

# **The Learning and Skills Service**

## **Fees Remission Policy 2025-26**

## **LOCAL FEE REMISSION POLICY 2025 – 2026**

The Learning and Skills Service at Sunderland City Council receives funding from the North East Combined Authority (North East CA) to deliver Adult Skills Funding (ASF). Provision is delivered by subcontracted training providers via three distinct funding streams:

- Tailored Learning – where the learning is designed to widen adult participation in learning through a targeted approach.
- Accredited courses– which lead to a full qualification
- Free Course For Jobs

All courses offered by The Learning and Skills Service are subject to The North East Combined Authority funding rules.

The principal 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 to progress towards formal learning or employment, improve their health and wellbeing and or develop stronger communities.

### **Service Objectives:**

- support unemployed and low-skilled people improve skills and confidence to prepare them for training or employment.
- provide both a universal and targeted offer to support learning where needs are greatest.
- improve essential skills for learners to progress to further learning, paid/unpaid work, and involvement in the community.
- improve recruitment of learners from equality groups e.g. those with learning difficulties and disabilities; males; minority ethnic groups; unemployed 19-25-year olds.
- provide opportunities for Sunderland residents to improve digital skills.
- support community development to build capacity and resilience in the voluntary sector to enable the population to help stay fit and active and create progression routes for those who want to move to more formal learning and employment
- To work with local partners to deliver a programme of high-quality learning, which clearly contributes to the priorities of the
  - Council's City Plan 2019 – 30
  - North East Local Enterprise Partnership – Strategic Economic Plan
  - Sunderland Partnership – Joint Health and Wellbeing Plan

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

Learners must meet the general eligibility criteria regarding residence and accredited learning aims as defined in the North East CA Adult Skills Funding Rules.

### **Fees and Remissions**

## Accredited Learning Provision

North East CA funded accredited learning includes support for 4 legal entitlements to full funding for eligible adult learners. These are:

- English and maths, up to and including level 2, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade 4 /A\* - C, or higher AND/PR
- first full qualification at level 2 for individuals aged 19 to 23, and/or
- first full qualification at level 3 for individuals aged 19 to 23
- Essential digital skills qualifications (EDSQs) or Digital Functional Skills qualifications (FSQs) up to and including level 1, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have digital skills assessed at below level 1

## Tailored Learning Provision

The primary purpose of tailored learning is to support learners into employment and to progress to further learning, in line with the overall purpose of the ASF. It will, however, also support wider outcomes including using it to improve health and wellbeing, equip parents/carers to support their child's learning and develop stronger communities.

The Learning and Skills Service focus provision fully on those learners that cannot afford to pay and need learning to move closer to work, formal learning or volunteering and 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.

All Tailored learning courses are funded if the learner meets the North East CA eligibility requirements.

## Evidencing Fee Exemption

To be eligible for fee exemption subcontractors must ensure eligibility criteria is checked and enrolment form completed accordingly for each learner.

**Low wage eligibility** – at induction stage sub-contractors must ensure they see evidence of the learner's gross annual wages and record type of evidence seen on enrolment form. This could be a wage slip or a Universal Credit statement within 3 months of the learner's learning start date, or a current employment contract which states gross monthly/annual wages. If the learner is unable/unwilling to present evidence they should be charged accordingly for attending the course.

## Fees

Sub-contracted providers have the option to charge fees for Tailored 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 £5.00 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 must 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 training providers are required to adhere to the hourly fee rates set out above at £5.00 per learning hour and should not impose any additional surcharges to meet the general cost of providing courses.

### **Learner Fee Collection**

Sub –contracted providers are responsible for collecting fees from all eligible learners.

Fee information should be accurately identified on the enrolment form.

The enrolment form will be used to calculate fees owed to The Learning and Skills Service.

At the end of the academic year the council will invoice sub-contracted training providers for the Learner Fees amount.

The Learning and Skills Service will use the Learner Fees monies to support ongoing delivery of subsequent Adult Learning provision.

### **Recording Learner Fee Payments**

Sub-contracted training providers must record details of all payments (course fees and other charges) made by the learner to the provider relating to Adult Learning provision.

Sub-contracted training provider must issue a receipt to the learner for all payments made by the learner.

Sub-contracted training providers must retain an audit trail for fees received and should make any fees documentation available for audit as required.

### **Employer Contribution to Tailored Learning**

Tailored Learning can be delivered in the workplace. A contribution to the cost of the Tailored Learning provision may be made by the employer.

Where Tailored Learning is delivered in conjunction with an employer all contributions to the cost of the programme should be recorded. This contribution can be direct, such as financial or indirect such as providing resources, equipment, or other forms of support.

Employer contributions should be agreed with the employer depending on the course. Subcontractors should refer to their own Fee Remission Policy and advise The Learning and Skills Service of any employer contributions.

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