



South Gloucestershire and Stroud College Community Learning: Fees Policy 2023/24

1. Introduction

In line with *'New Challenges, New Chances'* (Further Education and Skills System Reform Plan: Building a World Class Skills System, BIS December 2011), the purpose of SGS College's Community Learning Fees Policy 2022/23 is to:

- Maximize access to community learning for adults, bringing new opportunities and improving lives, whatever people's circumstances
- Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in deprived communities and people on low income with low skills
- Collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot
- Formally recognise 'Pound Plus' income
- Provide a service that maximises value for money and maintains the quality of the provision.

Note: Pound Plus* refers to the additional income and savings generated by providers over and above the core income contribution from the Government's Community Learning budget. SGS College receives a grant from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), and from the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) which subsidises the majority of its provision. The SGS College fees policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with any variations in the funding regulations and to support the College's strategic objectives, as outlined in the College's published strategy.

*Please refer to separate Pound Plus Policy.

2. Background information

Relevant Community Learning programmes offered by SGS College provide opportunities for learners to gain skills and improve their wellbeing. The wellbeing benefits manifest themselves in personal development outcomes such as increased confidence, social and employability skills, and improved physical and emotional health. To this end, managers will:

- *Demonstrate an ambitious vision, have high expectations for what all learners can achieve*
- *provide learning programmes or a curriculum that have suitable breadth, depth and relevance so that they meet any relevant statutory requirements, as well as the needs and interests of children, learners and employers, nationally and in the local community*
- *Successfully plan and manage learning programmes, the curriculum and careers advice so that all learners get a good start and are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training and employment.*

SGS College offers programmes within one of the four thematic areas (highlighted below):

- **Learning for Work** - Neighbourhood Learning, 16-18 and 19+ Apprenticeships (sub-contracted provision), traineeships and Pathway2b
- **Learning for Life** - English and Maths Functional Skills Programme, Family Learning
- **Learning for Wellbeing** - Personal Community Development Learning (PCDL), Learn2b, and Leisure Courses
- **Business Development** – Business courses and fundraising

The chosen theme promotes the SGS College goal to *“Increase the Wellbeing of Communities”* and *“Help You Take Charge of Your Life”*.

In this context the SGS College ‘Actifit’ Programme fits with these goals. Community Learning provision for adult learners (aged 19+) is paid for by a combination of central government funding through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the fee paid by the learner (where applicable). The tuition fee is the fee charged by SGS College to learners for the delivery of the learning activity. This tuition fee represents only a proportion of the full cost of the course, with the remainder being paid for with grants from central government.

Learners will be expected to provide their own resources or, where available, purchase them from their tutor. To support local needs, and SGS College policy, target groups of learners are able to access concessions on the tuition fee, as detailed in 'Remitted Fees' below.

SGS College 'targeted provision' refers to the Learning for Wellbeing - Personal Community Development Learning (PCDL), Learn2b, and Leisure Courses which are targeted for people who cannot afford to pay for their learning. These include adults (19+) who are:

- Unemployed Living in the areas of Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire's most deprived postcodes
- Experiencing mental ill health
- Classified as having a learning difficulty or disability
- From black or minority ethnic backgrounds
- Parents and carers with English, maths and language needs
- Low skilled, without a level 2 qualification
- Homeless or vulnerably housed
- Ex-offenders

- Economically vulnerable
- Digitally excluded
- Socially isolated.

Learners on targeted provision may participate in courses at no charge to themselves.

3.Fee paying provision: The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and WECA, through their Funding Rules, requires providers to seek fees from those who can afford to pay in order to ensure that the maximum amount of public funding can be focused on supporting and maximising the number of disadvantaged learners. For example, where appropriate, providers can consider full-cost recovery for repeat learners who register for similar courses over a period of several years.

