

	Lifelong Learning and Skills	Staff Guidance	Issue Date:	August 2021
			Review cycle:	Annually
		Learners Fee Policy	Date of last review:	August 2023
			Issued by:	Eleanor Churchward Head of LLS
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Sheffield City Council

Lifelong Learning and Skills

Education/Learning Fees

Fee Waivers

August 2023 to July 2024

1. Purpose:

To describe the fees policy relating to courses organised by LLSE which are funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA), or any other funding bodies that require a formal policy in relation to this subject.

LLSE is obliged by the ESFA and SYMCA to charge fees for its adult learning provision but will endeavour to hold fees at a level that allows those who are most in need to access adult learning. i.e. those adults who are in work, but are disadvantaged, have low skills levels and are most in need of access to learning to improve their life chances and their prospects in employment.

2. Scope:

All courses delivered by LLSE utilising the funding assigned for the Adult Education Budget (AEB), Apprenticeships, Advanced Learner Loan and Full Cost courses.

LLSE must comply with the ESFA and SYMCA guidance linked to the Adult Education Budget (AEB) which forms the grant funding that Family and Community Learning (FACES) receives. Learners' eligibility and funding is defined in the Funding Rules which can be found on the following websites:

[ESFA funded adult education budget: funding rules 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/esfa-funded-adult-education-budget-funding-rules-2023-to-2024)
(www.gov.uk)

[Adult Education Budget provider information - South Yorkshire MCA \(southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk/adult-education-budget-provider-information)

Our fees policy is based on a principle set out by the Government that **'those who are able to pay should do so'**, and that funding should be available to those that need it the most. Many of our learning courses allow learners to access courses free of charge, or at a discounted rate in line with the principles set out within the funding rules.

To ensure that it's learning offer is accessible to the greatest number of people, LLSE has developed its own local policy on, and criteria for, fee reduction and delivery of non-fee bearing opportunities. Any income generated from fees is used to fund more courses, support the most vulnerable, and innovative growth. The fee policy is based on a rate comparable to other local providers who run similar courses.

3. Responsibilities:

All staff involved with the administration, management and delivery of courses delivered by LLSE.

4. Funding and Tuition Fees Statement for 2023/2024:

Adult Learners (19 years and over on August 31st at the start of the academic year) are eligible to pay a fee unless covered by fee reduction (concession) or fee waiver.

- Many learners will be able to access courses free of charge. These courses are paid for with grants received from Central Government.
- Fee level charges will be set according to the resources and staffing requirements for the individual course and advertised in the course brochure.
- There may be instances where a class may be cancelled due to low numbers, but the service may offer the opportunity to learners that an increase in fees may enable the class to run.
- Learners who are eligible for co-funding as specified by the Funding Rules will be funded at a rate of 50% with a maximum of the other 50% being paid by the learner or employer. At the discretion of LLSE, some courses may be charged at less than 50% for the learner.
- On co-funded courses where fees are charged, these represent only a proportion of the full cost of the course, with the remainder being paid for with grants from Central Government.
- Eligible learners may apply for a concession or financial support to help meet the fees for their course.
- LLSE operates 3 fee rates:
 - Full fee
 - Concessionary fee
 - Fee waiver
- Learning at level 3 or above may or may not be selected from the funded Lifetime Skills Guarantee (LSG) – where the course is part of the LSG list, a learner must not already hold a level 3 qualification to receive this as a funded course (refer to funding rules).
- Learners aged 19+ joining a qualification course at Level 3 or above may not be eligible for grant funding but may be eligible to apply for an Advanced Learning Loan to cover the cost of their course
- Adult learners who are on an income-based benefit (see point 16) or are employed/self-employed earning an annual gross salary of £20,319, will not pay course fees on production of the required evidence.
- Learners who do not meet funding eligibility criteria will pay the full cost of the course fee.

5. Evidence for fee waiver

Learners entitled to fee waiver will be asked to bring relevant proof when they enrol on the programme.

