

Report to the Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services
Report submitted by: Director of Community Services
Date: 15 June 2015

Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:
All

Lancashire Adult Learning: Fees and Remission Policy 2015/16
(Appendix 'A' refers)

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Executive Summary

Lancashire Adult Learning reviews the Fees and Remissions Policy annually, to respond to variations in external (Skills Funding Agency (SFA)) levels of funding for learning, changes to SFA eligibility criteria for full or partially funded learning, and public demand for learning programmes. The policy for 2015/16 has been amended in order to reflect the recent FE Commissioner report and changes in the SFA contract for 2015/16.

The Service reviews the fees charged to balance the customer's ability to pay, and the need to earn fee income to subsidise priority learning which is free of charge.

The Service must balance the advantages of increasing fee income against the risk of reducing the number of enrolments and not achieving the allocated SFA learner number targets.

Although the proposals are not driven by the need to generate income, any additional fee income would help to offset a reduction in SFA funding for 2015/16.

To offset the negative impact of fees on learners who are least able to pay, the Service operates a Fee Remission policy, which is also reviewed annually and is included in this proposal.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order No 25 have been complied with.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services is recommended to approve the proposed Lancashire Adult Learning Fees and Remissions Policy for 2015/16 as set out at Appendix 'A'.

Background and Advice

This is an annual exercise to keep up to date with factors in the external environment which impact upon recruitment onto learning programmes.

The proposals include a variety of different measures in order to achieve as much equality across different groups of learners as possible. Over the last few years, the service has gradually but significantly increased the hourly fee for the "public" programme, in order to release as much funding as possible for the "targeted" programme which meets the needs of the most socially and financially deprived members of the community. When the policy was first introduced, an equality impact assessment was completed to show how the negative impact on members of the public would be moderated. This was informed by consultation with learners at the time.

Proposals are in line with government recommendations for community learning outlined in "New Challenges, New Chances" and with the funding methodology implemented by the SFA.

Further consultation was undertaken in April 2014 to support an updated Equality Analysis.

Consultations

Consultation was undertaken in April 2014 with learners on the public programme, and no change is being proposed for 2015/16.

Implications:

This item does not propose any change to the existing fee charging structure for 2015/16 and therefore there are no financial implications.

Equality and Diversity

An Equality Analysis was undertaken in April 2014 as part of the proposals for the revised Fees and Remissions Policy for 2014/15, no change to the existing charges is proposed for 2015/16.

Risk management

No changes to the existing charges are being proposed for 2015/16.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A