

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	16th October, 2013
3.	Title:	Funding and Fees Policy for Adult Community Learning
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services

5. **Summary:**

This report provides information on proposed Funding and Fees Policy for the Adult Community Learning Service in relation to these services for 2013/14.

These proposals will accommodate the changes required the Skills Funding Agency and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The proposals will continue to support sustainability and development of the offer of Adult Community Learning in Rotherham

6. **Recommendations**

6.1 To accept and endorse the Fee and Funding Policy for Adult Community Learning 2013/14

7. Proposals and Details:

7.1 Introduction

The priority for the Rotherham's adult community learning provision is to extend the range, appeal and access to learning and employment opportunities, including those that enable, motivate and build self-confidence in new learners.

The national priorities for the delivery are guided by the vision for adult community learning presented by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), in "*New Challenges, New Chances Further Education and Skills System Reform Plan: Building a World Class Skills System*". This document specifically identifies the purpose of Government supported community learning as being to:

- Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas and people on low incomes and with low skills
- Collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot
- Widen participation and transform people's destinies

Government supports adult community learning through the allocation of the Adult Safeguarded Learning Grant which is routed through the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

The level of funding provided by the Government to support adult community learning has been maintained and RMBC will receive allocations as in previous years. However, this allocation is now to be regarded as a contribution towards the cost of delivery. It is expected that RMBC, in partnership with other providers, will develop a strategic plan for community learning with priorities, delivery objectives and measurable learner outcomes – the ambition of which will be achieved only by securing additional revenue over and above the public subsidy available. The SFA expects each recipient of the grant to ensure they reach at least as many learners in 2012/13 and where possible exceed this number.

RMBC Adult Community Learning service (ACL) intends to deliver a value for money service by focusing public funding on people who would not otherwise have access to learning and to maximise income from learners who can afford to pay.

RMBC ACL service intends to increase the funding available to support the delivery of adult community learning by identifying sources of additional income, that can be used to help offset the costs of delivering a programme of learning. Any income generated can then be treated as a means to reduce the level of subsidy necessary, complement use of the grant and increase the number of learning opportunities offered in Rotherham. RMBC will seek to enhance the grant available through a range of activities.

8. Finance

The current financial value of the Safeguarded Learning Grant and the Adult Skills Budget for 2013/14 is £641,408. The Funding Policy outlines proposal to generate additional funding to the amount of £300,000 for funding additional learning opportunities.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There are uncertainties in the targets set for income generation from sponsorship, additional grant aid and fee collection.

- Targets may be unrealistic especially in areas where the service has no previous experience
- Reluctance of learners to pay the identified fees
- Learners accessing opportunities provided by other organisations
- Failure to secure additional income may affect future funding from the Skills Funding Agency

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Adult community learning delivery contributes to the learning and achieving theme of the Community Strategy and a range of priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan and Health and Well Being Strategy including supporting the development of skills to improve employability of working age adults by reducing the number of adults lacking essential skills around using computers, reading, writing and maths' and 'maximise participation in adult learning particularly in disadvantaged communities'.

The focus of funding towards the most deprived members of the community supports the priorities established by the Council.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Adult Community Learning Fees Policy 2013/14
Adult Community Learning Funding Policy 2013/14

Contact Name : Karen Borthwick, Head of School Effectiveness
e-mail: karen.borthwick@rotherham.gov.uk