6. Level of Government Contribution for Academic Year 2023/2024:

For 19- to 23-year-olds		
Provision	Notes and eligibility	Funding
English and maths up to and including level 2.	Must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement qualifications	Fully funded
Essential digital skills and digital functional skills qualifications up to and including level 1.	Must be delivered as part of the digital legal entitlement qualifications	Fully funded
First full level 2 (excluding English & maths and Digital).	First full level 2 must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement qualifications. Level 2 provision from the local flexibility offer will not be funded for 19 to 23-year-olds who do not have a first full level 2. See local flexibility and legal entitlement section,	Fully funded
Level 3 legal entitlement (learners first full Level 3).	First full level 3 must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement qualifications.	Fully funded
Learning aims to progress to a full level 2 – up to and including level 1.	Must be delivered as entry or level 1 provision from local flexibility.	Fully funded

For 19- to 23-year-olds		
Provision	Notes and eligibility	Funding
Learning aims up to and including level 2, where the learner has already achieved a first full level 2 or above	For those who meet the unemployed criteria or who are in receipt of a low wage.	Fully Funded
Learning aims up to and including Level 2, where the learner has already achieved a first full level 2, or above	For those who do not meet the definition of unemployed or do not meet the eligibility criteria for learners in receipt of low wage	Co-Funded
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learning up to and including Level 2.	For those who meet the unemployed criteria or who are in receipt of a low wage.	Fully funded
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learning up to and including Level 2.	For those who meet the definition of unemployed or meet the eligibility criteria for learners in receipt of low wage	Fully funded
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learning up to and including level 2.	For those who do not meet the definition of unemployed or do not meet the eligibility criteria for learners in receipt of low wage.	Fully funded
Continuing Traineeship (16- to 24-year-olds).	16–18-year-old continuing learners must be eligible under the ESFA's young people's residency requirements. Excluding the flexible elements where funding depends on age and level	Fully funded

For 24+ year olds

A learner is classed as being 24+ for funding purposes if they have turned 24 by the first day of learning.

Provision	Notes	Funding
English and maths for those aged 19 and over, up to and including level 2.	Must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement qualifications.	Fully funded
Essential digital skills and digital functional skills qualifications up to and including level 1.	Must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement qualifications.	Fully funded
Full level 2 (excluding English and maths)	For those eligible through unemployed or in receipt of a low wage.	Fully funded
	For those who do not meet the definition of unemployed or do not meet the eligibility criteria for learners in receipt of low wage.	Co-funded
Learning to progress to level 2.	For those eligible for their first full level 2 as they meet the unemployed criteria or who are in receipt of low wage	Fully funded
	For those who do not meet the definition of unemployed or do not meet the eligibility criteria for learners in receipt of low wage.	Co-funded
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learning up to and including level 2	For those who meet the unemployed criteria or who are in receipt of a low wage.	Fully funded

For 24+ year olds		
A learner is classed as being 24+ for funding purposes if they have turned 24 by the first day of learning.		
Provision	Notes	Funding
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learning up to and including level 2	For those who do not meet the definition of unemployed or do not meet the eligibility criteria for learners in receipt of low wage.	Fully funded
Learning aims up to and including level 2, where the learner has already achieved a first full level 2, or above.	For those eligible through unemployed or who are in receipt of a low wage.	Fully funded
	For those who do not meet the definition of unemployed or do not meet the eligibility criteria for learners in receipt of low wage.	Co-funded
Learning aims up to and including Level 2, where the learner has not achieved a first full Level 2, or above local flexibility and legal entitlements	For those eligible through unemployed or who are in receipt of a low wage	Fully funded
	For those who do not meet the definition of unemployed or do not meet the eligibility criteria for learners in receipt of a low wage	Co-funded

7. Funded courses that are free at point of entry

- Functional Skills English and Maths / Essential Digital Skills – are free to all who qualify for legal entitlement.
- Family Literacy (English), Languages and Numeracy (Maths) / Family Learning – are free to all.
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) below Level 2 – are subject to the legal entitlement table above.

