

Herefordshire Council Adult and Community Learner Fees Policy 2022-25

Introduction

Herefordshire Council's Adult and Community Learning Service (ACLS) receives Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to deliver learning to Herefordshire residents aged 19 and over. Provision is delivered by subcontracted learning providers via two distinct funding streams:

- **Community Learning** (ESFA funding model 10) – where the learning is designed to widen adult participation in learning through a targeted approach. There is no requirement for CL learners to progress to other learning or achieve regulated qualifications.
- **Adult Skills** (ESFA funding model 35) – accredited courses which lead to a full qualification.

All courses offered by Herefordshire Council's Adult and Community Learning Service (ACLS) are funded by government funding allocated to the service via the ESFA, and are therefore subject to ESFA funding rules.

Purpose of Government Supported Community Learning

The principle purpose of this funding is:

- to engage adults and provide the skills and learning they need to equip them for work, an apprenticeship or further learning;
- to develop the skills, confidence and resilience of learners in order to progress towards formal learning or employment, improve their health and wellbeing and or develop stronger communities.

Service Objectives

ACLS has determined to following objectives for the service:

- Focus the Adult and Community Learning funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate in learning, including people on low incomes, those with low skills, and those furthest away from the labour market.
- Widen participation in learning through locally delivered Community Learning, non-regulated and accredited programmes, serving the needs of the diverse communities across Herefordshire.
- Contribute to a wide range of outcomes for individuals and the wider community including; personal development; social development; educational attainment; economic regeneration; improved health and well-being through learning; support adults back into learning; training and employment. This objective will be achieved through community outreach provision delivered at venues local to the learner and across Herefordshire.
- Develop the capacity of voluntary and community sector organisations to deliver effective adult learning that meets the quality requirements of Ofsted through funding and supporting niche provision.
- To work with local partners to deliver a programme of high quality learning, which clearly contributes to the priorities of the Council's Adult and Community Learning Plan 2019-2022 and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Skills Plan, European Investment Strategy and Strategic Economic Plan.

Who is eligible to participate?

Learners must meet the general eligibility criteria regarding residence and accredited learning aims as defined in the ESFA's AEB Funding Rules

Fees and remissions

For Adult Skills accredited learning see Appendix A, pg. 5.

For Community Learning funded provision, key priorities have been introduced to widen adult participation in learning through a targeted approach, promoting equality and diversity, and improving access to learning for particular under-represented groups and those who have not been engaged in learning for a significant period of time. Herefordshire Council focus provision fully on those learners that cannot afford to pay and need learning to move closer to work, formal learning or volunteering. All courses are free if the learner meets the ESFA eligibility requirements and fall into one of the key priority groups:

- Care leavers.
- Carers.
- Learners with a learning difficulty and or disability.
- Mental health service users and adults with mild to moderate mental health problems.
- Learners engaged through the Troubled Families programme (Families First).
- Learners who are homeless, in sheltered living, or in danger of becoming homeless.
- Learners who have a low income (earn less than £16,009.50 per annum), or are in receipt of a state benefit.
- Learners with Refugee status.
- An Asylum Seeker in receipt of the equivalent of an income based state benefit.
- The unwaged dependant of an Asylum Seeker.
- Learners yet to achieve their first full Level 2 qualification.
- Learners yet to achieve a Level 2 in English and/or Maths.
- An offender serving their sentence in the Community.
- An individual who is Economically Inactive because they are unable to claim income related state benefits.

Evidencing Fee Exemption

To be eligible for fee exemption learners provide appropriate written evidence of their current status.

Learner evidence which is inappropriate will result in the learner being charged a Full Fee rate. If the learner is no longer on the course the provider will be required to cover the cost of the Full Fee rate.

Full Fees

Sub-contracted providers have the option to charge fees for Community Learning funded courses, to learners who do not meet one of the key priority groups as defined above.

In this event subcontractors must not enrol a paying learner in place of a learner eligible for funding, and must charge no more than £4.50 per hour of learning.

Payment of Fees

Learner fees where applicable are collected at the time of enrolment. No learner can attend without having paid their fees.

If a course is cancelled and does not run and no suitable alternative is available then a full refund will be given.

In the event of sickness, a full or partial refund will be given on production of a valid doctor's certificate, depending on the number of sessions attended. Applications for a refund should be made in writing and submitted to the relevant sub-contracted provider for approval.

Additional Learner Charges

Sub-contracted Providers must adhere to the hourly fee rates set out above, at £4.50 per learning hour, and should not impose any additional surcharges to meet the general cost of providing courses.

Where practical courses which require specialist course materials and/or resources are delivered, sub-contracted providers have the discretion to charge learners a reasonable amount for specialist course materials in practical courses.

Learner Fee Collection

Sub-contracted Providers are responsible for collecting fees from any learner where the learner must pay.

Recording Learner Fee Payments

Sub-contracted providers must record details of all payments (course fees and other charges) made by the learner relating to Adult Learning provision, and retain an audit trail for fees received and make any fees documentation available for audit as required.

A receipt must be issued to the learner for all payments.

Appendix A

Adult Skills accredited learning Fees policy

All learners will be fully funded or co-funded as defined by the ESFA in the [Adult Education Budget Funding and Performance Management Rules 2022-23](#).

The following extract identifies the general eligibility criteria for Adult Skills (funding model 35):

Provision	19-23 year-olds	24+ Unemployed	24+ Other
English and Maths up to and including Level 2 (Must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement)	Fully funded*	Fully funded*	Fully funded*
Level 2 (excluding English and maths) (First full level 2 must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement)	Fully-funded* (first and full)	Fully funded	Co-funded+
Learning to progress to Level 2	Fully funded^ (up to and including level 1)	Fully funded	Co-funded+
Level 3 (First full level 3 must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement)	Fully funded* (first and full)	Loan-funded	Loan-funded
	Loan-funded** (previously achieved Level 3 or above)		
Traineeship#	Fully funded (including 16- to 24-year-olds##)	N/A	N/A
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learning up to and including Level 2	Co-funded+	Fully funded	Co-funded+
	Fully funded - unemployed		
Learning aims up to and including Level 2, where the learner has already achieved at Level 2 or above	Co-funded+	Fully funded	Co-funded+
	Fully funded - unemployed		
*Must be delivered as one of the English and maths, and/or first full level 2 or first full level 3 qualifications required as part of the legal entitlements.			
^Must be delivered as entry or level one provision from local flexibility.			

Excludes flexible element where funding depends on age and level.

16- to 18-year-old learners must be eligible under the [ESFA's young people's residency requirements](#).

** Availability of loans at level 3 does not replace the legal entitlement to full funding for learners aged 19 to 23 undertaking their first full level 3.

+ Low Wage flexibility may apply, refer to paragraph 151