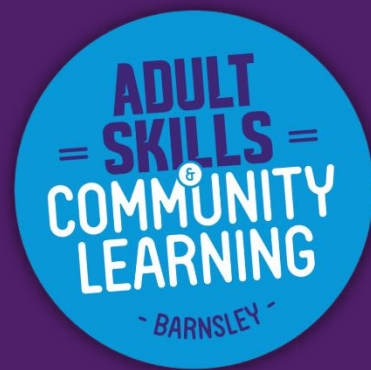


Adult Skills and Community Learning Service

Fees Policy

Academic Year 2024-25



**Barnsley – the place
of possibilities.**



**Education & Skills
Funding Agency**



BARNSELY
Metropolitan Borough Council

Context

The Adult Skills & Community Learning Service (ASCL) is a direct provider of Adult Community Education. It is funded predominantly through South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority's (SYMCA) Adult Skills Fund with additional funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the fees it generates from the minority of participating learners whose personal circumstances mean they pay a fee.

ASCL is obliged by its funders to limit the use of the public subsidy provided via the funding received from them to courses which engage adults and provide the skills and learning they need to equip them for work, an apprenticeship or further learning.

For such eligible courses the funders then expect that a notional 50% contribution to each total course fee for adults aged 19+ studying at level 2 or below should be collected, as a fee, from individuals or employers except in cases, for example in priority skill areas or for identified groups of individuals, where it identifies fee remission to be appropriate. In these cases, the funders will meet the full cost of the learning programme. Young adults aged 19-23 years studying at all levels are subject to the same criteria but are more likely, depending on their level of prior attainment, to be eligible for full fee remission and therefore not pay a fee when undertaking learning for skills development or qualification acquisition.

Learning for qualifications acquisition at level 3 or above can be funded through an ESFA centrally administered loans fund unless the learner is eligible to access their legal entitlement at this level. Some level 3 qualifications linked to priority skill areas are fully funded from the Free Course for Jobs Fund but as a provider Barnsley Adult Skills and Community Learning Service does not have access to this allocation.

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

In developing this policy the service has committed to stay true to its purpose of **empowering adults, families and communities to overcome barriers, challenge disadvantage and achieve their potential through learning, skills development and work.**

To balance the requirements of national policy, contract requirements and its own core purpose the Service will

- Provide some types of learning through non-fee bearing programmes that are free of charge to learners.
- Set fees in an open and transparent way, based on the number of guided learning hours delivered, and apply this across the Service.
- Ensure that course fees are clearly promoted and that information about fee remissions and reductions are made available to service users in an appropriate manner.
- Provide clear and consistent guidelines for staff and service users.

Scope

All courses delivered by ASCL utilising the funding assigned for the Adult Skills Fund (ASF).

ASCL must comply with the SYMCA and ESFA guidance linked to the provision of adult education. Learners' eligibility and funding is defined in the relevant Funding Rules which can be found here:

https://southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk/Explore_AEB-Provider-info

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advanced-learner-loans-funding-rules-2023-to-2024/advanced-learner-loans-funding-rules-2023-to-2024>

General Principles

- **Adult Learners (19 years or older on 31 August 2024) are eligible to pay a fee unless covered by the fee remission or fee reduction categories detailed in this policy.**
- **Learners under the age of 19 may access learning provision at the discretion of the Service Manager and the Head of Service who will also advise on any fee that may be payable.**
- **Learners who do not meet the relevant eligibility criteria will pay the full cost of the course fee which will include, where appropriate, the funded contribution in addition to the assumed learner contribution.**

Non-Fee Bearing Courses

The following courses will continue to be free at the point of delivery:

- Courses that help parents and carers to support their children's learning and development.
- **First Step** accredited courses (maximum 15 guided learning hours) that are designed to re-engage adults who have no or very low qualifications into learning and are intended to lead to longer qualifications and develop work related skills.
- Targeted provision to engage specific cohorts into further learning or address disadvantage and deprivation for identified individuals and communities.
- Short engagement activities (maximum 6 guided learning hours) that are designed to introduce learning and encourage individuals to progress into further learning.

Fee Structure

Unless otherwise stated course fees will include examination charges however any additional costs as a result of a need to re-sit any examinations will incur additional charges to the respective candidate.

In some circumstances learners may be asked to contribute to the costs of course materials. These costs will be discussed with learners prior to their enrolment on the course.

The hourly rates used to calculate course fees will be £3.00 per guided learning hour where the public subsidy is applicable and £6.00 per guided learning hour where it is not. These rates do not apply to accredited level 3 programmes or courses advertised as "Full Cost" when the rate will be fixed by the relevant manager.

Fee Remission and Fee Reduction

Fee remission and fee reduction does not apply to neither level 3 accredited programmes nor courses advertised as “Full Cost”.

Learners who are eligible for fee remission or reduction may be required to pay for accreditation if attendance on the course is lower than 90% or they fail to attend an exam without good reason.

Fee remission or fee reduction will only be given where individuals can provide evidence of their situation prior to the start of the course. Where this is not available, the course fee will apply.

