

## HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING – FEES POLICY 2015-16

Herefordshire Council receives Community Learning (CL) and Adult Skills Budget (ASB) funding from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to support learning in Herefordshire.

Community Learning (CL) – where the learning is designed to help people gain a new skill, re-connect with learning, pursue an interest, prepare for progression to formal courses or learn how to support their children better. There is no requirement for CL learners to progress to other learning or achieve regulated qualifications.

Adult Skills Budget (ASB) – where courses lead to a qualification and/or accreditation.

All courses offered by Herefordshire Council's Adult and Community Learning Service are funded partially or totally by government funding allocated to the service via the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and are therefore subject to SFA funding rules.

### **Purpose of Government Supported Community Learning (BIS – New Challenges, New Chances Dec 2011)**

- Maximise access to community learning for adults, bringing new opportunities and improving lives, whatever people's circumstances.
- Promote social renewal by bringing local communities together to experience the joy of learning and the pride that comes with achievement.
- Maximise the impact of community learning on the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities.

### **Objectives:**

- Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas and people on low incomes with low skills
- Collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot.
- Widen participation and transform people's destinies by supporting progression relevant to personal circumstances, e.g.
  - improved confidence and willingness to engage in learning or self-employment
  - improved digital, financial literacy and/or communication skills
  - parents/carers better equipped to support and encourage their children's learning
  - improved/maintain health and/or social well-being.
- Develop stronger communities, with more self-sufficient, connected and pro-active citizens, leading to:
  - increased volunteering, civic engagement and social integration
  - reduced costs on welfare, health and anti-social behaviour
  - increased online learning and self organised learning
  - the lives of our most troubled families being turned around.
  - develop skills for improving employability

### **Who is eligible to participate?**

Most individuals who want to take part in learning will be eligible for funding if:-

- 1) they are a citizen of the United Kingdom and Islands, have Right of Abode (the right to live permanently in the United Kingdom without any immigration restrictions), or are a citizen of a country that is within the European Economic Area (EEA).

- 2) they have been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom and Islands or the European Union (EU) or the European Economic Area (EEA); continuously for at least the previous three years on the first day of learning; and
- 3) the learning is taking place in England.

Other individuals could be eligible who do not meet the above list.

The above information has been taken from the Funding Rules 2015 – 2016 document as issued by the Skills Funding Agency

## Fee policy and remissions

### Community Learning (CL) courses

The cost of these courses has been set at £4.50 per learning hour however; learners in receipt of certain state benefits can enrol on these courses and pay £1.50 per learning hour.

Eligibility for discounted course fees will be subject to the learner providing proof of means tested benefits.

### Refund Procedure

Learners should note that fees should be paid at the time of enrolment and are not normally refundable.

If a course is cancelled 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 provider for approval.

### Non-Payment of Fees

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

### Skills for Independent Living courses

These courses are free to the following key target groups, and are specifically aimed at increasing their independence:

- Learners who are unemployed.
- Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including mental health issues.
- Learners who are homeless, or in danger of becoming homeless, or living in sheltered accommodation.
- Learners aged 19 or over who are leaving care.
- Learners who are carers or family of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including mental health issues.
- Learners yet to achieve a prior level of attainment at full level 2 or above (i.e. 5 GCSEs grade C or above).
- Learners with pre-entry level English and Maths skills (only as progression onto an accredited qualification)

- Learners who are engaged within the troubled families programme, known as Families First<sup>1</sup> in Herefordshire.

Furthermore, In 2015/16 the following two categories have been identified as key priorities:

- Learners who wish to improve their parenting skills (Wider Family Learning (WFL) learning aims only).
- Learners from areas identified as local areas of deprivation<sup>2</sup>, who are on low income (below £16,000) and/or in receipt of state benefits.

All delivery remains within the funding rules dictated by your existing contracts and the Skills Funding Agency Funding Rules 2015/16<sup>3</sup>.

These courses will be clearly identified on any promotional flyers or literature.

### **Adult Skills Budget (Qualifications/accredited courses)**

Only learners aged 19+ on the 31 August 2015 can access the Adult Skills Budget courses (ASB)

### **Maths and English**

Maths and English courses for adults are free of charge, and are ideal in helping to increase your confidence and skills.

You may take an English and/or Maths qualification up to Level 2 if you do not currently hold a GCSE grade C or above in the appropriate subject. If you attained a Maths and/or English qualification but can no longer use these skills you will also be eligible to attend these courses

### **Employment Skills**

Would you like to learn new skills which may improve your chances of finding employment?

If you are currently unemployed and in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), Employment Support Allowance -work related activity group (ESA WRAG), Universal Credit, or in receipt of any other state benefit, and wish to study a course aimed at improving your employment skills, you can study for free (subject to producing evidence of your benefit).

If you are currently in paid employment you may still be eligible to attend these courses. To see if you qualify please contact *To be agreed*.

For details of available courses please visit [www.learnherefordshire.co.uk](http://www.learnherefordshire.co.uk)

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<sup>1</sup> [Families First in Herefordshire](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Deprivation in Herefordshire](#)

<sup>3</sup> [SFA Funding Rules 2015/16](#)