

Curriculum Strategy and Fees and Remissions Policy (incorporating Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy and excluding apprentices)

CURRICULUM STRATEGY

The Community Learning Service (CLS) seeks to deliver a curriculum that is aligned to the Adult Education Budget Funding Rules 2017-2018 (*version1*), (DBIS & Education & Skills Funding Agency, February 2014), and aligns to the annual Education & Skills Funding Agency eligibility criteria. This requires all Community Learning Providers to deliver a truly locally-determined learning offer that conforms to the objectives set out in '*New Challenges, New Chances*'.

This curriculum strategy with the associated Fees and Remissions Policy is not intended to stand alone. It is a part of a suite of documents that detail how the service approaches its role as an outstanding provider of Community Learning in Portsmouth.

The Community Learning Service seeks to deliver high quality learning that:

- Is planned through consultation with the people and communities of Portsmouth
- Is responsive to the needs of communities in Portsmouth
- Widens involvement in adult learning, especially amongst adults who are most at risk of being excluded
- Increases learners' skills, knowledge and confidence and improves quality of life
- Has a positive impact on the communities of Portsmouth
- Forms part of a city wide planned and coherent offer of learning
- Supports employers in the city to meet their business objectives
- Ensures the learning opportunities are consistent with local, regional and national priorities
- Enables learners to take their first steps in learning and be supported on to further learning either through the service or through partnership with other providers.
- Offers clear and meaningful progression routes across the city's provision
- Maximises the use of resources to offer affordable opportunities for all

The Service has developed a curriculum that spans three core themes, namely; Learning for Work, Learning for Life and Learning for Pleasure. The nature of the provision within each theme has been decided by the learner's purpose for undertaking the learning and course fees have been allocated accordingly. Thus, a learner embarking on the acquisition of very basic computer skills is entitled to heavily subsidised / free provision as this is deemed a necessary life skill option, and a learner enrolling on an Arts & Crafts course will attract a minimally subsidised fee as this is learning for pleasure. This approach enables the Service to set fees that focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate (including people on low incomes with low skills) and to collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot (see page 5, Rationale for fee setting).

Curriculum rationale

1. Learning for Life

Provision in this theme will contribute to a learner's sense of wellbeing, support greater independence, reduce the digital divide and develop skills that support families learning together. The provision is non-accredited and heavily subsidised by the Education & Skills Funding Agency contribution. Outcomes from this theme will be further learning, increased social involvement, increased involvement in children's learning and increased use of technology to support everyday living.

2. Learning for Work

Provision within this theme will contribute directly to a learner's potential to be employed. Outcomes from this provision will be progression onto employment, further work related training / learning, volunteering or self-employment. The content of this theme is largely accredited, free to those who are unemployed and targeted at those with low skills. As the city council's in-house training provider for apprenticeships in Business Administration and Customer Service in levels 2, 3 and 4 we offer the opportunity to earn while they learn in a real job and gain accredited qualifications.

3. Learning for Pleasure

Provision within this theme will contribute to a learner's quality of life with enhanced skills and knowledge of how to use leisure time. Provision in this area is often linked to health and wellbeing and is designed to help with social isolation and to promote digital inclusion. Outcomes from these courses will be defined in terms of personal development goals. The Service will also develop opportunities for drop-ins that will be supported by volunteers.

FEES AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Within the three curriculum themes; Learning for Work, Learning for Life and Learning for Pleasure, CLS provides "targeted" and "universal" learning opportunities to residents of Portsmouth and its surrounding area. In all instances, the service seeks to provide high quality learning at the best possible value for money. The aim of this policy is to ensure that everyone has the best possible opportunity to participate in the learning of their choice and to not be disadvantaged by individual circumstance. High quality learning opportunities come at a cost and the Community Learning Service is conscious to set fees at appropriate rates which enable residents to participate and to contribute to the costs of learning where they are able.

Any charges will be clearly stated on all course promotion literature.

CLS adheres to the Education & Skills Funding Agency Funding Rules for charging fees and assessing individuals' eligibility to participate in its provision. Where provision is funded by other external funding sources and without ESFA subsidy, any charges will be set in line with the appropriate contractual requirements.

- 1. Targeted provision:** that which is offered to specific groups of residents who are considered to be at social, emotional, economic or physical disadvantage. Targeted provision is usually provided at zero-cost for the learner or with minimal charges for materials where required. Targeted courses and programmes are often set up as a result of engagement work with specific communities and their representatives who have particular needs and outcomes. Targeted courses are not usually openly advertised beyond a specific community although similar / equivalent programmes are available and advertised more widely.
- 2. Universal provision:** courses which are open to all residents and are openly marketed to the public. In many cases these courses charge a fee and form the majority of CLS's "Learning for Pleasure" programme.
- 3. Sub-contracted provision:** where the service sub-contracts provision to external organisations, CLS does not always dictate the course fees which should be applied. CLS considers an organisation's own fee policy as part of any procurement and sub-contracting assessment process before awarding a contract to deliver.

