



Derby City Council

COUNCIL CABINET
13 April 2016

Report of the Cabinet Member for Education
and Skills

ITEM 10

Adult Learning Service Course Fees 2016/17

SUMMARY

- 1.1 Learners on Derby City Council's 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.

The course fee rates for all Adult Education budget courses are to be decided by council cabinet.
- 1.2 The Skills Funding Agency funding model has changed for the 2016/17 academic year with the former Adult Skills and Community Learning budgets combined to form a single Adult Education Budget. However, the funding mechanisms will not be changed during the 2016/17 year. The former Adult Skills funding is paid at rates per individual learner and is standardised for all providers. The former Community Learning allocation is paid as a block grant to the city council.
- 1.3 The funding of provision that was formerly classed as Adult Skills budget will continue to be formula funded and the eligibility for fee remission will be determined by the Skills Funding Agency.
- 1.4 Derby City Council's Adult Education Budget funding allocation for 2016/17 is £2,732,870.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To approve an amended fee structure for the 2016/17 academic year from 1st August 2016 to 31st July 2017
- 2.2 To delegate responsibility to the Strategic Director of People's Services following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to adjust the proposed course fee rates if the 2016/17 allocation of Skills Funding Agency funding is significantly changed during the academic year.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The increased revenue from course fees will supplement the Adult Learning Service budget to enable it to maintain the current level of provision
- 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
- 3.3 Those learners who are unemployed and/or in receipt of benefits will not be affected by the course fee increases to qualification courses because they are fully funded by the Skills Funding Agency.



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 2014/15 academic year there were 5044 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, and for 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 funding allocation from the Skills Funding Agency for the 2016/17 academic year is £2,732,870.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 In 2016/17 Derby City Council will develop and enhance the range of provision for those learners who can afford to pay full fees through the creation of a "Learning Club". This will include higher level courses such as advanced modern foreign languages and courses with high resource and materials costs such as silversmithing and life drawing. The intention is to offer easier access to courses through on line enrolments and a wider range of venues, times and frequency of classes. Over time this provision will become self-financing so that it is not so dependent on public funding if the planned transfer of responsibility for commissioning adult education to area devolution arrangements is implemented in 2018/19 beyond. Profit from the Learning Club provision will be used to support other community learning at lower levels and for those adults who are in receipt of fee concession or remission.

4.5 **Proposed Fee Structure for courses that do not lead to a qualification (formerly Community Learning budget)**

General programme - £4.80 per hour.

This is a £0.10 increase from the 2015/16 rate

First Steps programme (entry level courses) – £1.00 per hour

This is the same rate as in 2015/16

Short taster courses (courses of no more than 4 hours to engage new learners) – no fee

This is the same rate as in 2015/16

Community Development programme - no fee

This programme is designed to engage targeted learners as outlined in paragraph 4.3

Proposed Fee Structure for courses that do not lead to a qualification (formerly Community Learning budget)

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First Steps programme (entry level courses) – £1.00 per hour

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Short taster courses (courses of no more than 4 hours to engage new learners) – no fee

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50 of 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

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- 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.

Full fee remission will be given on British Sign Language courses, Makaton and Lip Reading courses at entry level and level one to:

- Learners who are deaf or hearing impaired
- The spouse or civil partner of a deaf / hearing impaired person
- The parent or carer of a deaf / hearing impaired child

4.6 Proposed fee structure for the Learning Club

Learning Club rate - £6.00 per hour

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

- those in receipt of Universal Credit
- 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.

4.7 Proposed fee structure for courses that lead to a qualification (formerly Adult Skills Budget Funded courses)

For courses that are for less than 100 guided learning hours - £3.80 per hour
This is a £0.10 per hour increase from the 2015/16 rate

For courses that are for more than 100 guided learning hours - £3.60 per hour
This is a £0.10 per hour increase from the 2015/16 rate

Full fee remission is awarded by Skills Funding Agency to adults on Adult Skills courses who meet the following criteria:

Learners on English and maths courses
Learners in receipt of Universal Credit

Learners in receipt of Jobseekers' Allowance
 Learners in receipt of Employment Support Allowance
 Learners who are unemployed and actively seeking work enrolled on a courses with the aim of improving employability and in receipt of

- Income support
- Council Tax Benefit
- Housing Benefit
- Pension Guarantee Credit
- Universal Credit

The unwaged dependant of someone in receipt of working tax credit

Learners aged 19 – 23 years who do not have a full Level 2 qualification

Full fee remission will be given on British Sign Language courses that lead to a qualification at entry level and level one, Makaton and Lip Reading courses

Learners who are deaf or hearing impaired

The spouse or civil partner of a deaf / hearing impaired person

The parent or carer of a deaf / hearing impaired child

- 4.8 The total fee income in the 2014/15 academic year was £274,000. The target for 2016/17 will be £300,000.

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 Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	n/a Janet Bowlzer n/a n/a Iain Peel
For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Cath Harcula 01332 642304 cath.harcula@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The Adult Learning Service has received an indicative allocation of £2,732,870 funding for the 2016/17 from the Skills Funding Agency Adult Education budget.

The funding allocation and course fee income is ring-fenced for adult learning activity and cannot 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

IT

- 4.1 none

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 A full equalities impact assessment was conducted in April 2011 when the current fee structure was implemented. A further assessment was made in June 2014 to consider the use of the community learning funding.
An impact assessment of the proposed changes is being conducted currently. The intended impact of the changes proposed is to enable those on low incomes to be able to continue to access adult learning.

Health and Safety

- 6.1 none

Environmental Sustainability

7.1 none

Asset Management

9.1 none

Risk Management

10.1 none

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

11.1 Council Plan 2015-2018

Safe Derby - Early help and prevention

Strong Derby – New and Diverse Communities
Health and Well-being

Ambitious Derby – Attainment and Skills