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Victoria Buildings

6-8 Tower Street

Hartlepool

TS24 7HD

www.hartlepool.gov.uk/learningandskills

01429 868616

Facebook.com/HartlepoolLearning&SkillsService

**Hartlepool Learning and Skills Service**

**Pound Plus Policy**

**– 2020/21**

**Funded by Tees Valley Combined Authority**

**Author:** Scott Campbell

**Agreed by:** Patrick Wilson, Head of Service

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**1. Introduction and Definition**

The adult learning sector undertakes a large volume of activity that contributes to the wider delivery of community learning and the generation of additional income that is central to the objective of driving up participation in the community. This is particularly significant within a contained public funding environment.

The term ‘Pound Plus’ describes how providers can demonstrate that they are maximising the value of public investment. It is used by funders such as ESFA (Education & Skills Funding Agency) and TVCA (Tees Valley Combined Authority) to describe the added value required to supplement the existing community learning income streams to benefit learners, particularly those who are disadvantaged and who cannot afford to pay fees.

**2. Aim of Adult Education**

Hartlepool Adult Education is part of the Council’s Learning & Skills Service and it offers a diverse range of flexible courses focused on national and local strategic economic priorities, the needs of the community and businesses.

Adult Education courses are available to all adults aged 19 plus and they are designed to meet the specific needs of employers and learners so that individuals are fully prepared for the world of work.

The service has a wide range of provision to help learners to progress in their careers or to make the first steps back into education. This includes accredited Adult Skills courses and non-accredited Community Learning provision, an impartial Careers Service, Pastoral Support Service, Employment Advisers and employment focused programmes.

The service is wholly committed to equal access for all learners and therefore heavily invests in engaging with key stakeholders such as voluntary organisations, Jobcentre Plus and National Careers Service to effectively engage with hard to reach groups.

Within the service, there is a differentiated Fees Policy which includes a mix of fully funded courses, co-funded courses and free targeted provision. This policy is fully consistent with the service’s aims of ensuring that all adults have the opportunity to access learning, including the most affluent and the most disadvantaged. Fees are remitted if learners are in receipt of a means tested benefit and courses aimed at which supporting learners to improve their health and well-being, access formal learning and progress into sustained employment are free through Community Learning. A hardship fund exists for those in financial difficulty and a pilot scheme exists for those on a low income.

**3. Securing Added Value**

The Adult Education Budget received from ESFA and TVCA contributes to the overall costs of delivering Adult Education’s service. As part of the Pound Plus Policy there is an expectation that the service will add value to this funding by reviewing fees in line with its Fees Policy, attracting extra income, undertaking regular efficiency saving reviews to cut costs and then reinvesting any income/savings to widen the offer to more people who are disadvantaged.

To meet this expectation, the Service works collaboratively with external partners and other Council Departments to ascertain local priorities and consider ways of securing added value, joint working leading to greater efficiency savings and investment to supplement exisiting income streams.

The service generates additional income and savings over and above the core income from ESFA and TVCA through:

* Fee income from learners
* Commercial fee income
* Income from room hire
* Cost savings
* Use of volunteers to support learning
* Curriculum efficiency – avoiding duplicated provision
* Curriculum effectiveness – planning to ensure that the course offer meets government priorities; needs of the local community and employers; offers progression opportunities leading to increased participation and employment rates
* Use of external venues at low or no cost

By undertaking regular reviews on fees, working with partners on efficiency savings that reduce duplication of effort and generating income, the service has managed to provide more provision that has benefitted the end user.

For further information on our Pound Plus Policy, please do not hesitate to the Service on 01429-868616 or via our email address which is adult.education@hartlepool.gov.uk