South Gloucestershire and Stroud College will make charges to learners in universal (PCDL) provision. Courses in the PCDL programme encompass a number of elements:

- learning for individual economic wellbeing, the wellbeing of the local community and for improved mental health
- learning for leisure purposes
- learning for staff in local businesses

The universal PCDL programme provides the opportunity to learn new skills and develop a good level of proficiency in a subject. These courses support learners, at a subsidised fee rate, to take up a new skill or interest and in time use these skills to access further training, gain work, create an additional income, or benefit their community. Jobseekers are able to access these courses at no tuition cost. Having acquired a good level of proficiency in a subject, learners may alternatively pursue their interest in the new PCDL leisure courses programme. Leisure courses are not subsidised.

4.Fees and charges 2023/24:

Description of Charge	VAT Rating (Standard 20%)	2023/24 Fee £	Additional Notes/Supporting Information
Universal PCDL programme courses: <i>Hourly full fee rate (ESFA/WECA Funded)</i>			
Hourly rate	Exempt	£6.00	One day courses (or longer) - £6.00 per hour plus £5 registration fee (courses with life models have an additional fee of £10 per learner)
Two-hour courses	Exempt	£12.00	Two-hour courses - £6.00 per hour with registration fee waiver
One-hour courses	Exempt	£6.00	One-hour courses - £6.00 with registration fee waiver
Universal PCDL programme courses: <i>Hourly Remitted fee rate (ESFA/WECA Funded)</i>			
Hourly rate	Exempt	£1.80	Calculated at 30% of the full fee (£6.00 per hour) registration fee waived.
Two-hour courses	Exempt	£3.60	Two-hour courses – 30% of full fee registration fee waived.
Universal PCDL programme courses: <i>Hourly fee rate (Non ESFA/WECA Funded)</i>			
Leisure Course Programmes	Exempt	£9.00	This is the tuition fee per hour. There is no registration fee. extras e.g. life models, exam fees, resources etc are charged separately

Notes: **Remitted fees:** Concessions of up to 100% are available for those learners who are in receipt of the following benefit entitlements, (as defined by the ESFA - evidence to be provided at enrolment), who want to enter employment/progress in work/remove a barrier to get into work and are on skills training to help them to do so:

- Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Employment and support allowance (work related activity group) (ESA WRAG)
- Universal Credit
- Offenders who are serving their time in the community
- Asylum seekers in receipt of the equivalent of income-based benefit (assistance under the terms of the Immigration and Asylum 1999) and their dependents
- Incapacity Benefit
- Guaranteed Pension Credits
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)/ Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Carers Allowance

Additional course costs: Many resources or accreditation costs are detailed in the course information provided. Learners not eligible for ESFA funding: Learners who are not eligible for ESFA funding (see ESFA Eligibility Rules) can join courses where places are available but priority will be given to eligible learners.

Ineligible learners will pay the full cost recovery rate of £9.00 per hour, plus any additional courses costs, and are not eligible for Learner Support Funds, so must pay all exam and registration fees.

Staff PCDL fee remission: The staff employed by South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, are entitled to 300 hours of free PCDL learning. The rationale for the provision of these hours is to enable staff to gain a broader range of subject and teaching skills and maintain their own wellbeing. Hourly paid staff must be working during the year in which they take up the 300 hours. Staff may only take up free places if there is capacity on their chosen course once fee-paying learners have enrolled.

6. Refunds

A full refund of course fees will only be given if the SGS College cancels the course. If the learner withdraws from a course which has already started, depending on their circumstances, learners may be offered a pro-rata refund. The £5 registration fee is only refunded in exceptional circumstances.

This policy was drafted by the SGS College - Head of Project Performance, Funding and Data and will be reviewed annually.

Annex A – WECA Community Learning provision guidance – extract from the WECA FUNDING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT RULES 2023/2024

N.B. The guidance in Annex A applies only to funding utilised for Learners who are resident in the WECA area.

Community Learning

265. This section only applies to providers with a non-formula community learning allocation included in their funding agreement.

