HART LEARNING GROUP

FURTHER EDUCATION FEES POLICY 2025/26

GOVERNANCE AND CONTROL

Date approved by Group CEO	May 2025
Scheduled review date	July 2026
Accountable member of Group SMT	Skip Singleton
Responsible member of staff	Skip Singleton
Document author	Skip Singleton

AUDIENCE

Applicable to students?	Yes
Accessible to students?	Yes
Accessible to public?	Yes

PURPOSE

- This policy details how Hart Learning Group (HLG) will apply fees for courses funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and those courses that receive no grant funding (referred to as 'Full Cost' courses). Higher Education students should refer to the HE Fees Policy.
- This policy applies to all courses starting between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026.
- This policy applies to students who wish to study at HLG who live outside of the devolved funding areas listed below:
  - Greater London Authority
  - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
  - Greater Manchester Combined Authority
  - Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
  - Tees Valley Combined Authority
  - West Midlands Combined Authority
  - West of England Combined Authority
  - North East Mayoral Combined Authority

- Sheffield City Region Combined Authority
- West Yorkshire Combined Authority
- York & North Yorkshire
- East Midlands
- Cornwall Council

- Students within these areas should consult the HLG Devolved Areas Fees Statement in conjunction with this policy for areas that differ.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Tuition fees will be set annually in advance of the start of the academic year. If any further programmes are launched during the academic year, fees will be set in advance of launch.

- Tuition fees are normally set at the DfE's fee contribution expectation. Where market forces suggest it would be appropriate to vary from this approach (to set either a higher or lower price) then, following agreement through HLG's business planning process or by agreement of SMT such a market change may be undertaken.

- Fees will be set so that - in addition to public funding - they will cover the full costs to the College of delivering education and training to students.

- The policy will be reviewed annually and is subject to any changes in guidance from Government funding bodies.

- Where information provided to HLG is inaccurate and as a result the students enrolment does not attract grant funding, HLG reserves the right to charge a fee in line with the tuition fees detailed below.

- Where a course is receiving funding from the DfE we cannot fund a learner who is unable to complete a learning aim or programme of study in the time they have available. This will be factored into eligibility discussions, particularly around residency.

TUITION FEES

16-18 Year Olds

- Applies to students aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August 2025.

- 16-18 students do not pay tuition fees for full or part time courses as they are fully funded by the DfE.

- Students who have turned 19 but began a two-year study programme when they were aged 18 still qualify as fully funded under the DfE funding methodology. However, this does not apply where a student undertakes a Level 3 qualification such as a subsidiary diploma and then progresses to a further Level 3 qualification the following year.

EHCP Students aged 19-24

- Students aged between 19 and 24 on the 31 August 2025 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) do not pay tuition fees as they are fully funded by the DfE.

19+ Students Studying Courses Below Level 2

- Students must be aged 19 years or older on their first day of study on the course.
- Tuition fees will be set in line with the funding values as detailed in the General Information section of this policy.
- Fee concessions may be available (please see fee concessions section).

19+ Students Studying Level 3 and Above

- Students must be aged 19 years or older on their first day of study on the course.
- Tuition fees will be set in line with the funding values defined by the DfE, as detailed in the General Information section of this policy.
- Fee concessions may be available for 19-23 year olds (please see the fees concessions section).
- Concessions may be available for students over the age of 24 in certain situations (please see the fee concessions section).
- If a student has already achieved a full Level 3 qualification there is no funding available through the DfE. Students would be expected to pay for the course themselves, or through an Advanced Learner Loan, or sponsorship agreement with an employer.

Full Cost Courses

- Full cost fees will be determined by curriculum areas in line with market conditions and will be set at an individual course level achieving a minimum course contribution of 40% unless otherwise agreed by SMT.

Higher Education

- Students undertaking higher education study at HLG should refer to the Higher Education Fees policy for tuition fee information.

