

RUTLAND ADULT LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE

FEES POLICY August 2023-24



Enrolment

Experience has shown us that courses can fill up quickly and we do advise learners to enrol as early as possible to secure a place on their chosen course. Learners must enrol and pay any fees at least one week before the start of their course. The enrolment forms will cover both the GDPR and ESFA requirements including appropriate privacy statements and declarations of entitlement to fee remission due to low income or state benefits. Data will be retained in line with ESFA requirements. Learners will not be admitted to classes until they have enrolled on their chosen course and paid the appropriate fee, except where fees are to be paid by employers, or other authorities or where no fee is due. Where necessary any debt may be referred for collection, which could incur a referral fee.

Course cost and fees

The current basic hourly costs of our courses are stated on the website www.ralss.org.uk. On the majority of our courses examination entries are managed for you by Rutland Adult Learning and Skills Service (RALSS). RALSS reserve the right to increase fees on an annual basis to match those set by the funding bodies. It is our intention to move from a low base figure to that set by SfA. This may result in a 10% year on year increase. For 2023-24 the hourly fee for learners, for funded courses, will be £5.50p per hour. Some courses may not have additional funding, so will be charged at a full cost recovery rate and there may be additional charges for materials for specialised art courses. RALSS staff wishing to enrol on community programmes as part of CPD has access to a reduced rate of 50% of the course fees, but no reduction to the cost of course materials.

Pound Plus statement

Pound Plus is used by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to describe the added value required to supplement the existing Tailored Learning (was community learning), income streams to widen the offer to people who are disadvantaged and cannot afford to pay fees. The Tailored Learning Service is free to determine local definitions and supporting evidence trails.

Aims

The aim of the Tailored Learning Service is to maximise the value of public funding and secure increasing levels of Pound Plus to enable it to deliver a quality Tailored learning programme that meets the needs of Rutland's individuals, families and communities.

The Tailored learning grant is only considered as a contribution to the overall costs of delivering the programmes and there is an expectation that the council as the grant recipient and its partners will add value to this funding pot by attracting extra income, cutting costs and reinvesting to widen the offer to people who are disadvantaged and cannot afford to pay fees. Free places are offered in our maths and English courses as these are fully funded. ICT and ESOL courses which would normally be co-funded

are also offered free, and we offer a 50% fee remission to those able to claim benefits or on low household income, below £27,000.

The Tailored Learning Service works collaboratively to determine priorities among employers and the local community to investigate ways of securing added value and investment to supplement existing income streams. Our offer includes Emergency First Aid at Work and Paediatric First Aid at full cost recovery.

Pound Plus is considered within three categories: Direct Income, Cost Savings and Value for Money.

Direct Income

- Fee income from learners
- Room hire to other educational providers (WEA)
- Sale of completed art projects

Cost Savings

- Shared accommodation with Community Care
- Free accommodation at partner premises (Christchurch, Stamford)
- Use of volunteers to support learning
- Shared services - back office functions with sub-contractor

Value for Money

- Efficiency of curriculum - avoiding duplicated provision
- Effectiveness of curriculum - better progression opportunities leading to increased learner participation
- Expanded curriculum with new subjects offered in response to local surveys and need

Financial help and support

The Government guidelines regarding fees and financial assistance are complex and constantly changing and as such may mean that prices are subject to change. Once learners have paid their fee, however, we will honour this irrespective of any in-year changes. For up to date advice please contact one of our information advisers who will be able to help with any questions or concerns you may have.

Learners on qualification courses who fail to attend or cancel their pre-booked exams will be liable for the costs.

Fee Concessions

For our qualification courses learners may qualify for full fee remission if their personal circumstances are one of the following (evidence of benefit is required):

- In receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- In receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA (WRAG))
- In receipt of wider income related benefits and are not in employment

Access to the Discretionary Learner Support Fund is limited but may be available to those on a gross household income of less than £27,000 at rates of 66% or 100% support if less than £16,190, for 19+ Hardship and Transport or 20+ Childcare, which are also available to those in receipt of certain benefits – learners should apply using a DLSF Application Form. Learners are then responsible for declaring this to the Department for Work & Pensions if applicable as DLSF payments may affect eligibility for certain benefits.

Tailored Learning

If a learner is in receipt of qualifying state benefits (any benefit except Child Tax Credits) or is the unwaged dependent of someone in receipt, there is a 50% concession.

If a learner's gross household income is less than £27,000 there is also a concession of 50%. The Learning Agreement contains tick boxes for the appropriate claims and the learner signature or agreement confirms that the information is accurate.

For up-to-date information on the financial help available to our students call the Enrolments Team.

From January 2020, due to the devolution of funding in certain areas we are no longer able to offer any concessions on course fees or materials to learners residing in these devolved areas.

How can I pay?

Learners can pay for their course by cash, cheque, debit card, Switch/Delta card, access, MasterCard/Visa credit cards, preferably by phone or post.

Refunds

Refunds will only be given on the following grounds:

1. If the course is cancelled by the Service
2. The learner cancels their place on the course at least 7 days before the commencement date. This does not apply to short courses of fewer than 2 Sessions, where no refunds will be given.
3. The learner has an illness that precludes further attendance, or for the serious illness of a near relative, that precludes further attendance.

All refunds will be subject to a cancellation fee of £7.50.

Class numbers

Every effort will be made to help learners to complete their chosen studies. However, classes can only be held if a sufficient number of students enrol. It may be necessary to merge or discontinue classes if attendance falls below a minimum number during the course year.

Review History

Date	Reason for Review	Next Scheduled Review
Aug 14	Annual Review	August 2015
Aug 15	Scheduled Review	Aug 16
Aug 16	Scheduled Review	Aug 17
Jul 17	Scheduled Review and additional employer refund policy added.	Aug 18
Mar 18	GDPR update and scheduled review	Sept 19
Sept 19	Scheduled Review	Aug 2020
Jan 2020	Devolved funding changes	Aug 2020
Mar 2020	COVID 19 review	Aug 2021

Aug 2022	Scheduled Review	Aug 2023
Aug 2023	Scheduled Review	Aug 2024

Owner: RALSS Community Lead Tutor