
West Berkshire Council

Community Learning and Skills: Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy 2024- 25

Sub-contracting arrangements

Rationale for subcontracting

West Berkshire Council subcontracts provision of Community Learning and Skills to provide wider access to learning opportunities for adults in the community, outside of the Council's own direct offer. Subcontracting enables the Council to better respond to local need by working in partnership with specialist local providers to identify learning and skills gaps and develop an offer to fill them.

This model adds value, generating pound plus through the support of local charitable, voluntary and community organisations and their resources.

Allocation of subcontracted funding

Funding for the 2024-25 academic year has been decided using a variety of rationales, as detailed in the Community Learning plan.

The Community Education Fund (CEF) is opened to all local providers in May of each year. This is alongside negotiated proposals with providers out of scope of the CEF (referred to *established*) under spot purchase arrangement. All proposals consider:

1. Overview and priority groups
2. Project aims
3. Identification of local need
4. Working with other organisations
5. Delivery plan
6. Delivering personalised learning
7. Embedding of English, maths and digital skills
8. Impact – success and progression
9. Value for money
10. Compliance

A moderation meeting is then facilitated by the Community Learning Team, resulting in a combined, moderated score for each proposal.

Funding is allocated by considering each proposal in order of their scoring.

Each service provider's proposed courses were also considered in terms of the criteria in the specification and on how they contributed to the needs of a wide range of client groups across the district:

- Client groups who will either benefit more from the learning offer or who are currently under-represented in our programme.
- The activity meets specified local and/or national agendas where adult learning has been identified as being able to make a strong contribution.

These agendas include:

- Developing employment skills and opportunities
- Improving maths, English and digital skills
- Supporting families to help children to learn and develop
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Developing stronger communities

Funding requests typically outstripped available funding and additional consideration was therefore given to designing a balanced programme that offers a broad curriculum offer at a variety of levels aiming to support those most disadvantaged across the whole district. In many cases this resulted in the choice to offer funding for some, rather than all, requested instances of a particular subject (i.e. to offer funding for 2 instances of a course rather than the 4 requested) in order to be able to offer some funding to a different course or one aimed at a different client group or in a different geographical area. In some cases an overall funding allocation was agreed and, where all the courses proposed were judged to be of equal merit, the Community Learning Team work with the service provider to agree a balanced delivery programme.

Some courses were not allocated funding because they were judged to either not meet the necessary learning element of the funding (e.g. appeared to be clubs where clients meet to share similar interests but are not necessarily actually learning anything new), or because they failed to meet one of the other requirements of the funding (e.g. courses that either the learner or employer should pay for or there is the potential of other available funding).

Level of funding retained

West Berkshire Council retains a level of funding from the Adult Skills Fund (ASB) to support the improvement of community learning and skills locally.

The Community Learning Service leads on, administers, manages and quality assures subcontracted provision, benchmarking against other local authorities.

A level of 12% is retained for commissioned accredited learning (referred to as other learning programme funding or adult skills funding by the ESFA) as a contract management fee. The fee retained amounts to no more than the area cost uplift applied to the unweighted base rate of ESFA approved qualifications as listed on the [Hub](#)

When agreeing subcontracted levels, the Community Learning Service will convert the 12% retained amount to a day rate of the Community Learning Team plus indirect costs as below:

The Community Learning Team has four staff members: Manager, Principal Officer, Officer and Data/Finance/Systems Officer. Costs have taken team time needed to planning, developing strategic direction, mandatory training, staff management, prepare reports, briefing Members, collect, cleanse and submit data, procurement, contracting, administration, observations of teaching and learning, financial management etc. The current day cost of the team is **£969.77**.

40% indirect costs are added to this to cover premises, recruitment, HR, accountancy, audit, cleaning, telephones, utilities (as per ESF rules).

With indirect costs added, the day rate is £1,357.68. As an example, £1,200 retained funding on a £10,000 contract would equate to 0.88 days, or 6.6 hours of team contract management support. However, we do **not** limit the support to providers in this way and this is simply a guide.

Funding table 2024-25	
ASF allocation – Tailored Learning	£401,150
ASF allocation – Adult Skills	£79,717
Total ASF budget	£480,867
Funding subcontracted (forecast internal/external delivery)	£217,059
*Funding retained (overall service costs)	£263,808
Total funding allocated for all delivery and service costs	£480,867
Funding retained from ESFA adult skills allocation towards management of adult skills subcontracting programme**	£9,566.04

Commissioned Community Learning (non-accredited) is funded under a grant arrangement and is **not** subject to the same 12% contract management fee.

***Funding retained (overall service costs)**

These costs cover the running of the Community Learning Team and all associated costs. These include, but are not limited to:

- Staff salary costs
- Staff National Insurance contributions
- Staff Pension contributions
- Service Apprenticeship Levy contributions
- Staff work from home and other allowances (eg. First Aider)
- Staff expenses
- Staff telephony, IT and all consumables
- Contributions to central services (HR, Legal etc.)

The above costs are used to provide general management of *all* subcontracted external and internal delivery, as set out below.

