



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

Council Cabinet
12 April 2011

Report of the Strategic Director of Children and
Young People

ITEM 8

Adult Learning Service Course Fees 2011/12

SUMMARY

- 1.1 There have been a number of recent changes in government policy around adult learning and a reduction in the funding rates which will take effect from September 2011. Consequently there is a need to consider an appropriate structure for fees for Adult Learning Service (ALS) courses.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 In line with Government policy the structure for certain ALS course fees for the 2011/12 academic year should be changed to ensure that courses are affordable those learners who are not entitled to full fee remission as detailed in paragraphs 4.4 and 4.6
- 2.2 To agree that any minor adjustments to the rates of fee remissions or concessions as a result of additional guidance from the Skills Funding Agency should be approved by the Strategic Director for Children and Young People in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Derby City Council's ALS is funded government funded through the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and is obliged to adopt a fees policy that is in accordance with its policies and guidance.
- 3.2 A national policy is to be introduced to restrict the entitlement for full fee remissions on Adult Skills courses to those benefit claimants in receipt of a Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA) only. It has been recognised that this will adversely affect some adult learning services including Derby Adult Learning Service. The Skills Funding Agency has agreed to transitional protection of funding for the 2011/12 academic year.

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 2009/10 there were 3870 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 2011/12 academic year of £3,033,385 across all funding streams which is a 1.9% decrease on the current year's allocation. This includes an indicative allocation of funding for Adult Safeguarded Learning which remains at the same level as 2010/11 at £1,579,229
- 4.3 The funding rates for individual learners have been decreased by varying amounts according to the curriculum area, academic level of the course and the number of guided learning hours. In order to earn the funding allocated the Adult Learning Service will have to increase the number of enrolments in 2011/12.
- 4.4 The entitlement to full fee remission for Adult Skills Funded courses from SFA for benefit claimants who are not on Job Seekers' Allowance or Employment Support Allowance will be withdrawn from 1 August 2011.
- 4.5 The government is conducting a review of Adult Safeguarded Learning provision during 2011 which may lead to changes for the 2012/13 academic year.

4.6 Proposed fees policy for 2011/12

The fees and concessions policy for the following courses will not be changed from the current rates.

First Steps Funded Courses - £1 per hour

Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) courses

- **general programme** – £4.50 per hour
- **specialist programme** - £5.00 per hour
- **first steps and short taster programme** – £1.00 per hour.

Full fee remission for the following learners;

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

50% fee concession for the following learners;

- unemployed people in receipt of Job Seekers' Allowance or Employment Support 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 SFA 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 2010/11.

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

The fees and concessions policy will be changed for the following courses:

Adult Skills Funded courses (this includes courses that were previously categorised as Employer Responsive, Train to Gain or Adult Learner Responsive)

For learners on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) or Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LLD) courses the fee will reduce from £3.50 per hour to £2.00 per hour

For learners on all other Adult Skills Funded courses, the course fee will remain at £3.50 per hour

Learners who meet the following criteria are entitled to Skills Funding Agency full fee remission:

- Learners studying for their first full level 2 qualification
- Learners aged 19-24 year olds studying for their first full level 3 qualification
- Learners aged 16-18 years
- Those taking learning aims that are funded as Adult Skills for Life and Functional Skills in Literacy and Numeracy

Those people who are on Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA)

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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 Service Director(s) Other(s)	Lynda Poole
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For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Name Cath Harcula e-mail cath.harcula@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications
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IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 The income generated from fee income in the 2009/10 financial year was £242,086. The expected income for the 2010/11 financial year is £282,670 (as at 21 February 2011). The target for 2011/12 will be £300,000.

Legal

- 2.1 None

Personnel

- 3.1 The employment of ALS staff may be affected by a reduction in learner numbers resulting from a decrease in funding received from SFA and restrictions on entitlement to full fee remission

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 An equalities impact assessment has been completed. Analysis of current enrolment data has shown that 45% of learners on the Adult Skills programme including 72% of learners on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses will be adversely affected by the changes to full fee remission entitlement. Therefore the hourly rate for some learners has been reduced. This will be supported through transitional funding protection by the Skills Funding Agency.

Health and Safety

- 5.1 none

Carbon commitment

- 6.1 The Adult Learning Service will continue to offer courses at community venues across the city which will reduce the impact of travel by learners.

Value for money

- 7.1 The proposed structure for fee charges and concessions is designed to enable the Adult Learning Service to maximise its income from the SFA and maintain learner numbers

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 8.1 The proposed structure for fee charges and concessions supports the Derby City Council Plan 2011-2014 objective: All people in Derby will enjoy achieving their learning potential.

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