



Derby City Council

COUNCIL CABINET **2 April 2014**

Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and
Young People

ITEM 14

Adult Learning Service Course Fees 2014/15

SUMMARY

- 1.1 Learners on Derby City Council adult learning courses are required to pay course fees. The course fee structure is based on learners' ability to pay according to their income and the level of subsidy received from the Skills Funding Agency.
- 1.2 The funding received from the Skills Funding Agency is allocated in two categories Adult Skills and Community Learning. The Adult Skills funding is paid at rates per individual learner and is standardised for all providers. The Community Learning allocation is paid as a block grant to the city council. The indicative allocation of funding for community learning is £1,584,845 which is the same as the current year's allocation.
- 1.3 A new Community Development programme will be offered in 2014/15 to attract new learners from under-represented groups in line with the Council Plan priorities.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To approve an amended fee structure for the 2014/15 academic year from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2015.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The changes to the current structure are minor and fees for the majority of adult learners will remain unchanged.
- 3.2 The fees and concessions proposed support the objectives for Community Learning which are to:
 - Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate and people on low incomes with low skills
 - Collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Adult Learning Service delivers a wide range of adult learning opportunities in adult learning centres, schools, community venues and workplaces across the city. In 2012/13 academic year there were 4550 adults enrolled. The largest number of enrolments is on Skills for Life courses - Literacy, Numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages. Other popular areas of learning include Information Technology, Modern Foreign Languages and Visual Arts. The service provides a range of courses that are open to all and also targets some provision in neighbourhoods with the highest levels of socio-economic deprivation, adults with learning difficulties and disabilities and adults with low levels of skills who have not previously engaged in adult learning.
- 4.2 The Adult Learning Service has received an indicative allocation of funding for the 2014/15 academic year of £2,891,415 across all funding streams, Adult Skills, Apprenticeships and Community Learning. This includes an indicative allocation of funding for Community Learning which remains at the same level as 2013/14 at £1,584,845.
- 4.3 The fee rates for Adult Skills and Apprenticeships reflect national funding rates. Community Learning fee rates are set at a local level. It is the Community Learning course fees that are the main consideration in this report.
- 4.4 The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in New Challenges, New Chances, December 2011 outlined the purpose and objectives for Community Learning funding;
- Purpose
- Maximise access to community learning for adults bringing new opportunities and improving lives whatever people's circumstances
 - Promote social renewal by bringing local communities together
 - Maximise the impact of community learning on the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities.
- Objectives
- Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate and people on low incomes with low skills
 - Collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot.

The fees policy will support these purposes and objectives.

4.5 **Proposed Fee Structure for Community Learning Provision**

General programme - £4.50 per hour.
This is the same rate as in 2013/14.

Specialist programme - £5.50 per hour.
This is the same rate as in 2013/14.

First Steps programme (entry level courses) – £1.00 per hour.
This is the same rate as in 2013/14.

Short taster courses (courses of no more than 4 hours to engage new learners) – no fee.
This is the same rate as in 2013/14.

Community Development programme - no fee.
This is a new addition to the fee structure for 2014/15 and is designed to engage targeted learners as outlined in paragraph 4.4.
Included are:

- those who live in priority wards where there is low participation in learning - Sinfen, Derwent, Abbey and Boulton wards
- adults living with mental ill-health
- adults with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Premium Day Courses (specialist provision to attract additional fee income) - £40 per course (approx. 5 hours) with no concessions.

50% fee concession will be given to the following learners;

- unemployed people in receipt of Job Seekers' Allowance or Employment Support Allowance
- those in receipt of income-based benefits, e.g. Council Tax Benefit, Housing Benefit and Income Support
- those in receipt of Working Tax Credit with a household income of less than £16,190
- those in receipt of Pension Credits–Guarantee
- the unwaged dependants of those listed above

10% fee concession will be given to Derbyshire Gold Card holders (this is the concessionary bus pass issued to older people and disabled people in Derby and Derbyshire). This will only apply to those who do not meet the criteria for 50% fee concession.

Bespoke courses will be offered in workplaces and for self-financed groups separately at negotiated rates that are not subsidised by public funding.

4.6 **Proposed fee structure for Adult Skills Budget Funded courses**

The main course fee will remain at £3.50 per hour.

Full fee remission will be given to those with entitlement as stated in the Skills Funding Agency Funding Rules 2014/15.

The course fee for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses for those who are not entitled to full fee remission will be £3.50 per hour. This is an increase of £1 per hour. In 2011 Skills Funding Agency removed the universal entitlement to full fee remission for all ESOL provision and the decision was taken to reduce the hourly fee for ESOL courses from £3.50 to £2 per hour to enable those learners who were already enrolled on courses to complete them in two years with the intention that the fee would be increased over a three year period so that it was in line with the fees paid for all other Adult Skills courses. The increase from £2.50 per hour in 2013/14 to £3.50 per hour in £2014/15 will fulfil this intention.

Full fee remission will be given to the following learners;

- hearing impaired learners on lip-reading courses
- those on any British Sign Language (BSL), Lip-Reading or Makaton course who are deaf or hard of hearing or who live in the same household as a BSL or Makaton user.

- 4.7 The total income from all course fees in 2012/13 was £247,054. The target for 2014/15 will be £260,000.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 To increase all course fees. This could lead to an overall reduction in income as learner numbers may decrease.
- 5.2 To reduce the number and range of courses offered in order to reduce the overall running costs of the service. This could lead to a reduction in choice and opportunity for Derby residents.
- 5.3 To introduce a course fee subsidy from council funding. This option has not been recommended due to current Council budget pressures.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	n/a
Financial officer	Janet Bowlzer
Human Resources officer	n/a
Estates/Property officer	n/a
Service Director(s)	Lynda Poole
Other(s)	

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Background papers:	None

List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications
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IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The Adult Learning Service has received an indicative allocation of funding for the 2014/15 of £2,891,415 across all funding streams. This includes an indicative allocation of funding for Community Learning which remains at the same level as 2013/14 at £1,584,845.

The course fee income is ring-fenced for adult learning activity and can't be used to subsidise other Council services.

The Adult Learning Service is not funded through core council budgets.

The fee rates represent good value for money for learners and are comparable with other local authority adult learning services in the region.

Legal

- 2.1 None.

Personnel

- 3.1 None.

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 A full equalities impact assessment was conducted in April 2011 when the current fee structure was implemented. An impact assessment of the minor changes proposed is currently being conducted. The intended impact of the minor changes proposed is to enable those on low incomes to be able to access adult learning more easily.

Health and Safety

- 5.1 None.

Environmental Sustainability

- 6.1 None.

Asset Management

7.1 None.

Risk Management

8.1 None.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 9.1
- Inspiring working life by improving skills and creating jobs
 - Inspiring place to live by improving inner city areas.