



Fees Policy 2025 - 2026

To cover education services delivered by CLIP and Riverside

Lead officer	Claire Woodward
Author	Head of Education and Skills
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Diversity compliant	Y
Equality Impact Assessment required	Y
Data Protection compliant	Y
Health and Safety compliant	y

1. What is this policy about and why do we need it?

The purpose of our Fees Policy 2025/2026 is to:

- Maximise access to learning programmes
- Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas 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.
- Ensure learning is affordable for all – particularly with current cost of living challenges
- ensure we deliver to the funding rules as set out by our various funders

This policy sets out:

1. our categories for charging, and criteria to be eligible for each category
2. our approach to setting our costs
3. our refund policy
4. our support funds
5. our process for fee collection

2. Who does this policy apply to?

Adult learners within our education and skills service area attending courses,

Young people learners within our education and skills service area attending courses,

It is also applicable to our people, volunteers, tenants, wider customers and Board members.

3. Our policy is...

3.1 .1 CHARGING ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA - ADULTS

We have three clear categories for charging:

Fee exempt (free)

Short courses (except those certified) are free for adults who are:

Unemployed and in receipt of state benefits of the following:

- Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) (including receiving National Insurance Credits only)
- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit (and their take-home pay as recorded on their Universal Credit statement (disregarding Universal Credit payments and other benefits) is less than £892 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £1437 a month (learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner)
- An offender released on a temporary licence, studying outside a prison environment, and not funded by the Ministry of Justice
- An individual who earns less than **£25,000.00 annual gross salary**, and on the assumption of a 37.5hr contract with paid statutory holiday entitlement

OR

Are attending an English, Maths or digital skills course

Free to anyone who hasn't achieved GCSE Grade A*-C (4-9) in the subject. This applies to all English and Maths courses including GCSE.

Free to anyone wishing to enhance their maths skills (delivered through multiply funding).

Note: People with GCSE grade C-A* (4-9) who want a revision course or to improve their grade will pay the full rate as detailed in our costs.

OR

Are attending a course to achieve a vocational qualification L3 or below

These are free to those under 23 years old and who have not yet achieved this full level of a qualification.

Reduced fee

Concessions will be available for learners

- aged 65 or over on 31 August 2025 (at 25%)
- in receipt of other benefits not listed in fee exempt above (at 25%)
- for ex-service personnel disabled in service (at 50%)

Full price

All other adult learners not covered in the above categories

3.1.2 CHARGING CRITERIA – YOUNG PEOPLE

No fee is charged for our young people 16-19 education programmes.

To access our fully funded flare programme learners must be between 16 and 19 as at 31 August 2025. Additionally, learners who are 15 as at 31 August 2025 may be eligible subject to specific criteria outlined within our procedures.

There is no specific eligibility criteria for accessing this free provision, other than age.

Additionally, once enrolled on flare, learners can join any adult course relevant to their learning journey for free.

3.2 WHAT WE CHARGE FOR COURSE

GCSE Maths and English

People with GCSE grade C-A* (4-9) who want a revision course or to improve their grade will pay the full rate for the elements they require. This includes but is not limited to:

- Attending the course
- Revision short courses
- 1-2-1 tutor sessions
- Fee for examination to sit the exam
- Additional learner support (as required)

These costs are available on request.

Access to Higher Education Courses

In line with the national LARs rate, our Access to Higher Education – Health and Social Care course costs £3384.00 for the full course.

Learners can self-fund this study programme or may be eligible to apply for an advanced learner loan.

The funding source must be agreed when signed up to this programme, a payment plan schedule agreed and funding in place within the first six weeks of starting. If via a loan, evidence must be submitted prior to the 42nd day into the study programme to ensure you can continue your studies with us.

We have the facility to offer learners Advanced Learning Loans to fund appropriate provision such as our Access to HE programmes.

Loan repayments start when you earn over £25,000 per year. Additionally, Student Finance England will ‘write off’ any outstanding Advanced Learner Loan balances you owe for an Access to HE course once you complete a higher education course. This means you do not have to repay it.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan>

Vocational Qualifications

Our fees for each course are based on the size of qualification. We have reviewed this to ensure this is the most affordable method, and whilst we could charge more, feel this ensures affordability for all, whilst remaining viable.

- We charge a fee of £25 per 3-credits (e.g. £75 for a 9-credit course).

Learning - Non-Accredited

- A fee of £15 per course is applicable regardless of length unless the course is a ‘certified’ course.
- Those courses that you achieve an industry recognised certificate are exempt from our flat rate fee, and from our fee exempt discount. This is due to the higher costs associated with running these courses. The costs for these courses are detailed below. We do from time to time add further certified courses, of which it will be clearly identified and outlined in the course advertising:
 - £30 for **courses under 10 guided learning hours** (for example Emergency First Aid)

- This includes Makaton for each level £30 (or if book and attend both levels concurrently this is discounted to £50)
- £50 for courses **10 guided learning hours or over** (for example paediatric first aid and mental health first aid)

3.3 EMPLOYERS AND BUSINESSES

We work with businesses to develop tailored packages of support and learning to support their staff to develop, and to support their recruitment and onboarding practices to help people gain meaningful and sustainable employment. To enable the discounted rates to apply, attendees from a business setting must be in Lincolnshire and over 19, and fit the above outlined criteria for fee exemption. This ensures that public funding continues to be used appropriately and supported employers to access training that is affordable at all levels. It may be we can help your workforce where they are under 19 – but this will be discussed on a case by case basis.

