

Hartlepool Jobs and Skills Service



Fee Policy

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for Hartlepool Borough Council's Jobs & Skills Service in relation to the Fee Policy for 2024-25.

This is to ensure that:

- Fees are levied appropriately and consistently, and;
- The Service is operating in accordance with the requirements of Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA).

2. OVERVIEW

Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service delivers through the Adult Skills Fund and is funded by both TVCA and the ESFA.

The Service reviews the Fees Policy annually in line with Adult Skills Fund Funding Rules to ensure compliance with any variations in the funding regulations and to support our objectives, as outlined within the Community Hubs Strategy 2023-28.

Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service offers a wide range of courses which have been created in response to local need. Fees for skills courses are calculated based on eligibility and circumstances on the first day of learning and are under three bands:

- **Full Fee:** The full fee must be paid by the learner, employer or through a successful application for an Advanced Learner Loan.
- **Co-Funded:** There is a 50% fee reduction with half of the costs paid by the learner or employer and the other half funded.
- **Free/Fully Funded:** The course is 100% funded in line with the eligibility rules for the Adult Skills Fund.

Please note that due to devolution of the Adult Skills Fund the guidance is primarily based on eligibility rules through TVCA. As such not all of the funding entitlements may be available if you reside outside of Tees Valley however you can receive further information by contacting the Service on 01429 868616.

3. FULLY FUNDED LEARNERS

The following categories of learners undertaking funded learning aims up to and including Level 3, will be entitled to full funding of their fees, subject to satisfactory evidence of status being provided at enrolment:

- Aged 19+ enrolling on English and Maths, up to and including Level 2 and has not previously attained a GCSE Grade 4 or higher.

- Aged 19+ enrolling on Essential Digital Skills or Functional Digital Skills, up to and including Level 1, and has their digital skills assessed at below Level 1.
- Aged 19+ enrolling on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), up to and including Level 2 following initial assessment for ESOL.
- Aged 19-23 undertaking an eligible first full Level 2 or Level 3 qualification excluding English, Maths or Essential Digital Skills.
- Aged 19+ enrolling on an approved qualification up to and including Level 3 which is eligible through the Local Flexibility Offer.
- Aged 19-23 undertaking an approved first full Level 3 qualification through the Adult Skills Fund.
- Aged 24+ undertaking an approved Level 3 qualification through the Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs and being either Unemployed or Employed with earnings under the Earnings Threshold.
- Aged 19+ studying learning aims at Level 2 or Level 3 where the learner has already achieved a first full level 2, 3 or above and is seeking to retrain or change career to secure employment in an identified Priority Sector.
- Aged 19+ undertaking a qualification, up to and including Level 2, if they meet the eligibility criteria for being classed as Unemployed.
- Aged 19+ undertaking a qualification, up to and including Level 2, whilst earning less than £33,210 (Tees Valley) or £25,000 (Non-North East).

4. CO-FUNDED LEARNERS

The learner would be co-funded if they are 19+ studying funded learning aims up to and including Level 3, who do not meet the fully funded criteria such as those:

- Aged 19+ studying learning aims at Level 2 or Level 3 where the learner has already achieved a first full level 2, 3 or above and does not meet the relevant criteria for Full Funding.
- Aged 24+ enrolling on a qualification, up to and including Level 2, and does not meet the criteria for Full Funding.

These learners are referred to as 'co-funded' because only 50% of the full funding value is provided as shown on the Find a Learning Aim Service. The cost to the learner would therefore be 50% of the fully funded rate for studying the relevant Qualification.

5. LEARNING FOR INCLUSION

The purpose of Learning for Inclusion provision is to provide outreach support and programmes to engage adults and assist in addressing some of the key priorities within communities across Hartlepool.

This will allow the creation of learning provision in response to local needs and delivery focuses on key topics such as:

- Learning for personal development aimed at addressing the specific needs of adults in areas such as isolation, , mental health, health and well-being, social exclusion and food poverty;
- Learning that aims to enhance community engagement, develop stronger communities and respond to the priorities within communities, and;
- Learning opportunities for adults residing in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in partnership with key stakeholders such as Voluntary Sector Organisations.

