

Pound Plus and Community Learning Fee Policy 2019-20

Context

The Adult Skills and Learning service aims to maximise the participation and learning impact gained from the Community Learning grant and to ensure equality of access and participation. Generating additional income and revenue is central to the objective of driving up participation in community learning within a very constrained public funding environment. 'Pound plus' is a term that describes how learning providers can show how they are maximising the value of public investment. Pound plus refers to additional income (and savings) generated by providers over and above core income from Government's Community Learning funding. This includes income generated through course fees, financial sponsorship, access to accommodation made available at no or reduced cost, the use of volunteer workers, donations of equipment or consumable items, and access to other funding sources or grants. 'Pound plus' allows providers to show that the initial investment of public funding in community learning has a crucial and positive leverage value that can be expressed as a multiplying factor for the initial public funding investment. In other words, it enables them to evidence that for every one pound of public funding investment a further 'x' pounds have been generated to extend reach, provision and impact – sums that might or would not be possible without the initial investment.

Pound Plus has been systematically incorporated into LASALs financial strategy. The main elements of pound plus are:

- Income generation: course fees, lettings and other grants;
- contributions (including those 'in kind') from the council and community partners; and
- the use of volunteers

Income Generation

Income generated subsidises targeted courses which are free. It supports the development of new curriculum opportunities to meet the needs of priority groups and most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. It also supports adult learning delivery in smaller groups and in priority outreach venues which are less cost effective but important for widening participation.

Course Fees

Community Learning course fees are set at a level which aims to make learning affordable and accessible to all. Following several years of increasing course fees and decreasing levels of participation the decision was made in 2015 to remove means testing and bring fees down to an affordable level for all and remove the administrative burden of means testing. This reversed declining participation levels and has nearly eliminated the problem of cancelling course due to low numbers. Course cancellations were costly in terms of compensation payments to tutors, administration or enrolments and refunds and demoralising to staff and prospective learners.

In 2019-20 Course fees for the open access programme of Community Learning courses will be £2 per hour. In 2018-19 Community Learning Course Fees generated £98,006

Grant Income

The service is successful in securing grant income for a range of services which complement and support the programme of learning and support to students.

In 2018-19 £189,250 of additional grant income was generated, that would not have been possible without the Community Learning infrastructure.

| Grant | £ |
|--|---------|
| REMIT Mental Health Programme | £54,574 |
| Syrian Refugees resettlement Scheme | £12,273 |
| Migrant Impact Fund – Real English in Action | £10,200 |
| Migrant Impact Fund – Asylum Seekers English | £28,000 |
| Universal Credit Digital Champions | £10,345 |
| Moneywise Plus | £12,558 |
| English at Work | £35,000 |
| Fosse Arts (LCC contribution) | £26,300 |
| | |

In addition to the costs of direct delivery several of these projects made a contribution of around 10% to management and overhead costs which supports the sustainability of the service as a whole.

Capital investment by Leicester City Council – The council invested in the delivery of adult learning in 2018-19 through its capital programme to improve Leicester Adult Education College. In 2019-20 the council plans to invest £500K in the creation of a new, additional Adult Learning Hub in Beaumont Leys.

Traded Services

The service earns additional income from traded services such as the delivery of courses which are not subsidised by the ESFA. From 2019-20 these courses will be charged at either a 'non-profit rate' for activity which furthers the service's aims and objectives or a commercial rate.

- Non-profit - £75 per hour + additional course specific costs
- Commercial - £90 per hour + additional course specific costs

The service also derives income from the letting of facilities at the Adult Education College on both long term and ad-hoc basis. Current regular users / tenants include Connexions, Open University, Leicester Vaughan College, Just the Tonic Comedy Club and Kings Church. This income contributes to the staffing, running costs and maintenance of the Adult Education College.

Contributions in kind from the council and community partners

Partnership activity is an important mechanism for generating pound plus. The overall level of resources available to community learning is enhanced because partners are contributing additional skills and resources over and above that provided by LASALS.

The council and community partners contribute in kind to the development and delivery of Adult Learning across the city. Some of this is very hard to quantify, for example, Re-enablement officers

supporting disabled learners to access and sustain learning programmes; Library staff promoting adult learning, providing information and encouragement to the public or voluntary organisations referring people into courses. This eco-system of public sector community networks and support systems has been put under significant strain or just disappeared as a consequence of austerity driven funding cuts in recent years and its loss is keenly felt.

Another key contribution in kind is the use of space, particularly space in schools for Family Learning. In 2018 we delivered 1880 hours of Family Learning and 1156 hours of other provision in community partner venues

Total savings from venues provided by partners in 2018-19 was £26413 (@ £8.70 per hr indicative rate)

The use of volunteers

Volunteers are used to complement the services provided by employees. For example, to support the Real English in Action Project, where students go out and about in the city in small groups to practice their spoken English. The lunchtime lecture series is provided on a voluntary basis by research students from Leicester University and provides a valuable enrichment activity for learners, introducing them to a wide range of topics and potential areas of further study. Learners also contribute to the governance of the service by volunteering on student councils and the Learner Forum. In 2018-19 approximately 110 hours of volunteering (valued at £11 per hour) equates to £1210

Pound Plus calculation

On this basis around £315,000 of pound plus will have been generated in 2018-19, a 9% dividend.

This is used to keep our community learning fees very low. We have demonstrated that this maximises participation from the grant provided and widens participation without the stigma and administrative burden of means testing. In 2019-20 Community Learning fees will be just £2 per hour.

In addition, Community Learning courses specifically targeted at priority groups who most need, but can least afford, community learning have full fee remission and are free. In 2019-20 these groups will include:

- Parents and carers on Family Learning provision
- Learners on the REMIT Mental Health Programme
- Unemployed people seeking support into work
- Ex-offenders on the 'Out for Good' programme
- Older people in supported housing and care homes on the 'Feel Good' Programme
- People without basic digital skills
- Young people (under 25) who have been in or are leaving care and are currently not in education or employment.

The Community Learning Grant and pound plus income also allows us to maintain provision in community venues, often with smaller group sizes, to encourage widening participation.

Community Learning: Pound Plus and Local Fee Remission Policy –

Statement for the website, brochure and poster

The Adult Skills and Learning Service is largely funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency through the Community Learning grant. As a result of this core funding, we are able to generate additional income from a wide variety of sources. This income, known as 'pound plus' includes contributions from the council, external grants, donations, profits from the café, lettings of classrooms and halls and course fees.

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The Community Learning Grant and pound plus income also allows us to maintain provision in community venues, often with smaller group sizes, to encourage widening participation. In 2019-20 pound plus will be used to support the launch of the new Bishopdale Adult Learning Hub in Beaumont Leys by providing free taster sessions and courses for local people.