8. Community Learning Course Fees (FACES)

Fees for non-accredited community courses delivered by FACES will use SYMCA guidance as a means of determining which learners are fully funded, determined by AEB funding rules. Where learners may not be fully funded LLSE has the discretion to offer to waive the fee. Full details of possible reasons for fee waiver are listed on enrolment forms. If no fee waiver is suitable then learners will be expected to pay the required fees.

Where a fee waiver (see paragraph 4) or legal entitlement (see paragraph 6) is not in place, the course fees will be as follows:

- £2.50 per hour

8.1. Family Learning

Non-accredited Family Learning courses enable learners to develop new skills and raise aspirations for an entire family. These courses include English and Maths/STEM, Digital, Employability, and Health and Wellbeing. Family Learning classes are free at the point of entry with pathways for progression to other learning.

9. Study Programme and Traineeship

Learners eligible for a Study Programme or Traineeship (16-24 year olds) will be fully funded and not charged a fee.

10. Apprenticeships

No fee is charged to learners undertaking an Apprenticeship. Employer contributions will be charged in line with ESFA guidance and the levy/non levy government policy considering market rates.

11. Adult Education Budget (AEB)

Adult learners are subject to ESFA and SYMCA eligibility criteria at enrolment which determines LLS funding. Prior to enrolment, learners will be informed at the IAG stage, whether or not they are subject to fee payment.

Where courses are co-funded under ESFA and SYMCA guidance, LLSE as a provider has the discretion to offer to waive the fee. Full details of possible reasons for fee waiver (see paragraph 4) are listed on enrolment forms and

detailed within this fees policy (see paragraph 6). If no fee waiver is suitable then learners will be expected to pay the required fees.

12. Advanced Learning Loan

Learners who are 19+ and enrolling on a Level 3 qualification and are required to pay fees may wish to take out a government provided Advanced Learner Loan. Fees will be set at funding rates advised by the ESFA. We reserve the right to set some fees lower than advised rates to consider local market conditions.

13. Full Cost

Full cost programmes are not government funded. Fees set for these courses are at a competitive market rate determined by LLSE. There is no concessionary fee on full cost classes. Minimum numbers of learners on courses will apply to ensure these courses remain financially viable.

14. Fee Waiver:

A fee waiver will only be given where individuals can provide evidence of their situation prior to the start of their course. Where this is not supplied, the course fee will apply. A fee waiver can only be given to a learner who meets the ESFA eligibility criteria for access to public funding.

Fee waivers do not apply to full cost programmes or where learners are not eligible for one of the governments' funded legal entitlements (see funding rules).

Adult learners enrolled on courses funded by the Adult Education Budget (AEB) may be subject to a fee waiver if in receipt of income-based state benefit (see para 15 below).

In exceptional circumstances an individual fee waiver for AEB may be granted. This will be requested by email within 7 days of enrolment to the FACES Service Manager at FACES@sheffield.gov.uk with a copy email to cypd.lse.operations@sheffield.gov.uk. You will provide details of the learner, an outline of their exceptional circumstance, and financial restrictions that exclude them from attending the course. A response will be given within 3 days.

15. Active Benefits

- Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) including those receiving National Insurance credits only.

- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit, and their take-home pay as recorded on their Universal Credit statement (disregarding benefits) is less than £617 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £988 a month (learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner)
- are released on temporary licence, studying outside a prison environment, and not funded by the Ministry of Justice

16. Other income related state benefits

- Income Support
- Incapacity Benefit (related to low income)
- Housing Benefit (related to Universal Credit)
- Council Tax Benefit (subject to low-income household threshold)
- Pension Credit (not savings credit)
- Carers Allowance

To be eligible for fee waiver learners must provide appropriate evidence at the enrolment session or first teaching session. Proof of entitlement must be current and /or dated within the last 3 months and cover the period of learning.

17. Payments

Fees are due at the start of each course. Fees can be paid:

- In full at enrolment
- In three equal instalments over the length of the course
- If your employer is paying for your course, you must provide a letter of confirmation on letter-headed paper from your employer

Learners will be asked to sign a disclaimer stating that if they do not attend an exam for which they have agreed to be entered they may be charged the entry fee.