Fee remission and fee reduction can only be given to learners who meet the eligibility criteria for access to public funding.

Fee Remission

Categories for fee remission are shown in the table below.

Co-funded indicates the £3.00 hourly rate indicated above.

The reference to low waged refers to an annual gross salary of £23,400.00. This will support adults in low paid employment who want to progress in work and in their chosen career. Proof of earning must be provided and will be retained as evidence.

Additionally, as a provider we have opted to use our discretion and fund learners who are:

- employed and their take-home pay (disregarding UC payments and other 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) and
- want to be employed or progress into more sustainable employment and where we identify that the learning being undertaken is directly relevant to their employment prospects.

Anyone who is entitled to full fee remission cannot be charged any additional costs related to the mandatory requirements of the qualification they are undertaking.

Provision	19-23 years old	24+ year olds Unemployed or Low Waged	24+ year olds
English and maths, up to and including level 2 (must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement)	Fully funded	Fully funded	Fully funded
Essential Digital Skills Qualifications up to and including level 1 (must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement)	Fully funded	Fully funded	Fully funded
First Full Level 2 (excluding English and maths. First full level 2 must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement)	Fully funded (first and full)	Fully funded	Co-funded.
Level 3 legal entitlement (learners first full level 3)	Fully funded	N/A	N/A
Level 3 Advanced Learning Loans (a learner has already achieved a full level 3)	Loan-funded	Loan-funded	Loan-funded
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learning up to and including level 2	Fully funded	Fully funded	Fully funded
Learning aim to progress to first full level 2 – up to and including level 1. (Local flexibility)	Fully funded if unemployed or in receipt of low wage	Fully funded	Co-funded
Learning aims up to and including level 2, where the Learner has already achieved a first full level 2 or above (Local flexibility and legal entitlements)	Co-funded or	Fully funded	Co-funded
	Fully funded if unemployed or in receipt of a low wage		
Learning aims up to and including level 2, where the Learner has not already achieved a first full level 2 or above.	N/A	Fully funded	Co-funded

Fee Reduction

We continue to use our local discretion to offer a 50% fee reduction for those learners not eligible for full fee remission.

Fee reduction will apply to the course fee only. Additional charges such as examination or materials fees are to be paid in full however individuals can apply to the Discretionary Learner Support fund for assistance with these elements.

Learners who are studying at level 2 and below and in receipt of a means tested benefit (examples below) or who are the dependent named on the benefit claim paperwork/evidence, will be entitled to a 50% fee reduction on the tuition element of the course fees. This does not apply to anyone who is studying at level 3.

Type of Benefit	Proof Required)
Income Support	Benefit award letter
Housing Benefit	Local authority letter
Council Tax Support, (excluding single person allowance)	Local authority letter
Working Tax Credit	Tax credits award notice (TC 602)
Pension Credit (Guarantee element)	Award notice
Universal Credit (if you do not qualify under full fee remission element)	Universal Credit statement

Payment

Fees are due at the point of enrolment when learners must identify how these will be met. This may be either by themselves, by a third party through an invoice, by an Advanced Learner Loan or through instalment arrangements.

Requests to invoice third parties will only be accepted on a 3rd Party form which indicates the agreement to pay and the contact details of who to invoice. Any non-payment by the 3rd party will mean the learner is liable for any outstanding fee.

Invoices are issued for all fees due. Details of how to pay are printed on the revers of the invoice and include online at www.barnsley.gov.uk (select "Pay for it") or by telephone using the automated telephone payment line on 01226 775445.

Learners have the option to pay their course fee by instalments. When the learner receives their invoice, it will include a telephone number that the learner can ring (within 7 days) to arrange to pay by instalments.

If the learner is not opting to pay by instalments, they have 30 days from the date of the invoice to pay their fee, otherwise the learner will be pursued under the Corporate Debt Recovery Procedure.

Non-Payment of Fees

Study may be suspended and/or future enrolment prevented if any fees are outstanding.

Certificates may be withheld if any course fees are outstanding.

Not producing evidence of benefit for fee remission or fee reduction from the start of the course will result in the full fee being due.

Non-payment of fees from the start of the course will result in the application of the Corporate Debt Recovery Procedure. Fees outstanding from learners who did not request, or were not eligible, to pay by instalments may not be pursued due to the economic cost of recovering the debt (amounts exceeding £50 will be pursued by BMBC's Accounts Receivable department). As stated above, debts outstanding for course fees paid by instalments will be recovered according to the Corporate Debt Recovery Procedure.

Refunds

The table below shows % fee refund available.

Circumstance	Refund available %
Prior to course commencement	100
Within 2 weeks course commencement	90
Course Cancellation by Adult Skills and Community Learning within first two weeks	100
Course Cancellation by Adult Skills and Community Learning after first two weeks	Pro-rata @ hourly rate charged
Exceptional circumstances e.g., long term illness	Considered on an individual basis

Exceptional circumstances out of the control of the Adult Skills & Community Learning service will not warrant a refund. Such circumstances will usually include, but are not limited to, war, terrorist activity, industrial dispute, bad weather (actual or threatened), fire and flood.