



Pounds Plus and Community Learning Fees Policy for 2020 – 21

Introduction and Definition

Adult Education Wolverhampton (AEW) is in receipt of Community Learning Funding from the West Midlands Combined Authority. AEW is required to lever-in additional funding through, for example, fee income, sponsorship, grants, funding from other government departments and/or commercial sales. This approach is known as 'Pounds Plus'.

The policy objective is to widen participation in learning by ensuring as much funding as possible is targeted at enhancing opportunities for those experiencing social and/or economic disadvantage.

Purpose of Community Learning Funding for 2020-21

Adult Education Wolverhampton will plan and deliver a mix of provision that responds effectively to local needs and develops skills, confidence, motivation and resilience of adults for different ages and backgrounds to:

- Progress towards formal learning or employment and/or
- Improve their health and well-being, including mental health and/or
- Develop stronger communities

The Service will performance manage this offer against an outcomes framework based around target groups for provision such as:

- People furthest away from work
- People in very low paid work
- People with English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) needs
- Mental health service users
- Older people (50+)
- People with learning difficulties and disabilities

In Wolverhampton the Community Learning Funding aims to contribute to the following key priorities:

- Engage communities and promote our local priorities. A key priority will be re-training residents who have been furloughed or made redundant due to COVID-19 and ensuring they have the up-to-date skills to meet the changing needs of employers such as digital skills for home learning and working
- Improvement in the health, and particularly the mental health needs of all residents and tackling issues of increasing social isolation

- Targeted provision to engage priority groups including BAME and residents who may have experienced a disproportionately higher impact due to COVID-19.
- Targeted provision to engage residents with disabilities, those with no and low qualifications and those employed on a low wage including health and care workers
- Targeted provision to engage young people who are currently not in education or employment or have been in care or are leaving care
- Targeted provision to improve progression and ensuring there is a continuum of support to move people from basic skills through to level 3+ and into employment
- Targeted provision that continues to promote the benefits of learning meeting the need for social distancing e.g. blended and online learning
- Targeted provision to support those residents least able to pay and particularly those whose finances and employment may have been adversely affected by COVID-19
- Targeted Family Learning provision to engage and progress disadvantaged families and groups from priority neighbourhoods and to support digital inclusion and active citizenship.
- Develop the English language skills of residents who are new to ESOL in areas of highest need, promoting social cohesion and enabling their integration in the life of the City. Train volunteers to effectively support those with ESOL needs, so as to enhance informal learning opportunities and promote social integration activities in the community.

The national, regional and local priorities have led Adult Education Wolverhampton to develop the following priorities and delivery plan for its Community Learning Funding:

Priority groups include:

- Disadvantaged groups living in the priority wards of Bilston East, Bushbury South and Lowhill, East Park, Ettingshall, Heath Town and St. Peter's
- People from a BAME background
- People who are unemployed and low skilled
- People with disabilities
- Older people
- Vulnerable people
- Families with multiple disadvantage factors
- Families and individuals identified by Public Health as being from the top 20 most deprived streets in Wolverhampton

AEW is supported in its planning and delivery by well-developed, productive partnerships internally within the Council and externally with a range of public, private and third sector organisations, including City of Wolverhampton College, Wolverhampton University, Job Centre Plus, the Refugee and Migrant Centre and the Learning Platform. Schools, Children's Centres and Strengthening Family Hubs are particularly valuable in supporting the co-design and delivery of Family Learning courses. We will plan our provision against the following six intents and monitor and evaluate against the eighteen outcomes listed:

1. Improved health and wellbeing
 - Improved or maintained physical health
 - Improved or maintained mental health
 - Improved or maintained wellbeing
2. Increased integration
 - Reduction in isolation
 - Increase in integration
 - Strengthened communities

3. Prepared towards employment
 - Progression towards work
 - Gained a job or a better job
 - Progression to a higher level of study

4. Improved active citizenship
 - Increased participation in cultural opportunities
 - Production, exhibition or sale of a creative product
 - Contribution to community or regional culture

5. Improved confidence/resilience
 - Improved confidence
 - Improved critical thinking and creative thinking
 - Improved resilience

6. Developed key life skills
 - Improved parenting skills
 - Progression towards independent living
 - Increased capacity to support child's learning.

Alongside the curriculum intent the Service will:

- demonstrate increased cost efficiency and effectiveness by increasing enrolments and widening participation
- continue to develop community partnerships to strengthen its reach to priority groups

Pounds Plus

The Service will deploy the following approaches to achieve a positive Pounds Plus contribution to Community Learning:

- Room rental in spaces not utilised for AEW learning purposes, this will maximise building utilisation and spread costs for facilities and utilities costs.
- Support Learning Clubs, which are self-funded learning groups that are charged by AEW for marketing, administration, room usage, technician and facilities services. In addition, students attending Learning Clubs are charged a termly fee by AEW for health and safety, safeguarding and other support services.
- Use of volunteers for marketing and enrolment events
- Receiving income from full cost recovery courses
- Receiving income from other funding sources such as the ESOL Integration Fund
- Maximising curriculum effectiveness and efficiency through planning pathways from engaging residents from priority groups through to level 2 and 3, with Community Learning episodes strategically placed to bridge gaps and consolidate learning.

Community Learning Fees

The Council fees and charges arrangements are approved annually by the Cabinet Resources Panel.

In 2020-21 it was approved that the:

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Standard Community Learning Fee would be £4.20 per hour

*Concession Fee would be £16.00 per course

In addition, the Service will provide courses attracting no fees to stimulate engagement with priority residents and priority communities as and when required.

*Eligibility for a concession would follow the WMCA funding rules for reduced fees and would include those residents who are unemployed and low waged.