FEE CONCESSIONS

Unemployed Students

- Students who are unemployed and in receipt of an eligible state benefit* may be entitled to their fees being waived. The student must meet the following conditions:
  - The student must be studying a course at Level 2 or below (except for 19-23 year olds as detailed below).
  - The students take home pay (disregarding benefits) is less than £952 a month (student is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £1534 a month (student has a joint benefit claim with their partner).
  - The student must want to be employed, or progress into more sustainable employment, and the learning must be directly relevant to their employment prospects and the local labour market needs.
- Where there is a joint claim then both individuals are eligible for a fee concession.

* A list of benefits accepted by HLG for fee concessions is available on request.

Students Below the DfE Earnings Threshold

- Students who are employed and cannot contribute to the cost of course fees may be entitled to a fee concession if they meet the following conditions:
  - The student must be studying a course at Level 2 or below, or studying a course included in the level 3 free courses for job offer.
  - The student must be earning less than £25,000 annual gross salary.
- Evidence of the gross salary will be requested to check student eligibility. Should this not be provided the student will not be eligible to receive this concession.

Progression to Level 2

- Students aged 19-23 who are progressing towards their first full Level 2 qualification may be eligible for a fee concession.
- To be eligible, they must be studying qualifications at entry level or Level 1 from the list of local flexibility qualifications from the DfE for 2025/2026.

Studying a First Full Level 2 Qualification

- Adult students aged 19-23 at the start of their course, who do not currently hold a full Level 2 qualification who are enrolling on a full Level 2 qualification are eligible for a fee concession as part of their legal entitlement to funding.
- To receive this concession, the student must be enrolling on a course with a learning aim listed in the DfE's legal entitlement listing for 2025/2026.

Studying a First Full Level 3 Qualification

- Adult students aged 19-23 at the start of their course, who do not currently hold a full Level 3 qualification who are enrolling on a full Level 3 qualification on either the legal entitlement list, or the level 3 free courses for jobs list, are eligible for a fee concession as part of their legal entitlement to funding.
- To receive this concession, the student must be enrolling on a course with a learning aim listed in the DfE's legal entitlement listing for 2025/26.
- Additionally, some students aged 24+ will also be able to receive this concession but they must be undertaking a learning aim listed in the level 3 courses for jobs listing and meet either the definition of 'below earnings threshold' or 'unemployed'.

Studying English, Maths and Digital Qualifications

- Adult students (unless delivered as part of a 19+ Apprenticeship) receive a fee concession for their English and maths courses if they are studying one of the following learning aims:
  - GCSE English Language (not already attained at Grades A* - C, or 4-9)
  - GCSE Maths (not already attained at Grades A* - C, 4-9)
  - Functional Skills English (Entry, Level 1 or Level 2)
  - Functional Skills Maths (Entry, Level 1 or Level 2)
  - Stepping-stone qualifications (including components, where applicable) in English or maths approved by the DfE
- Adult students (unless delivered as part of a 19+ Apprenticeship) receive a fee concession for their digital courses if they are studying one of the following learning aims:
  - Essential Digital Skills Qualification (EDSQ) up to and including level 1
  - Digital Functional Skills Qualifications (DFSQ) up to and including level 1

FULL TIME COURSES – ADDITIONAL OPTIONS

- Any relevant optional course additional to a full-time programme of study, as pre-defined and approved by the relevant Director of Curriculum, will be treated for the purposes of fees as part of the full-time programme and will not attract additional administration fees.
- Any additional course which is not relevant to the main programme of study will be charged full fees, including an additional administration fee.

OTHER FEES

- Charges for material fees can be made for equipment, special clothing or other materials. Where clothing or equipment is necessary for the student's health & safety, a charge will be made for clothing and equipment that the student retains, but the student will also have the option of borrowing the clothing or equipment free of charge. Financial assistance may be available.