Partnership working is critical to enable us to deliver an effective range of provision through Learning for Inclusion. The Service therefore works closely with a wide range of partners, services, and stakeholders across Hartlepool including Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations.

All courses delivered in Tees Valley through Learning for Inclusion are completely free for all learners. These are courses which support learners against some of the key topics and are in response to local need within Hartlepool.

Please note that Learning for Inclusion is only for learners residing in Tees Valley as it is funded through TVCA. If you reside outside of the North East then you can access fully-funded non-accredited provision through the Adult Skills Fund with further information available by speaking to a Staff Member.

The Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service also has the discretion to develop courses through Learning for Inclusion for a specific cohort of learners through a partnership with internal or external stakeholders such as other Council Departments.

6. COURSE CANCELLATION

Hartlepool Jobs & Skills will refund fees in full if we close a course in the first two weeks or cancel a course before it starts being delivered by the Service.

If we cancel a course(s) prior to the start date and we are unable to provide a suitable alternative, learners will be entitled to a full refund of the fees. If we change a course venue, dates or times and the alternative offered is unsuitable for the learner, a full refund will also be given by the Service.

7. INSTALMENT PAYMENTS

Payment of fees can be made by instalments for courses with fees greater than £50.

To pay through instalments the course being delivered must be for more than one term. If so, 50% of the first term cost must be paid upfront and all remaining costs at least two months prior to the end date for the course.

8. EXAM FEES

All normal examination fees are included in the course fees and also cover the learner for one re-sit if required. Any learner who requests an additional re-sit will be required to pay the examination fees in advance and will be invoiced for the cost.

9. INVOICE PAYMENTS

Payment of fees can be made by invoice for courses with fees greater than £50 and if the full cost upfront may provide the learner with financial difficulty.

To pay through invoice the course being delivered must only be for one term. If so, 50% of the first term cost must be paid upfront and all remaining costs at least two months prior to the end date for the course.

10. LEARNER SUPPORT

Learners who are in hardship and meet specific eligibility criteria may be able to get assistance from the Learner Support Funds.

This is available to provide financial support for learners studying an accredited course who have a specific financial hardship which is preventing them from taking part or continuing in learning. There are two categories of learner support:

- **Hardship Funding:** This provides support for financially disadvantaged learners to facilitate their participation or continuation within learning such as travel costs, course-related costs/fees or items of equipment.
- **Childcare Funding:** This is for learners aged 20 or older on the first day of learning who are at risk of not starting or continuing learning because of their childcare costs which cannot be funded through Government Free Childcare.

There are strict rules and guidance around the usage of learner support and if you require further information then you can speak to one of our team by contacting the Service on 01429 868616.

11. LEARNING SUPPORT

Learning support is available to meet the cost of putting in place a reasonable adjustment, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, for learners who have an identified learning difficulty or disability, to achieve their learning goal.

Learning support must not be used to deal with everyday difficulties that are not directly associated with a learner's learning on their programme.

To access learning support the following steps must be followed:

- Carry out a thorough assessment to identify any support which the learner requires whilst studying with the Service.
- Agree and record the outcome of your assessment so it is available for the learner, tutor and funders such as TVCA or ESFA.
- Record all outcomes and retain all evidence of the assessment of the needs alongside the planned and actual delivery of learning.
- Report in the ILR that a learner has a learning support need associated with an identified learning aim in the Learning Delivery Funding and Monitoring.

If a learner, needs significant levels of support to start or continue learning and has support costs of more than £19,000 in a funding year, then the Service can claim Exceptional Learning Support (ELS). This is primarily for those aged 25+ because, unless specific reasons have been provided, learners aged 19 to 24 would be able to access this funding through their Education Health Care (EHC) Plan.

There are strict rules and guidance around the usage of learning support and if you require further information then you can speak to one of our team by contacting the Service on 01429 868616.