If fees are paid for by the company the additional criteria must be met:

- If a course is required for company employees, and they wish to attend an open course, no places can be reserved, individuals must book on the courses directly and payment will be made in line with the charging criteria set out on page 2.
- If a course is for the company to use exclusively the full fee methodology is applied. This ensures that the course is reserved for their sole use.
- If a course is designed specifically for the company and delivered exclusively either virtually, at our learning centres, or on their premises, a cost will be provided in the form of a quotation each time. This will include development time to ensure the scheme of work fits the business objectives and mileage.

Additional to the guidance set out for businesses above, for companies within the wider Acis Group of companies, including those who deliver training (Riverside and CLIP) we want to ensure transparency for employees to access training that is appropriate to them, and supports them in their continued development. All employees would be full fee payers. Therefore:

- If a bespoke or exclusive course is required for Acis employees, a full quotation will be provided and approved in advance (to include development and mileage).
- If an individual books on a course of interest–
 - If it's required for their roles – Acis Group Limited will fund this course for the employee.
 - If it's agreed in advance within their CPD plan by their manager and L&D approves it – Acis Group Limited will fund this course for the employee

(note, this may involve a training agreement dependant on value and requires central approval prior to booking on the course).

- If it's for lifelong learning interest – the individual will fund this course in line with the policy outlined above.
- Additionally, all Acis Group full fee paying employees will receive a 10% discount on any certified courses.

3.4 Additional notes

- All the courses and funded eligible is for learners aged 19 years and over on 31 August 2025 (except Access to HE courses) and subject to further eligibility criteria, including living in Lincolnshire.
- For all qualifications registered with an awarding body, if a learner applies late, there will be an additional late fee for any registration of £10
- Occasionally, we run courses which have no subsidy. In these cases, they are only available by paying the full fee. The most common course that this applies to is the Level 3 Award in Education and Training.
- Students age 19-23 undertaking their first full level 3 qualification maybe fully funded.
- For chargeable certified courses it is at the discretion of the engagement team if any discounts should apply.
- All costs are VAT exempt.

3.5 REFUNDS

A full refund of course fees will only be given if we cancel the course and do not rearrange it within an appropriate time period. If the learner withdraws from a course which has already started, depending on their circumstances, learners may be offered a pro-rata refund. A £5 administration charge is applicable in all cases.

3.6 SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

There is a learner support fund to support people who find it difficult to pay for the cost of learning. For example, travel, childcare and materials. There is an information sheet and application form available for learners to complete – and this is assessed on an individual basis on application. Learners must meet the specified eligibility criteria to be considered for any assistance. Financial support is intended to remove barriers and support participation, attendance and achievement.

Applications received will be processed within a maximum of four weeks of enrolment or of receiving a fully completed application. Applicants will be notified of their application outcome by email.

We have two support funds available:

Learner and learning support

Available to all young people and adult learners on any funded education programme. This covers things like learning aides (overlays, equipment or adjustments needed in the classroom) and wider support or equipment to enable their learning such as travel.

To qualify for the bursary support, the household must have an annual gross household income of below £40,000. In extenuating circumstances discretion may be given to award elements of the bursary in households exceeding this threshold. Funding is limited; therefore, evidence of eligibility does not guarantee an award.

16-19 bursary

This is available to all enrolled students who meet the minimum attendance requirements aged under 19 on our 16-19 ESFA study programme – Flare. The criteria for accessing our 16-19 bursary is outlined in our 16-19 bursary procedure.

This bursary covers learner costs to support such as

- support for meals where free meals are not being provided,
- additional trip costs for learning related trips,
- specialist equipment needed to undertake study,
- books,
- travel to and from us and placements.

To qualify for the bursary support, the household must have an annual gross household income of below £40,000. In extenuating circumstances discretion may be given to award elements of the bursary in households exceeding this threshold. Funding is limited; therefore, evidence of eligibility does not guarantee an award.

Payments will be made monthly and will be awarded based on 90% attendance rate except exam resit support which will have no attendance threshold.

Additionally, learners can access free school meals funding through us subject to eligibility criteria outlined in our bursary procedure.

We additionally have support available for learners who find themselves in exceptional financial barriers a standalone hardship application can be submitted by a member of the support team up to a total of £250 in any one year.

3.7 FEE COLLECTION

All course fees must be paid in advance of the course starting, unless previously agreed or a payment schedule in place for courses over 10 hours. We encourage online payments for courses, but also accept cash, cheque or bank transfer where this is required. Businesses are invoiced within our standard invoicing terms.

4.0 How will we monitor this policy?

This policy will be reviewed annually or when funder guidance changes, whichever is sooner.

5.0 Links to other policies and procedures

Lincolnshire County Council Adult Education Budget, Adult skills fund: funding rules 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

ESFA 16-19 study programme: Advice: funding regulations for post-16 provision 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

6.0 when will this policy be reviewed?

August 2026