

Waltham Forest Adult Learning Service Fees and Refunds Policy (2026/27)

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Charges
3. Fee Categories
4. Reduced Fees
5. Payment
6. Withdrawals
7. Refunds
8. Equality & Fairness
9. Disclaimer
10. Appendix 1 – Scale of Fee Charges

1. Introduction

This policy applies to all fees relating to WFALS courses. It ensures:

- Fees are charged appropriately, consistently, fairly and transparently
- Information is published in a timely and accessible way
- Compliance with GLA and ESFA funding rules

WFALS supports learners from diverse backgrounds, ensuring:

- fair, open and transparent Information, Advice and Guidance
- every learner is assessed to ensure they can fully participate
- the right support is in place for each learner
- learning is accessible regardless of economic inequality

WFALS delivers both accredited and non-accredited adult learning provision funded by:

- Greater London Authority (GLA) – Adult Skills Fund
- Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

WFALS encourages learners to contribute financially where eligible, so that additional income can support wider participation.

Who can access courses?

Most courses are funded through the GLA. To enrol, learners must:

- Be aged 19+ as of 31 August 2024
- Be resident in London
- Be a UK or EEA citizen with the right of abode
- Have lived in the UK/EEA for the last 12 months

WFALS staff may require evidence of residency, eligibility, or benefit status.

Some courses require interview or assessment. WFALS cannot take enrolment if learners have not attended required assessments.

WFALS reserves the right to:

- cancel courses
- change charging policies
- refuse entry on non-discriminatory grounds

2. Charges

2.1 General Principles

- Fees reflect delivery costs and Government fee expectations.
- A minimum hourly rate is set annually for standard courses.
- Advertised fees include all cost elements and cannot be broken down proportionally.
- WFALS may vary hourly rates based on market circumstances.
- Discounts or promotional fees may be introduced.
- Fees may change after publication if required by funding or administrative changes.

2.2 Exam Fees

Some course fees include exam costs; some do not.

- Exam fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.
- Learners who miss exams or fail may need to pay full re-entry costs.
- If an awarding body increases fees mid-year, WFALS may pass these on.

Re-sits

- If failed and re-sitting within the same funding year → no charge
- If re-sitting in the next year → full charges apply
- Learners re-sitting to *improve* a grade pay full re-entry cost

2.3 Other Learner Charges

Learners paying tuition fees must also pay for:

- materials
- consumables
- registration fees (where applicable)

3. Fee Categories

3.1 General Principles

Fees depend on:

1. Whether a learner is eligible for Government funding
2. Type of course and venue
3. Learner's fee status

There are three funding categories:

- Full Funding (no payment required)

- Co-Funding (subsidised fee)
- Non-Funded / Full Cost (full fee charged)

Eligibility requires:

- meeting residency rules (12 months minimum)
- meeting funding-criteria requirements
- providing valid evidence of entitlement (benefits within last 6 months)

Full Funding

Learner pays no tuition, exam, registration or required course charges.

Co-Funding

Learner pays the advertised price, plus any additional costs.

Non-Funded (Full Cost)

Learner pays full commercial cost.

3.2 Fee Status — Learners aged 19+

Unless specified in the policy tables, learners must pay full fees plus additional charges.

3.3 Definition of Unemployed

A learner is unemployed if ANY of the following apply:

- Receiving JSA (including NI credits only)
 - Receiving ESA
 - Receiving Universal Credit with take-home pay below:
 - £892/month (single adult)
 - £1,437/month (joint claim)
 - Receiving other benefits while meeting the same income thresholds
 - Not receiving benefits but seeking work and WFALS confirms the course supports employment
 - Released on temporary licence and not MoJ funded
-

3.4 Advanced Level & Level 3–4 Courses

- Age determines cost.
- Learners aged 19–23 completing their *first* full Level 3 → free

- Learners aged 24+ or those with prior Level 3 → may apply for an Advanced Learner Loan

Loan repayments begin only when earning over £25,000/year.

Learners taking an Access to HE loan that go on to complete a degree will have their loan written off.

Loan approval must be completed 3 weeks before course start.

Failure to secure loan approval means learners must pay full fees or lose their place.

4. Reduced Fees

4.1 Reduced Fees for Tailored Learning (TL)

Reduced fees apply for learners receiving:

- JSA
- ESA
- Universal Credit
- Other State Benefits
- Dependents named on benefit documentation

Reduced fees apply only to tuition, not to:

- exam fees
- registration fees
- materials

4.2 Course Fees for Specific Groups

WFALS offers specialised fee structures for:

- a. Courses planned for employees of Waltham Forest Council
- b. Courses for voluntary organisations or businesses (standard rates apply)
- c. Offsite courses delivered for partner organisations
- d. Community learning delivered with voluntary groups
- e. One-to-one specialist training (£125/hour)

4.3 Learner Hardship Support Fund

WFALS may offer discretionary support for learners who:

- receive income-based benefits
- can demonstrate hardship

Support may include covering:

- exam fees

- materials
- books
- external childcare costs (Ofsted-registered)

5. Payment

5.1 Payment Methods

Payment may be made by:

- Mastercard
- Visa

Receipts are issued to the registered learner, unless sponsored by an employer.

Payments made by third parties still credit the learner's account.

6. Withdrawals

6.1 Definition

Withdrawal is the complete termination of a learner's registration on both the programme of study and all units associated with it.

