



**Hampshire
Achieves**

Participation & Lifelong Learning

Hampshire Learns Adult & Community Learning

Fees Policy

2023/24

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ACL Fees Policy

The contents of this policy are an integral part of the HA Quality Assurance Framework.

1.0 Introduction

The Hampshire Achieves Adult and Community Learning Fees Policy 2023/24 offers guidance to providers on setting appropriate fees for adult learners to support equality of entitlement for learners on Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA, the Agency) and Hampshire County Council funded programmes across the County.

The County Council's Adult and Community Learning provision is funded through a contract with the Agency. The level of funding made available to providers for delivering different programmes is determined by Hampshire County Council, with guidance from the Agency.

There is an expectation that, where appropriate, learners will contribute to the costs of delivering their learning programme through the payment of course fees. We expect learners who are studying principally for their own leisure, to contribute approximately 75 per cent of the cost to the provider of delivering the course.

2.0 Learner Support

Learner support relates to discretionary support for learners on courses that are expected to enhance their skills, competence, or personal development, so as to contribute to their future training, education, employability, or self-employment, e.g., transport or assistance toward crèche facilities. It is likely that were such support not available, the learner may be excluded from the provision.

This funding is limited and targeted at exceptional cases. Providers should request funding for individual learner support using the 'Application for Learner/Learning Support' form, to outline specific details of the level of support required. The funding is allocated on an individual learner basis, according to the resource available.

2.1 Crèche Support on Family Programmes

Family Programmes aim to encourage family members to learn together, and the funding includes an element to cover the costs for the children enrolled on the course. As such, no claims for crèche costs should be made relating to the children on the course. Learner support relating to crèche facilities for children that are not enrolled on the course, for example younger siblings, may be requested but a clear distinction needs to be made between those children on the course and those for which a crèche is required.

2.2 Learning support

Learning support refers to arrangements that are required to provide direct additional support for learning by individual learners, over and above that which is normally provided in a standard learning programme. The additional learning support is required to help learners progress towards and successfully achieve, their learning goals.

The need for additional support may arise from a learning difficulty or disability, eg specialist computer keyboard or mouse for a disabled learner; specialist software for a blind student; or additional / specialist advice and guidance at the end of a course to enable progression.

Providers will be able to request funding for learning support, outlining specific details of the support required. The funding will be evaluated on an individual learner basis. Learning Providers will need to request learner support through the Application Form.

Evidence of expenditure for learner and learning support will be required for audit purposes. Any learning support equipment purchased will remain the property of Hampshire County Council.

Funding for whole cohort support is not available through this funding and should be costed within the course funding.

Please be aware that the ESFA does not allocate separate funding for learner or learning support and so the payments granted are paid from programme funding. A total maximum of £20,000 has been set aside for learner/learning support and fee remission.

3.0 Remission of Fees

The County Council offers full concessions of fees to learners who are participating in the following programmes and who meet the eligibility criteria:

- Hampshire Thrives
- Hampshire Works

Furthermore, the County Council offers courses free-of-charge to those learners below the low-pay threshold of £20,319 annual gross salary.

3.1 Concessions

To claim concessions on course fees, qualifying evidence must be seen by the provider before enrolment. For 2023/24, a 50% concession of fees is offered to the following learners:

- Those eligible and in receipt of Work-related benefits including Working Tax Credit
- Those eligible and in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit; Council Tax Reduction; or Housing Benefit
- Those eligible and in receipt of a State Pension
- Those who live in households where children are eligible for Free School Meals
- Those aged 19-25 who were formerly in the care of Hampshire County Council (Care Leaver)
- Learners who are asylum seekers (or their dependant) in receipt of the equivalent of income-based benefit (assistance under the terms of the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act).

Please be aware that the ESFA does not allocate separate funding fee remission and so the payments granted are paid from programme funding. A total maximum of £20,000 has been set aside for learner/learning support and fee remission.

4.0 Viability

Providers have responsibility for ensuring the financial viability of their overall programme. There is an expectation of a figure of around 10 enrolments per course, should enrolments fall below this number, providers must consider the financial and educational viability of continuing the programme. The interests of the learner must take precedence. Merging small groups within a provider's programme, or with another provider where possible, is often a better option. It is recognised that enrolments on Thrives or Works courses may be lower.

5.0 Refunds

Decisions on refunds are the responsibility of the learning provider. If a learner wishes to dispute the provider's decision, the Centre should inform the learner of their right to appeal using the complaints procedure, as outlined in the Learner Handbook.

If a learner decides to withdraw from a course before a course begins, the following charges should be made:

- More than 4 weeks before course starts – full refund
- 1 to 4 weeks before the course starts – a £10.00 admin fee may be charged regardless of course fee
- No refunds will normally be made if a learner withdraws from a course less than 7 days before the start of the course.

Once a course has begun, providers should only consider refund requests in exceptional personal or family circumstances: holidays, loss of interest, new time commitments and similar domestic changes, do not qualify. Providers may make full or partial refunds in exceptional circumstances where the learner has received poor service from the Centre.

Providers reserve the right to cancel courses for which learners have enrolled – full refunds should be given in this case.

6.0 Pound Plus

Hampshire Learns Adult and Community Learning providers will be expected to continue to add value to the public contribution (via the Agency) by attracting additional revenue and making costs savings. In particular, providers are required to:

- Leverage-in additional funding through fee income, sponsorship grants, funding from other government departments and/or commercial sales
- Secure savings from contributions in kind, volunteer activities, sharing services and/or pooling resources.

The value of the Pound Plus contribution is expected to be at least three times the value of the funding of the Hampshire Learns programme.

7.0 Monitor, Review & Audit

The contents of all policy and procedures will be monitored regularly by Hampshire Achieves Performance Management Group (PMG). Policies and procedures will be kept

updated in accordance with any mid-year changes in the law, regulations, or changes to the Services' provision, with updates approved by PMG.

All policy and procedures will be reviewed annually to determine their effectiveness, and where any changes are required, these will be applied and ratified. A summary of all changes will be kept as part of the PMG meeting notes. In addition, an annual cycle of internal policy compliance/audits defined by Senior Managers will provide the assurance of the overall effectiveness of the Services ethos, policies, and procedures, and will confirm operational effectiveness, and compliance with our own quality assurance framework and any relevant laws or regulations.