****All funding retained specifically against adult skills accredited provision is used to fund any growth in delivery in-year.**

Contract management of *all* subcontracted external and internal delivery will include:

West Berkshire Council will support our subcontractors in the following ways:

- 1.1 Funding will be confirmed before the start of each academic year and an individual Purchase Order Number issued to each partner
- 1.2 Have an annual contract review meeting
- 1.3 Provide additional support meetings as requested or required
- 1.4 Hold three Provider Meetings across the academic year where the provider network (Community Learning Partnership) will come together to share good practice, raise issues or concerns and hear important service updates and information. These will be managed and chaired by the Service
- 1.5 Confirm allocation and the payment process
- 1.6 Provide Policies and Procedures guidance including Prevent and Safeguarding Support
- 1.7 Provide advice on Government policy
- 1.8 Provide a full suite of course paperwork and support and training as required for tutors and managers in ensuring accurate completion
- 1.9 Provide a full tutor pack containing templates of all required paperwork and training, if required, on their completion.

Financial Support

- 1.10 Funding will be confirmed before the start of each academic year and an individual Purchase Order Number issued to each partner
- 1.11 Returns of paperwork will be made in line of the course start and end dates in order to claim funding three times over the course duration or academic year
- 1.12 After all paperwork has been processed, subcontractors will be informed of the invoice amount
- 1.13 Invoices must be sent to Customer Services - Exchequer, West Berkshire Council, Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury, RG14 5LD Berkshire.
- 1.14 Payment will be issued by BACS 30 days after receipt of invoice
- 1.15 Specific financial advice will be provided in relation to West Berkshire Council processes, ASF funding rules and other ESFA finance policy
- 1.16 Additional financial support for learner support is available on a case by case basis as determined by the needs of the learner

Data input, monitoring and analysis support

- 1.17 Each subcontractor will receive support for both data entry and data analysis:

- 1.18 Provision of online enrolment forms to enable learners to be enrolled onto courses
- 1.19 All learner enrolment and course data will be input by the service, unless directly input by the subcontractor
- 1.20 Any errors or missing data will be notified to the subcontractor for follow up
- 1.21 Additions and corrections will be completed by the service on the subcontractor's behalf on receipt of correct data
- 1.22 The ILR file will be created and submitted to the ESFA as required
- 1.23 All in-year data returns will be completed and submitted on the subcontractor's behalf
- 1.24 Learner and tutor feedback will be collected and input for each subcontractor as applicable
- 1.25 Individual and overall service targets will be shared with subcontractors including regular analysis of delivery against target as part of the contract review process.

Publicity and Marketing Support

- 1.26 Each subcontractor will receive marketing and communications support:
- 1.27 Courses promoted on social media, and other platforms
- 1.28 Appropriate courses advertised via Berkshire Opportunities
- 1.29 All subcontractors will be invited to take part in annual Adult Learner Achievement Awards event to promote and celebrate adult learning in the district.

Additional Support

- 1.30 Each subcontractor will receive additional support:
- 1.31 All data input and data quality control to ensure ILR and data uploads meets ESFA requirements
- 1.32 Support from the Service to manage the contract and associated support to ensure all ESFA requirements are met
- 1.33 One to one support for teaching, management and administrative staff as requested or identified; this is particularly relevant for new subcontractors
- 1.34 Support to identify strategic and funding opportunities within and outside West Berkshire
- 1.35 Delivery support is available equally to all providers. Greater support is available for new and inexperienced subcontractors, or where existing subcontractors have staff changes, as required.
- 1.36 Managers and officers within the Community Learning team will work closely with subcontractors on a regular basis to ensure the provision goes to plan.
- 1.37 Managers and officers within the Community Learning team will have the autonomy to do this using their previous skills, knowledge and expertise. Senior colleagues are readily available to support and assist as necessary.

- 1.38 Managers and officers within the Community Learning team will collect regular information to monitor subcontractor performance around:
- 1.39 Course starting dates against planned starting dates
- 1.40 Initial learner enrolment, and regular attendance throughout the provision
- 1.41 Progress of learning throughout the provision, to include, but limited to, observations of teaching and learning at appropriate points, talking to both the tutor and learners, reviewing progression paperwork, including ILPs and RARPA compliance, reviewing learner progress surveys, intended destination surveys, satisfaction surveys and any other form of feedback that will help contract management and future planning.
- 1.42 Follow the Complaints Policy against *any* complaint, notifying senior colleagues at all stages to ensure mitigation and resolution.
- 1.43 Ensuring all safeguarding practices and processes are followed at *every* point, including any concerns that are raised by any learner, parent/carer, staff member or other wider colleague(s).
- 1.44 Payments, following the payments scheduling, supporting the Finance Officer to ensure timely Purchase Orders, invoices, processing and payments.
- 1.45 Gathering all required learner data in a robust and timely manner to enable accurate and timely ILR uploads in line with the upload schedule.
- 1.46 On completion of the learning provision, gathering all required documentation, including learner and staff surveys.
- 1.47 Evaluate performance against proposed plans, using management information to monitor performance against overall performance and wider West Berkshire Council key performance indicators such as employment status, ethnicity, disability, area of deprivation, age etc.
- 1.48 Providing input in to reports for Senior Leaders, Council Members and Members of the Community Learning Scrutiny Group.
- 1.49 Encourage nominations for the annual Learner Achievement Awards, and support as needed.
- 1.50 Gather good news stories, and photos, to be included in the Making it Happen newsletter.

Communication of policy with current and potential subcontractors

This policy is communicated to current and potential subcontractors by being made available on the Council's website on the *Working with Community Learning* page: [Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy](#)

Current and potential subcontractors can discuss this policy at any time with the Community Learning Team by contacting them by email ac1team@westberks.gov.uk or by calling 01635 519060.

Timing of policy review

September 2024

This policy will be reviewed annually. If significant or substantial changes are made to ESFA funding or guidance or there are other central or local government changes that may affect it, the policy will be amended in year as necessary.

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