6.2 Withdrawal by a Learner

If a learner is planning to withdraw from a course at the Waltham Forest Adult Learning Service, the learner must:

1. Make an appointment with a member of the curriculum team to discuss the reasons and possible options.
 - If the learner cannot withdraw in person, they should telephone 020 8496 2974 or email adult.learning@walthamforest.gov.uk, supplying the following details: name, date of birth, date of withdrawal, reason for leaving and what they will be doing next (e.g., employment, another course).
 - Leaving the course early: learners will still have to pay the full cost of the course. Each course requires a minimum number of enrolments to cover running costs and a maximum number to ensure appropriate tuition. Once WFALS has accepted an enrolment, the place will not be offered to anyone else. If a learner leaves early, WFALS will lose all the government subsidy for that learner. WFALS cannot always fill places that become available during the year and, for some courses, cannot accept late enrolments where it would be too late to complete the required work.
2. Return any WFALS property within the set timeframe.

3. Learners with a Student Loan must also complete the Student Loans Company Withdrawal Form. Failure to do so may result in continued loan liability.

6.3 Withdrawal of a Course Place by WFALS

- Absence – WFALS will automatically withdraw a learner from a course because of non-attendance or non-participation in any element of their agreed learning plan after four consecutive weeks of absence from planned sessions. If a learner knows they will be absent for more than four weeks, they must inform the respective curriculum team in writing, explaining the reason and timeframe. WFALS reserves the right to withdraw the learner after four weeks' absence if not satisfied the learner will genuinely return to their programme, and to invoice for any outstanding fees.
- Funding regulations require accurate recording of withdrawals on learners' electronic records. If a learner leaves early, any recorded achievement must be credible and justifiable. Achievement of early leavers will be reviewed to ensure accuracy and credibility.

7: Refunds (Standalone Refund Policy Content — replaces the Fees Policy refund section in full)

7.1 Policy Overview

This refund policy applies to all courses provided by Waltham Forest Adult Learning Service. Refunds are granted only under specific circumstances, such as if a course is moved or cancelled. Refunds are not available for learners who change their mind or fail to attend.

7.2 Eligibility for Refunds

Refunds will only be issued if:

- The course has been rescheduled, impacting a learner's ability to attend.
- The course has been cancelled by WFALS.

In some cases, learners may transfer the balance of their course payment to another course within the same academic year.

7.3 Refund Request Process

When a refund is due, please note WFALS is unable to refund directly to the original payment method. Refunds are issued to the learner's bank account via bank transfer through the Council's Finance Department.

To facilitate this, the following documentation is required for verification:

- A recent bank statement dated within the last three months (PDF, screenshot or photo).
- The statement must show the account number, sort code, account holder name, and bank name (including the bank's logo where possible).

Learners may obscure transaction details but should leave visible the statement dates, which confirm the account's recent activity and validity. This verification process helps prevent fraudulent activity and ensures refunds are processed to the correct account.

7.4 Contact for Refund Queries

If you have questions regarding eligibility or the refund process, please contact the team on 020 8496 2974.

Note: Where learners request a transfer or credit (instead of a refund), this may be approved at WFALS's discretion within the same academic year.

8. Equality and Fairness

Waltham Forest Adult Learning Service is committed to the promotion of equality, diversity and providing a supportive environment for all. This policy has been reviewed to ensure it does not discriminate—either intentionally or unintentionally—against any protected characteristic (age, disability, gender including gender identity, race, religion or sexual orientation) and meets obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

9. Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this policy is accurate. WFALS and the Council reserve the right to:

- cancel any course or change the charging policy where costs may result in financial loss
- cancel any course where there is a lack of appropriate resources
- refuse entry to a course on any non-discriminatory grounds
- amend fees when errors arise or policy changes are required by Government, Council or governing bodies

Appendix 1 – Scale of Fee Charges

Effective from 1st August 2025 for published courses and activities

Note: Fees for 19+ learners.

Note: No concessions for learners aged 16–18.

Adult Skills Fund (ASF)

Provision	Charging Basis	Fee Charge	Exam/Accreditation Fee	Notes
Adult Skills Fund (ASF)	Standard Fee	£4.00–£2.90 per hour depending on course length	+ Accreditation Fee + Exam Fee	Admin fee included; early-bird discount available; DLSF/Exceptional Fund support may apply.
ESOL	—	+ £20 Accreditation Fee (excl. benefits)	—	—
Adults in receipt of qualifying state benefits	—	FREE	—	Income thresholds: £892 (single), £1,437 (joint).

Tailored Learning (TL) – ACL

Standard Fee ranges £5.00/hour (1–12 hours) to £4.30/hour (61–80 hours).

Discounted Fee (70%) applies for means-tested benefits.

TL Family Learning (AFL 1)

Provision	Charging Basis	Fee Charge	Notes
TL Family Learning	Standard Fee	FREE	Materials charges may apply.

Overseas Learners

Provision	Fee Basis	Fee Charge	Exam/Accreditation Fee	Notes
Overseas Learners	Standard Fee	£12 per hour	+ Accreditation Fee + Exam Fee	Not eligible for GLA/ESFA funding.

Full Cost Courses

Provision	Fee Basis	Fee Charge	Exam/Accreditation Fee
Full cost courses (not publicly funded)	Standard Fee	Advertised price	+ Accreditation Fee + Exam Fee

Notes

- Additional material costs may apply.
- Courses subject to Government, Council, and Governing Body policies.
- Fees may be amended when errors arise or policy changes occur.
- Class sizes affect course viability; classes may change or close.
- Exam schedules set externally; WFALS not responsible for scheduling issues.
- WFALS may refuse enrolment or exam entry.
- Contact: adult.learning@walthamforest.gov.uk