

## **Adult Learning Service Course Fees 2010/11**

### **SUMMARY**

1. There have been a number of recent changes to government policy around adult learning and a reduction in government funding which will take effect from September 2010. Consequently there is a need to consider a new structure of fees for Adult Learning Service (ALS) courses.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 To approve the adoption of a new structure for ALS course fees for the 2010/11 academic year.
- 2.2 To agree that any minor adjustments to the rates of fee remissions and concessions as a result of the Equalities Impact Assessment should be approved by the Corporate Director for Children and Young People in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Health.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

3. Derby City Council's ALS is mainly funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and is obliged to adopt a fees policy that is in line with SFA priorities. The SFA has taken on the allocation of funding role from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) from 1 April 2010. In order to continue to offer the current broad range of courses the Council will need to change the course fees structure from September 2010. This is necessary due to a reduction in the overall funding which will be received from the SFA for the 2010/11 academic year.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 The ALS delivers a wide range of adult learning opportunities in adult learning centres, schools, community venues and workplaces across the city. In 2008/09 there were 4945 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 In 2009/10 academic year the ALS received an allocation of £3,147,225 from the LSC which was generated by a variety of adult learning funding streams. The 2010/11 allocations for all funding streams have yet to be notified but an overall reduction in funding is expected. The Adult Learning Responsive stream allocation has been reduced by £158,000.
- 4.3 In 2010/11 Adult Learning Responsive government funding can only be used to fund accredited courses that have been categorised by the LSC as priority provision. Most of the adult learning services courses fall into this category but there will be a small number of courses at Level 2 and Level 3 that can only be delivered if learners cover the running costs through the payment of fees.
- 4.4 The White Paper "The Learning Revolution" which sets out the government's strategy for informal adult learning states that public funding should be prioritised for those in greatest need. This is to be reflected in the fees structure.
- 4.5 Proposed Fees Policy from September 2010

### **Adult Learner Responsive (ALR) Funded and Employer Responsive (ER) Funded Courses**

Increase the course fee from £2.90 per hour to £3.50 per hour with the exception of full fee remission for the following:

- learners studying their first full Level 2 qualification
- unemployed people in receipt of income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- those in receipt of income-based benefits, i.e. 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
- those taking Basic Literacy and Numeracy courses
- asylum seekers eligible for LSC funding and in receipt of the equivalent of income-based benefit (assistance under the terms of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999)
- Learners on English for Speakers of Other Languages courses who are eligible for ESOL Hardship grant

- those on British Sign Language (BSL) or Makaton courses who live in the same household as a BSL or Makaton user.
- learners aged 16 –18 years old
- income-based benefit (assistance under the terms of the *Immigration and Asylum Act 1999*).

### **First Steps Funded Courses**

Reduce the course fee from £2 per hour to £1 per hour

### **Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) courses**

- **general programme** – increase the course fee from £3.90 per hour to £4.50 per hour
- **specialist programme** - increase the course fee from £4.20 per hour to £5.00 per hour
- **first steps and short taster programme** – reduce the course fee from £2.00 per hour to £1.00 per hour.

Full fee remission for the following learners;

- hearing impaired learners on lip-reading courses
- those on British Sign Language or Makaton courses who live in the same household as a BSL or Makaton user.

50% fee concession for the following learners;

- unemployed people in receipt of income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- those in receipt of income-based benefits, i.e. 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
- asylum seekers eligible for LSC funding and in receipt of the equivalent of income-based benefit (assistance under the terms of the *Immigration and Asylum Act 1999*).

10% fee concession\* for Derbyshire Gold Card holders.

10% fee concession\* for adults who attended a Derby City Council Family Learning course in 2009/10.

Concessions marked with \* will only apply to those who do not meet the criteria for 50% fee concession.

### **Self Financing Courses**

Courses that are not eligible for ALR funding or are of a bespoke or specialist nature will be provided at a fee that will cover the basic costs of staffing, accommodation and resources. The rate will vary according to the nature of the provision but will be in the region of £8.00 per hour.

## Full Cost Recovery

In response to specific requests from groups of learners, employers or organizations the ALS will provide specialist courses that will not be supported by any other ALS income. The cost of these will be calculated on the full cost of delivery.

### OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 To introduce a course fee subsidy from council funding. This option has not been recommended due to current Council budget pressures.

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<b>Background papers:</b>	None
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Abbreviations

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial**

1. In 2008/09 financial year the fee income was £266,903. The target for income generated from the new fees structure for 2010/11 financial year will be £320,000. Current demand for places on courses indicates that this level of income generation is feasible. The impact of the reduction in funding will be reduced through efficiency savings.

**Legal**

2. None.

**Personnel**

3. The employment of ALS staff may be affected by a reduction in learner numbers resulting from the decrease in funding received from SFA or course fee increases. There could include a reduction in contracted hours for teaching staff.

**Equalities Impact**

- 4.1 The fee structure, remissions and concessions are designed to enable those on the lowest incomes and those with specific needs to participate in learning.
- 4.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment of the new fees structure will be concluded once the final allocations of funding from SFA are confirmed.

**Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

5. Supports the corporate plan objectives to build ambition, aspiration and achievement and to help create a healthy, vibrant economy with the physical and educational infrastructure to sustain the prosperity of business and citizens.

**List of Abbreviations**

ALR – Adult Learner Responsive funding

ALS – Adult Learning Service

BSL – British Sign Language

ER – Employer Responsive funding

ESOL – English for Speakers of other Languages

LSC – Learning and Skills Council

PCDL – Personal and Community Development Learning funding

SFA – Skills Funding Agency