



Derby City Council

COUNCIL CABINET

12 April 2017

Report of the Cabinet Member for Education
and Skills

ITEM 9

Adult Learning Service Course Fees 2017/18

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 was changed significantly for the 2016/17 academic year but will remain the same for the 2017/18 academic year.
- 1.3 Derby City Council's Adult Education Budget funding allocation for 2016/17 was £2,732,870 and is expected to be at the same level for 2017/18, subject to written confirmation from the Skills Funding Agency.
- 1.4 It is proposed that the fee structure will not be changed for the 2017/18 academic year.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To approve the fee structure for the 2017/18 academic year from 1st August 2017 to 31st July 2018
- 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 2017/18 allocation of Skills Funding Agency funding is significantly changed during the academic year.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The funding allocation and fee income target for 2016/17 academic year are on track to be achieved. The allocation of funding from Skills Funding Agency for 2017/18 is expected to remain the same.
- 3.2 The Adult Learning Service was restructured through the Achieving Change process in 2016 in order to balance expenditure and income. The adult learning budget for the 2016/17 financial year is balanced.
- 3.3 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

Those learners who are unemployed and/or in receipt of benefits are fully funded by the Skills Funding Agency for accredited courses..



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 2015/16 academic year there were 6680 enrolments on to courses representing 4315 learners. The largest number of enrolments was 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, 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 2017/18 academic year is expected to be £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 developed and enhanced the range of provision for those learners who can afford to pay full fees through the creation of a "Learning Club". This includes higher level courses such as advanced modern foreign languages and courses with high resource and materials costs such as silversmithing and life drawing. The aim is that over time this provision will become self-financing so that it is not dependent on public funding. 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. The target number of learners in the 2016/17 academic year was set at 400 and is on track to be achieved with 338 enrolled as at 28th February 2017. The target for 2017/18 is to increase this to 500.

4.5 **Proposed Fee Structure for courses that do not lead to a qualification**

General programme - £4.80 per hour.

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

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

Community Development programme - no fee

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

Proposed Fee Concessions for courses that do not lead to a qualification

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(WRAG)
- 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 Guarantee Credit
-

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 and Makaton 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 person / 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(WRAG)
- 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 Guarantee Credit

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)**

Accredited courses - £3.80 per hour

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) - £3.60 per hour

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 (who do not already have GCSE Grade C or 4 or higher

Learners in receipt of Universal Credit and in a Work Group (work-related requirement, work preparation or work-focused interview) organised by Job Centre Plus and earn less than £330 per month

Learners in receipt of Jobseekers' Allowance(including JSA National Insurance Credit)

Learners in receipt of Employment Support Allowance(Work Related Activity Group only)

Learners who are unemployed and actively seeking work enrolled on a course with the aim of improving employability and in receipt of

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

Learners aged 19 – 23 years and joining an Entry, Level 1 or Level 2 course who do not already have a full Level 2 qualification

Learners aged 19 – 23 years and studying their first 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 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 person/child

- 4.8 The total fee income in the 2016/17 financial year was £305,866, exceeding the target of £300,000. The target for 2017/18 will be £320,000.

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 funding allocation of £2,732,870 for the 2017/18 academic year 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 The intended impact of the proposed fee structure 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

8.1 none

Risk Management

9.1 none

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

10.1 Council Plan 2016-2019
Raising achievement and skills
Promoting health and wellbeing