Fully funded courses: In accordance with the Adult Education Budget, a large proportion of our courses are fully funded. For eligibility see the summary on page 7 or the full AEB Funding Rules document:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/73003/0/2018-19_AEB_funding_pm_rules_July.pdf

Please note, the Community Learning Service does not seek to make profit. All funding received, from whatever source, is focussed on providing the best learning opportunities we can.

Fees

Whilst CLS are able to offer a range of courses free of charge we also recognise the cost of providing high quality learning opportunities and therefore many courses do have a fee. We have done our best to keep all our courses affordable and where a fee is charged there is usually a reduced (remitted / concessionary) fee for eligible learners. Broadly there are 3 fee categories:

1. Full fee - attracting no public subsidy
2. Subsidised - with some subsidy for specific groups of people (remissions criteria apply)
3. Zero fee - fully subsidised

The vast majority of our courses are subsidised by the Education & Skills Funding Agency and where appropriate there is a reduced fee available, it is to encourage those most vulnerable groups into learning. Where we do charge a fee it allows us to provide materials needed for the course, contributes to our delivery costs and where appropriate any accreditation and childcare costs.

The fee for each course is calculated using a framework. The framework takes into account all of the potential costs of a course (venue, tutor, resources, admin, accreditation etc.) and considers the target / expected enrolment numbers in order to calculate an appropriate fee to charge for the course for it to be viable for us to run.

A learner's place on a course is not confirmed until the total fee due has been received and fees should be paid at the point of booking. Decisions on course viability are taken 5 working days prior to the course start date and in some cases, course enrolment will close 5 working days before the course starts in order that tutors can prepare accordingly. No payment means that the place cannot be booked or reserved. Once a course is full a waiting list will be created.

Reduced fees

The Community Learning Service offers reduced fees to learners to support its mission and objectives; to widen participation and secure equality of opportunity in learning.

Learners in receipt of a means tested benefit will be able to pay a reduced fee on identified courses.

To benefit from the reduced fee, learners must provide at least one form of evidence of being in receipt of the following:

- Income support
- Working tax credit
- Job seekers allowance (income based)
- Housing benefit
- Council tax benefit
- Asylum seeker receiving the equivalent of income based benefit
- Unwaged dependant of someone in receipt of listed benefits above
- Pension credit

Examples of acceptable evidence as proof of receipt of a means tested benefit include:

- Written notification of entitlement (received by all recipients)
- Benefit book
- Portsmouth Leisure Card

Photocopies are not acceptable evidence and learners are only eligible to claim one fee remission per course / event.

Exceptions

Portsmouth City Council staff are eligible for a 20% reduction to the published fee on proof that they are employed by the Council (i.e. on the payroll). CLS staff are eligible to claim one free fee-charging course per year, with management approval.

Volunteers who are active with the service and /or projects are able to claim a place on one fee-charging course per year, with management approval.

Refunds

Should the Community Learning management team cancel a course prior to it starting, a learner is entitled to a full refund via the method they paid.

Should a course be cancelled mid-way through by the Community Learning management or lessons be missed (e.g. through staff sickness) a partial refund would be offered. This would be on a course by course basis.

Should a learner wish to have a refund up until the cut-off point of the course start (five working days beforehand), they will receive a full refund. If a learner cancels at any time after the 5 working days before the course is due to start the course fee is not refundable.

If a learner believes their need to cancel is a result of exceptional circumstances they should be provided with a "Request for fee refund" form to complete for the consideration of the management team.

Recording of fees

All fees and refunds are processed through the e-payments system, cash register / card reader and recorded on the Management Information System (MIS) along with the reason for any reduced fee being applied. Daily reconciliation between the systems is required to ensure accurate recording and management of any learner accounts.

Rationale for fee setting

	Fee driver >>>	Fee Criteria			
		ESFA AEB funding rules or CLS "Learning for life" priority	CLS fees calculator tool, eligibility for reduced fee in line with ESFA AEB funding rules	CLS fees calculator tool, local context / communities	CLS fees calculator tool and / or ESFA funding rates w here applicable
	Predominant funding sources >>>	Fully ESFA funded (Adult Skills / Community Learning)	ESFA contribution (Community Learning grant) towards admin, infrastructure and direct costs of learning	Predominantly learners with some ESFA contribution (Community Learning grant) for admin / infrastructure	All costs of delivery fully funded by fees from learners, businesses / organisations
"Purpose" of learning	Subject area	Zero fee	Reduced fee	Subsidised 'full' fee	Full fee rate
Learning for work	English (accredited)	√	×	×	√
	Maths (accredited)	√	×	×	√
	IT (accredited)	√	×	×	√
	Food hygiene (accredited)		×	×	√
	Employability (accredited)	√	×	×	√
Learning for life	Community ESOL	×	√	×	×
	Community Engagement activity	√	×	×	×
	Confidence Building	√	×	×	×
	IT Beginners	√	√	√	×
	Basic cookery	×	√	√	×
	Non-accredited English	√	×	×	×
	Non-accredited maths	√	×	×	×
	FL & parenting	√	×	×	×
Learning for pleasure	Community Engagement activity	×	√	√	×
	Art	×	√	√	√
	Crafts	×	√	√	√
	Health and Wellbeing	×	√	√	√
	IT	×	√	√	√
	Cookery	×	√	√	√

SUPPLY CHAIN FEES AND CHARGES POLICY

The Education & Skills Funding Agency's Funding Rules require all providers who sub-contract provision to publish a Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy in the interests of transparency and openness and to ensure that the best use of resources is at the heart of securing learning and training provision.

