**Pound Plus Policy**

**2021-22**

**Scope**

Pound Plus is a term used to describe how learning providers demonstrate how they are maximising the value of the public funding they receive. Generating additional income/revenue is key to increasing participation within a constrained public funding environment. We ensure as much funding as possible is targeted at opportunities that support residents who experience social and/or economic disadvantage.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) requires providers (as part of their funding rules) to detail how they provide added value to their Community Learning Provision. The process of Pound Plus has been in place since the Skills Funding Agency’s publication of New Challenges, New Chances in 2011, and it ensures that the Community Learning Grant is seen as a *contribution* to the overall funds necessary to sustain Community Learning within a local geography.

Providers must have in place a ‘Pound Plus’ policy, which is available on their website or at their training venue and must invest Pound Plus fee income or savings for the people who most need, and can least afford, community learning provision.

**Purpose**

The aim of the CW&C Skills and Employment Service is to support targeted residents and their families to: ***‘Progress in Life and Work’***

The aim of Skills & Employment team is to maximise the funding grant (Adult Education Budget) allocated by the ESFA and increase the value to enable the delivery of a high-quality Adult Education, both accredited and non-accredited that is aligned to our local labour market and meets the needs of the individual learners across Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C).

CW&C Council and its partners recognise their responsibility to add value to the grant received and take appropriate action to attract additional income (actual or in kind), reducing costs to widen the offer available to disadvantaged learners who otherwise may not be able to afford course fees.

**Income Generation**

The ESFA grant contributes to the overall cost of delivering the programmes, but there is an expectation that the council and its partners will add value to this funding by attracting extra income.

Our Tuition Fee policy outlines how we generate income from those learners who can afford to pay for their community learning course. Fee remission is in place for individuals who, due to personal circumstances are unable to pay for some or all of their course.

CW&C will seek funding from other sources in order to provide progression for learners and complement the ESFA grant. To date this has included:

* NHS funding to support an Individual placement support (IPS) programme. This provides employment support in secondary mental health settings
* ESF/ Big Lottery funding to support the New Leaf project, providing employment support to adults in Ellesmere Port and Chester facing multiple barriers to progressing towards employment.
* DWP funding – to provide employment advisors in IAPT, working in partnership with Cheshire Commissioning Group to provide employment support to people in primary and secondary mental health.
* ESF to support the Journey First project aimed at providing employment support to vulnerable adults and young people
* ESFA funding to offer a supported internship programme to 20 young people with SEND.

This will also include funding from other sources or in-kind resources such as volunteers and sourcing sponsorship for events.

**Cost Savings**

* Accommodation - Courses are held where possible in venues that are accessible to learners and which are free of charge across the city. The majority of our provision is delivered through our 4 Work Zones (Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich and Winsford).
* Winsford and soon to be Ellesmere Port Work Zone shares its accommodation with Jobcentre Plus providing a more holistic offer to residents.
* Partnership Working - working with subcontractors, additional provision and services are provided that aim to engage hard to reach learners that the council may find difficult to achieve on its own.
* Reducing Costs to other services - Through partnership working CW&C has helped other services reduce their costs, for example through ‘upstreaming’ interventions that keep people healthy and fit, through reducing visits to GPs, through reducing social isolation (which is a major cost to services), and through reducing falls (through exercise). The ongoing partnerships with Job Centre Plus aims to reduce costs to local government through a structure that helps unemployed people get back into work.

Using the National TOMS tool for measuring social value we have calculated that we generated over £18 million for the borough (see table 1 below) during 2018/19. This is an indicative tool, rather than an exact science, but clearly demonstrates how the service adds value to Cheshire West and Chester.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Table 1**  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Code\*** | **SVP definition (abbrev.) / CW&C working definition** | **Number** | **£ factor** | **Result** |
|  | *Total Learner Count for Dataset* |  | *2,414* |  |   |
|  | NT1 | No. of local direct employees (FTE) hired or retained / Learners into Employment | 434 | £30,353 | £13,173,202 |
|  | NT3 | No. of local direct employees (FTE) hired or retained who were LTU (12+ months) / Learners into Employment who were LTU (12+ months) | 165 | £18,965 | £3,129,225 |
|  | NT7 | No. of hrs of support into work provided to unemployed people / SLH for Employability provision that resulted in a Job Outcome | 18,197 | £125.62 | £2,285,907 |
|  | NT9a | No. of weeks of training opportunities on the contract… / Learners completing Vocational Programmes | 198 | £258.45 | £51,173 |
|  | **Total**  |  |  |  | **£18,639,507** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Value for Money**

CW&C Skills & Employment team works closely with other AEB and ESF providers and referral stakeholders to ensure the curriculum available is efficient and avoids duplication of provision or activity.

We aim to provide effective courses that encourage participation which in turn leads to increased and improved progression opportunities.

**In Kind Resources**

It is difficult to quantify the value of all in kind resources, the added value of the knowledge of partners and sub-contractors over and above that of the council enhances the learner experience.

Other examples of in-kind resources include staff in other departments who support the development of the service with their expertise and support learners that have disabilities to access and complete a course, or organisations across the borough that advertise and promote courses for free.

Volunteers are both a cost saving and in-kind resource. Volunteers provide additional support in Work Zones both in the office and sourcing job vacancies for our customers. They provide additional support on open days, career fairs and help promote learning across the borough. All four Work Zones are supported by volunteers.

**How will Pound Plus be monitored?**

The Pound Plus activity will be monitored through the service’s annual self-assessment process. We will also ask the same from our sub-contractors through their own self-assessment reporting.