- Students will be charged for other fees including library fines, replacements keys, replacement ID cards, printing and photocopying, trips, visits etc.
- Students will be charged for materials if they want to keep these materials outside of the learning environment (e.g. artwork, models and food).
- Subscription charges, made by professional bodies to become a member of that organisation, will be passed on to the students or employer. If achieving the course relies on membership, then the student will be charged this fee as a requirement of enrolling.
- Any optional extras that are offered in addition to a student's course will be charged for. e.g. trips and visits.
- Where a student requires a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check they will be required to pay the fee for this check, except for DfE funded 16-18 year olds, fully funded DfE students and students accessing loans from the Student Loans Company where the DBS is required in order for the student to pass the course.

EXAM FEES AND RESITS (FE STUDENTS)

- Examination fees relate to registration, certification and exam costs charged by Awarding Bodies that the College incurs on behalf of the student as part of their programme of study.
- The College reserves the right to charge an examination fee in the following circumstances:
  - Attendance is less than 85% (not due to illness)
  - Completion of work/assignment is less than 85% (not due to illness)
  - If a student fails to attend an exam without good reason
- Students will not be entered for their examination until all fees have been paid.
- Payment of an examination fee (including those students for whom the exam fee is waived for reasons stated above) entitles a student to have one attempt and one re-sit only at that examination. This only applies to a funded student. Where a student is full cost, then each re-sit must be paid for in advance and will not be booked until payment has been confirmed.
- All students, regardless of status or age, will be expected to pay for subsequent re-sits of an examination, or unit of an examination where the Awarding body makes a charge for re-sits. This must be paid before the College re-enters the student for the examination.
- All students re-sitting Functional Skills will not be charged for further attempts at these examinations.
- All students resitting an Exam to marginally improve a grade will need to pay for the re-sit.

PAYMENTS

- Payment is required before attendance at the first session of a learning programme. All fees due must be paid before the student can be entered for any examination or awarded any qualification unless an instalment plan has been agreed.

Instalment Plans

- Except for students receiving Student Loan Company loans, instalments are available if fees are above £150. Instalments are only available for individuals and not employers. Any additional fees must be paid with the first payment. Instalments must be paid by direct debit. There are no additional charges for paying by instalment.
- The following payment instalments are available:

Course Fees	Instalments
£150 - £499	50% of fee payable on entry the balance payable in equal instalments over two months
£500 - £999	40% of fee payable on entry, the balance payable in equal instalments over four months
£1000 +	30% of fee payable on entry, the balance payable in equal instalments over 6 months

- Instalments are not available to students paying fees with an Advanced Learning Loan. The College will receive the loan payment in instalments from the Student Loan Company.

Advanced Learner Loans

- As a general principle the loan will equal the value of the funding rate on the DfE's Find a Learning Aim service (FALA) unless otherwise agreed by SMT in response to market conditions.
- Advanced learner loans are paid directly to the college.
- Students who do not take out a loan to the full value of the course fee will be expected to pay the remainder of the course fee themselves.
- The minimum loan a student can apply for is £300.
- A tuition fee will not be charged that is over the maximum loan value on FALA.
- Any additional activities not essential to the learning, such as trips and visits will be charged separately from the loan.
- If a professional body membership fee is needed to pass the qualification the student will be asked to pay for this at enrolment.
- Students who withdraw from their programme of study after their initial liability point will be liable for partial tuition fees. The amount will be calculated on a monthly basis and based on the number of months left to study in an academic year.

Employer Sponsorship

- HLG accepts payment for a student's course from their employer where the student has an agreement with their employer.
- Where it has been confirmed, as part of the advice, guidance, and enrolment process, that the fees for a student are to be paid by an employer, formal written confirmation of this must be submitted to the College, via a letter or official purchase order that details the costs the employer is committing to paying HLG.
- The College must receive any such purchase order or letter of authority for payment by a third party at the point of enrolment, otherwise the student will be required to pay the full fee.

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

- Government funded students facing financial difficulty may be eligible to receive payments from the HLG's Student Support Funds to help meet extra costs of accessing education.
- Applications for additional financial support will be handled by the Student Services team.

RELATED POLICIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

- Customer Complaints Procedure
- Further Education Fee Refunds Policy
- Higher Education Fees and Refunds Policy
- Devolved Areas Fees Statement.