As defined in the Curriculum Strategy, the Community Learning Service seeks to secure a high quality community learning programme for adults (aged 19+) which meets local need, focussing on widening participation, developing communities, improving health and well-being, increasing skills and supporting personal progression. The CLS does this through a combination of directly delivered provision and subcontracted provision; a model it seeks to continue through subcontracting components of its Adult Education Budget to local delivery partners.

Subcontracting overview

The process for securing subcontractors follows Portsmouth City Council procurement requirements which in turn adhere to Standing Orders and all relevant procurement legislation.

Contracts are awarded on a competitive tendering basis for academic periods following the publication of the "Specification and Invitation to Quote to Deliver Community Learning in Partnership with Portsmouth City Council Community Learning Service". This document details the procurement process, the provision being sought, the delivery / performance requirements and expectations and the subsequent contract management processes for successful organisations. It includes details on how tenders will be assessed and the criteria which will be scored:

- Requirements, including financial appraisal (pass / fails)
- Links between programme & identified priorities / needs
- Quality of provision and assurance processes
- Cost / value for money
- Innovation and added value.

All subcontracted provision is required to be delivered in line with the ESFA's Funding Rules, should be delivered in line with the CLS Quality Assurance Framework, is included in the CLS's ILR returns and is subject to Ofsted inspection.

In line with the ESFA Funding Rules, CLS adheres to the Declaration of Subcontractors requirements.

Management fees and charges

Subcontracts and any associated funding or grants for Community Learning provision is not awarded based on a formal formula. CLS does not currently subcontract any provision for which we ourselves are funded based on a formula. To this end, no element of any published funding rates for the delivery of programmes is retained by CLS.

The costs of managing, supporting and monitoring any subcontracted delivery are included in the service's staffing costs and are detailed as core responsibilities in the relevant job profiles or are budgeted for separately.

CLS seeks to ensure that no more than 20%-25% of the total funding received from the Education & Skills Funding Agency is spent on management costs. However, CLS recognises that delivering and managing (operationally and strategically), high quality learning programmes and a purpose built community learning centre does require appropriate investment in management, administration and infrastructure alongside the direct costs of delivering the learning itself.

ELIGIBILITY FOR SKILLS FUNDED AGENCY PROGRAMMES

This is a summary of the key points from the Funding Rules. Should you wish to access the full document please follow the link below:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/730030/2018-19_AEB_funding_pm_rules_July.pdf

GENERAL FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

Who we fund

- To be funded by us, on the first day of learning a learner must be aged 19 or older on 31 August within the 2018 to 2019 funding year if the learning aim is not an apprenticeship or Traineeship (22/22.1)

Eligibility for funding

- Providers must make sure an individual is eligible before claiming funding for them (33)
- Individuals will be eligible for funding if the learning is taking place in England and they(34)
- Are a citizen of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA) or other countries determined within the EEA, including those with bilateral agreements such as Switzerland, or have the right of abode in the UK and have been ordinarily resident in the EEA or other countries determined within the EEA, including those with bilateral agreements such as Switzerland, for at least the previous three years on the first day of learning (34.1/34.2)
- The eligibility of individuals who do not meet the requirements in paragraph 35, is stated below (36)
- Any learner or relevant family member who has applied for an extension or variation of their current immigration permission in the UK is still treated as if they have that leave. Keeping this permission applies as long as the application was made before their current permission expired. Their leave continues until the Home Office make a decision on their immigration application (38)

Non-EEA citizens

A non EEA citizen is eligible for funding if they have permission granted by the UK government to live in the UK, which is not for educational purposes and have been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least the previous three years before the start of learning (40)

Individuals with certain types of immigration status and their family members

Any individual with any of the statuses listed below is eligible to receive funding and are exempt from the three-year residency requirement rule:

- Refugee Status (41.1)
- Discretionary Leave to Enter or remain (41.2)
- Exceptional Leave to Enter or Remain (41.3)
- Indefinite Leave to Enter or Remain (41.4)
- Humanitarian protection (41.5)
- Leave Outside the Rules (41.6)
- Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 leave (41.7)
- The husband, wife, civil partner and child of any of the above (41.8)

Asylum Seekers

Asylum seekers are eligible to receive funding if they have lived in the UK for six months or longer while their claim is being considered by the Home Office and no decision on their claim has been made (43.1)

Family members of EU and EEA nationals

If the learner, who is a family member of an EEA national, has been ordinarily resident in the UK for the three years prior to the start of their course, they are eligible for funding (46)

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