266. The purpose of community learning is to develop the skills, confidence, motivation and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds so they:

266.1. Progress towards formal learning or employment and/or

266.2. Improve their health and wellbeing, including mental health and/or

266.3. Develop stronger communities

The objectives set out in annex B ask you to widen participation and transform people’s destinies by supporting progression relevant to personal circumstances. We expect you to encourage and support all learners to progress onto new or more stretching provision to help progression into more formal learning or employment. We do not expect to see multiple enrolments on similar levels or learning aims where this does not benefit the learner’s development.

268. Community learning courses are delivered and reported on the ILR under the following 7 delivery strands which link to the objectives at annex B:

268.1. Engaging and/or building confidence

268.2. Preparation for further learning

268.3. Preparation for employment

268.4. Improving essential skills (English, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), maths and digital provision)

268.5. Equipping parents/carers to support children’s learning

268.6. Health and well-being

268.7. Developing stronger communities

Non-formula community learning funding

269. The funding allocated to support non-formula funded community learning provision is included within your overall Combined Authority Adult Education Funding Allocation.

270. We expect the proportion of allocation utilised in support of non-formula funded community learning to fall in line with that proposed in your C&DP, however, we will consider proposals to increase or decrease this proportion. If you wish to make such a change, please discuss and agree this with your Relationship Manager. Any changes are to be formally approved with the Combined Authority through an updated the Combined Authority Adult Education Funding C&DP Profile.

271. Providers are expected to work collaboratively to ensure that this flexibility is utilised in a coordinated manner. For example, providers should not all focus on a single community where one provider could engage learners on behalf of all. Equally, a resident engaged by one provider may be best supported by the provision offered by another. Providers are asked to present joint proposals which ensure the effective deployment of flexibility and associated resource.

272. Flexible utilisation of Community Learning relates to the following priority types of individuals who:

272.1. Have been unemployed or economically inactive for 6 months or more prior to enrolment

272.2. Are unemployed and aged 50 or above

272.3. Have an income that falls below the Real Living Wage

272.4. Have prior attainment below full level 2

272.5. Have literacy, numeracy or ESOL needs assessed to be below level 2

273. The Combined Authority reserves the right to reconcile any funds that are transferred into Learner Support or Community Learning which are not fully utilised, where it has not been used for community learning, or where its use cannot be evidenced.

274. You must attribute costs for eligible learners, up to the value of your nonformula community learning allocation. This must include the use of this

funding to cover learning and learner support costs. If you do, you must:

274.1. claim for learning and learner costs through the final monthly claim report, following the policy in line with the support funding section

274.2. record these costs in the learner's evidence pack and maintain evidence that support the costs for audit purposes

275. You can use your Combined Authority Adult Education Funding to deliver non-regulated provision that may be similar to community learning and/or regulated qualifications to meet local demand. If you do, you must:

275.1. follow the Combined Authority Adult Education Funding formula-funded methodology and submit ILR data under funding model 35

275.2. enrol learners following the Adult Education Funding eligibility requirements, and you must not use your community learning local fee remission policy

276. You can support learners aged under 19 if they meet both of the following:

276.1. they are a parent, carer or guardian attending provision delivered through family learning, and

276.2. are funded through non-formula community learning using funding model 10 in the funding model field (refer to ILR guidance for information)

277. When considering distributing your allocation flexibly across the Adult Education Budget funding lines (such as adult skills, community learning and learners support), the proposed use of funds must represent good value for money, and we may require you to provide information on your delivery where it does not do so.

278. When providers are not already delivering through Community Learning for the Combined Authority, any proposed utilisation of this funding methodology may only be used where:

278.1. It is on a strictly not-for-profit basis in line with actual evidenced eligible costs, and

278.2. It is not in support of purposes that do not fall within the Combined Authority Community Learning Objectives 2023/24, and

278.3. It is in support of the Priority Residents (Employed and Unemployed).

279. Community Learning Methodology may not be used to support the following ring-fenced initiatives, which must be supported by Adult Skills funding:

279.1. Sector Based Work Academies

279.2. National Skills Fund Level 3 Entitlement / Free Courses for Jobs

280. This funding must also not be used for learning that is eligible for funding through an advanced learner loan.