

## Introduction

The Learning Partnership – Bedfordshire and Luton Ltd receives Community Learning funding through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to support the delivery of community learning in Bedfordshire and Luton. This policy provides guidance on the application and collection of fees for the academic year 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 - 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017.

Course fees are set by the Learning Partnership. The Learning Partnership subcontracts some of its provision to local voluntary and community sector organisations. These organisations set their own fees policy.

Community Learning is designed to help people gain a new skill, re-connect with learning, pursue an interest, prepare for progression to formal courses or learn how to support their children better. There is no set requirement for learners to progress to other learning or achieve regulated qualifications.

## Purpose of Government Supported Community Learning

*(BIS – New Challenges, New Chances Dec 2011)*

- Maximise access to community learning for adults, bringing new opportunities and improving lives, whatever people's circumstances.
- Promote social renewal by bringing local communities together to experience the joy of learning and the pride that comes with achievement.
- Maximise the impact of community learning on the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities.

## Eligibility and Funding

Only learners who meet the eligibility criteria are entitled to funding for their learning programme.

Most learners will be eligible if they are:

- aged 19 or older on 31 August 2016
- a citizen of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA) or other countries determined within the EEA, including those with bilateral agreements such as Switzerland, or have the Right of Abode in the UK, and
- have been ordinarily resident in the EEA or other countries determined within the EEA, including those with bilateral agreements such as Switzerland, for at least the previous three years on the first day of learning

There may be some instances where learners do not meet the above criteria but could still qualify, in this instance contact should be made with the lead for the programme [cwilkins@learning-partnership.co.uk](mailto:cwilkins@learning-partnership.co.uk)

## Fees and Charges

The Skills Funding Agency through its funding rules requires us to seek fees from those who can afford to pay in order to ensure that the maximum amount of public funding can be focused on support and maximising the number of disadvantaged learners.

Many learners are able to access courses free of charge. Fees are paid from the Skills Funding Agency grant fund. Where fees are charged, these represent only a proportion of the full cost of the course, with the remainder being paid for from the grant funding.

To qualify for full funding on community learning programmes, individuals must:

- meet the stated eligibility criteria
- be unemployed or work less than 16 hours per week

Any learners employed for 16 or more hours a week, and not in receipt of low income benefits, will not qualify for full funding.

Such individuals are not excluded from participating however they will be expected to pay fees for their course of learning. The amount payable per learner will be 75% of course fees. Course fees will vary dependent on the course being accessed and should be confirmed with the tutor before payment is made.

Where payment is applicable, fees will be paid in advance otherwise the learner will not be able to commence the course.

Eligibility to funding will be determined through self-declaration on the enrolment form.

## Refund Procedure

Learners should note that fees should be paid at the time of enrolment and are not normally refundable. If a course is cancelled and no suitable alternative is available then a full refund will 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 provider for approval.

## Approval

Signature:			S Kendall - Chair
Board Approved:	September 2016	Review Date:	September 2017