

Community Learning Service

Fees Policy 2016/17

Community Learning funding

Introduction:

In line with *'New Challenges, New Chances'* (Further Education and Skills System Reform Plan: Building a World Class Skills System, BIS December 2011), and to support Lincolnshire County Council's widening participation policy, the purpose of the Community Learning Service's Fees Policy 2016/17 is to:

- Maximize access to community learning for adults, bringing new opportunities and improving lives, whatever people's circumstances.
- Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas and people on low income with low skills.
- Collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot.
- Formally recognize and grow 'Pound Plus'* within Lincolnshire Community Learning Service to maximize value for money and quality of the provision

* Pound Plus – Pound plus refers to the additional income and savings generated by Providers over and above core income contribution from the Government's Community Learning budget.

Background information:

Community Learning provision for adult learners (aged 19+) is paid for by a combination of central government funding through the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the fee paid by the learner (where applicable). The tuition fee is the fee charged by the Learning Provider for the delivery of the learning activity. This tuition fee represents only a proportion of the full cost of the course, with the remainder being paid for with grants from central government.

Learners will be expected to provide their own resources or, where available, purchase them from their tutor. Some learners will be eligible to apply for funding from the Learner Support Fund for assistance to pay for resources (please see Learner Support Fund below)

To support local needs, and Lincolnshire County Council policy, target groups of learners are able to access concessions on the tuition fee, as detailed in concessions below.

In 2016/17, in order to focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate in Community Learning fee concessions are available for learners on

benefit on skills training only. The definition of courses that deliver skills training is at the discretion of the Learning Provider.

Provision in areas of deprivation/rural areas

In order to support learners in deprived/rural areas, targeted courses in these areas aimed at improving job prospects and learner confidence may be delivered free of charge. Areas in Lincolnshire that apply are detailed below.

Boston Fenside	Lincoln Boultham	Weston and Moulton
Boston Skirbeck	Lincoln Bracebridge	Bourne East
Boston Witham	Lincoln Carholme	Bourne West
Fishtoft	Lincoln Castle	Deeping St. James
Alford	Lincoln Glebe	Grantham Earlsfield
Chapel St. Leonards	Lincoln Hartsholme	Grantham Harrowby
Coningsby/Tattershall	Lincoln Minster	Grantham St. Annes
Horncastle	Lincoln Moorland	Grantham St. Johns
Ingoldmells	Lincoln Park	Grantham St. Wulframs
Mablethorpe	Bracebridge Heath and Waddington	Market and West Deeping
Scarbrough	Heckington	Stamford All Saints
Seacroft	Heighington and Washingborough	Stamford St. Mary's
Skegness St. Clements	Ruskington	Gainsborough East
Skegness Winthorpe	Holbeach Town	Gainsborough North
Trusthorpe	Long Sutton	Gainsborough South West
Wainfleet and Friskney	Pinchbeck	Spalding St. Pauls
Woodhall Spa	Lincoln Abbey	Spalding Wygate
Nettleham	Lincoln Birchwood	Sutton Bridge

Family Learning Programmes (learners aged 16+)

These programmes are paid for by central government funding through the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). There are no fees and charges for these courses.

Fee paying provision

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) through its Funding Rules requires Providers to seek fees from those who can afford to pay in order to ensure that the maximum amount of public funding can be focused on supporting and maximising the number of disadvantaged learners. For example, where appropriate, Providers could consider full cost recovery for repeat learners who register for similar courses over a period of several years.

To comply with the guidelines, and to support SFA Policy, in addition to the Learning Provider's own Fees Policy, in 2016/17 Providers will be required to collect Fees to extend provision and widen participation. Evidence will be collected on a termly basis. Failure to comply will result in Fees being collected by the Provider being forwarded to the Community Learning Service for re-distribution in line with this principal.

Fees

Fees are based on an hourly rate. Fees are payable at the beginning of each course as part of the enrolment process.

PCDL	Can be charged up to £5.00 per hour (maximum) **
Full Cost Recovery	As appropriate

** The aim of the Fees Policy is to standardise the levying of fees for learning provision across the county in a way that is fair and transparent so that a learner in Spalding gets the same opportunities as a learner in Mablethorpe. However, it is recognised that there will be regional constraints and differing course content due to the needs of learners and the locality.

In order to ensure Providers are able to meet the needs of their community they have a certain amount of discretion when applying the Fees Policy. Providers can charge **up to** £5.00/hour for Community Learning provision. However, it is anticipated that some provision will be charged at a lower rate in order to meet the needs of the curriculum.

Providers will outline in their own Fees Policy what fees will be charged to best meet the needs of their local community.

Concessions/Skills training (*these are subject to change)*

Concessions of 50% are available for those learners who are in receipt of the following benefit entitlements, (as defined by the SFA - evidence to be provided at enrolment), who want to enter employment/progress in work/remove a barrier to get into work and are on skills training to help them to do so. The definition of skills training is at the discretion of the Provider.

- Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Employment and support allowance (work related activity group) (ESA WRAG)
- Universal Credit

- Offenders who are serving their time in the community
- Asylum seekers in receipt of the equivalent of income-based benefit (assistance under the terms of the Immigration and Asylum 1999) and their dependents

General concessions:

- Concessions will also be available for learners aged 65 or over on 1st August 2015 (at 25%)
- Concessions will also be available for ex-service personnel disabled in service (50%)

Discretionary Remissions:

There are some categories of learners, for example but not exclusively travellers, the homeless and hostel dwellers who, whilst not necessarily in receipt of benefits, are clearly unable to contribute to the cost of their learning. In such instances, the Community Learning Service may agree discretionary fee remission to groups of learners or individual learners without the prior consent of the SFA. Records of all such discretionary remissions will be retained.

Refunds

A full refund of course fees will only be given if the Learning Provider cancels the course. If the learner withdraws from a course which has already started, depending on their circumstances, learners may be offered a pro-rata refund. A £5 administration charge is applicable.

Learner Support Fund

The Learner Support Fund aims to remove financial barriers to learning. Financial support is available for learners who would otherwise not be able to access the learning provision offered. This fund can help pay for specialist equipment, transport assistance, child care and course resources. Please contact the Customer Service Centre on 01522 782011 for information on the Learner Support Fund.

Review and Evaluation

This document is revised on an annual basis, but is subject to LCC, key stakeholders and SFA policy in-year updates which may require further publication. The revised document will be published in August 2017.