



Derby City Council

**COUNCIL CABINET**  
**15 May 2013**

Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and  
Young People

# ITEM 13

## **Adult Learning Service Course Fees 2013/14**

### **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 indicative allocation of funding for community learning known as the Adult Safeguarded Learning funding has been set at £1,579,229 for 2013/14 which is the same as the current year's allocation
- 1.3 Minor changes are proposed to support the purposes and objectives of community learning by increasing the fee for specialist courses by fifty pence per hour whilst introducing free taster courses for those who have not previously engaged in learning.
- 1.4 English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Courses will be increased by 50 pence per hour but will remain at £1 per hour cheaper than all other Adult Skills courses.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 To approve an amended fee structure for the 2013/14 academic year from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2014

### **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:
  - 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

<b>SUPPORTING INFORMATION</b>
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- 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 2011/12 academic year there were 4385 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 2013/14 academic year of £2,839,510 across three funding streams Adult Skills, Apprenticeships and Community Learning. This includes an indicative allocation of funding for Adult Safeguarded Learning which remains at the same level as 2012/13 at £1,579,229
- 4.3 The fee rates for Adult Skills and Apprenticeships are set according to national funding policy but the fee rates for Community Learning 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

#### 4.3 **Proposed Fee Structure for Community Learning Provision**

General programme - £4.50 per hour.  
This is the same rate as in 2012/13

Specialist programme - £5.50 per hour  
This is an increase of 50 pence per hour from the rate in 2012/13

First Steps programme (entry level courses for new learners ) – £1.00 per hour  
This is the same rate as in 2012/13

Taster courses (short courses to engage new learners) – no fee  
This is a reduction from £1 per hour from 2012/13

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 Universal Credit
- 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)

Concessions marked with \* 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.

#### **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 2013/14

The course fee for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses for those who are not entitled to full fee remission will be £2.50 per hour. This is an increase of 50p 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. Many of those learners have now completed and therefore it is intended to increase the fee in stages over the next two years so that it is comparable with the fees paid for all other Adult Skills courses.

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.

- 4.4 The total income from all course fees in 2011/12 was £263,018. The target for 2013/14 will be £270,000.

<b>OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED</b>
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- 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:**

<b>Legal officer</b> <b>Financial officer</b> <b>Human Resources officer</b> <b>Service Director(s)</b> <b>Other(s)</b>	N/A Alison Parkin N/A Lynda Poole
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<b>For more information contact:</b> <b>Background papers:</b> <b>List of appendices:</b>	Name Cath Harcula 01332 642304 e-mail cath.harcula@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications
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<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial and Value for Money**

- 1.1 The Adult Learning Service has received an indicative allocation of funding for the 2013/14 of £2,839,510 across all funding streams. This includes an indicative allocation of funding for Community Learning which remains at the same level as 2012/13 at £1,579,229.

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 Achieving their learning potential – more adults learning