



Name of Policy /Strategy:	Fees Policy		
Updated by:	CEO		
Approved by:	Board of Directors	Date:	August 2026
Implementation Date:	August 2026		
Review date*:	July 2027		
This document will be reviewed annually or when there are operational or legislative changes that require a review.			
Associated policies, procedures & Strategies:			
Amendments (include date)	Changes made August 26 • Referred to DWP where appropriate • Updated Apprenticeships paragraph in line with updated funding rules • Updated earnings threshold in line with updated funding rules • Reviewed and updated list of groups who can be fully funded for Tailored Learning in line SS&L strategy and funding rules. • Removed reference to sub-contractors • Added full funding eligibility list for ASF Qualification to improve clarity. Changes made March 25 • Consistency with wording changing 'government funding' to 'funding body' • Funding definitions expanded to include additional terminology included in the Policy • Tailored Learning eligibility criteria aligned to Somerset Council' s (funding body) Fees Policy with reference to their eligibility criteria • Reference to FCFJ funded courses added under the Advance Learner Loans section		

Policy Overview

This policy explains how course fees are set and charged at SS&L. It provides information for learners, customers and staff about course fees, funding eligibility, payment arrangements, financial support and refunds. It has been written in accordance with funding rules set out by the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Any amendments to this policy will require the approval of the CEO. This policy will be reviewed annually and approved by the Board of Directors.

SS&L reserves the right to:

- cancel any course or change its policy where costs may result in financial loss.
- cancel any course where there is lack of appropriate resources.
- refuse entry to a course on any non-discriminatory grounds.

Funding Definitions

Funding Body: an organisation that pays all or part of the cost of eligible learning. The relevant sections below explain the requirements for full funding.

DfE: Department for Education

DWP: Department for Work and Pensions

Unfunded Course: a course or programme that is not funded by a funding body. The learner or employer is expected to pay the full cost of the provision.

Advanced Learning Loan: where eligible, a learner may apply for a loan through the Student Loans Company to help pay the tuition fee for an eligible course that is not directly funded by a funding body.

Young Person (16-18): an individual aged under 19 on 31 August of the academic year in which they enrol.

Adult Learner (aged 19+): an individual aged 19 or over on 31 August of the academic year in which they enrol.

Government Contributions

Government funding may cover all or part of the cost of an eligible course or apprenticeship. The amount of funding available depends on the learner, employer and course eligibility requirements set by the relevant funding body.

Depending on these requirements, the government may:

- fully fund the cost of learning.
- expect either the employer or learner to contribute towards the costs of learning.
- expect the employer to cover the full cost of learning.
- expect the learner to cover the full cost of learning, possibly through an Advanced Learning Loan.

Government Funded Courses

Adult Skills Fund (ASF) - qualification courses

Learners may be eligible for full funding if they meet the relevant residency, learner and qualification requirements in the ASF funding rules and one of the following applies:

- they are aged 19+ and meet the English and/or maths legal entitlement;
- they are aged 19+ and meet the essential digital skills legal entitlement;
- they are aged 19-23 and are undertaking their first full Level 2 through the legal entitlement;
- they are aged 19-23 and are undertaking their first full Level 3 through the legal entitlement;
- they are aged 19+ and earn less than the applicable ASF earnings threshold (£26,800 for 2026/27), including eligible learners who are unemployed or economically inactive with no earnings, and are undertaking eligible provision; or
- meet the eligibility requirements for an applicable ASF policy entitlement or offer, including eligible Level 3/Free Courses for Jobs provision.

Learners who are not eligible for full funding may be required to contribute towards the cost of their course. Under the ASF funding methodology, the assumed learner contribution is 50% of the unweighted value of the learning aim (course), plus any applicable registration or examination fees.

Where a fee is charged, the total of the funding and the learner's fee must not exceed the fully funded weighted rate for the learning aim. The learner should not be charged more than 50% of the unweighted rate.

If a learner has relevant prior learning that reduces the amount of teaching or assessment required, the course fee may be reduced where applicable.

Once a learner has enrolled on a course there will be no change to the fee charged.

However, eligibility to funding will be reviewed again for any subsequent enrolment.

Tailored Learning (previously Community Learning)

The primary purpose of Tailored Learning is to support people who live or work in Somerset to move into employment and/or progress to further learning. It also supports wider outcomes, including improving health and wellbeing, helping parents and carers to support their child's learning, and developing stronger communities.

Tailored Learning can be fully funded for people living or working in Somerset who can provide evidence that they fall within one of the groups below. Evidence of eligibility will be requested:

- Carers
- Care leavers
- Learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability
- Mental health service users and adults with mild to moderate mental health problems
- Learners who are homeless, living in sheltered accommodation, or at risk of becoming homeless
- Learners who earn less than £26,800 per year
- Learners with refugee status
- Asylum seekers in receipt of the equivalent of an income-based state benefit
- Learners released on temporary licence, studying outside a prison environment and not funded by the Ministry of Justice
- Learners yet to achieve their first full Level 2 qualification
- Learners yet to achieve or be working at Level 2 in English and/or maths
- Learners yet to achieve a Level 1 essential digital skills qualification and enrolling on a digital-focused course
- Learners attending family learning provision to ensure equitable parental support within a school setting

If a learner is not eligible for a fully funded Tailored Learning course, a fee of £8 per hour will be charged. Additional material costs may apply to some sessions.

Apprenticeships

Government funding towards apprenticeship training and assessment depends on the apprentice's age and the employer's circumstances.

For apprentices aged 16-24, the government will fund 100% of training and assessment costs up to the funding band maximum where the employer does not pay the apprenticeship levy.

For apprentices aged 25 or over, non-levy-paying employers are required to contribute 5% of the training and assessment costs, up to the funding band maximum.

Where a levy-paying employer has insufficient funds in its Apprenticeship Service account, the government contributes 75% for a new apprentice aged 25 or over, with the employer contributing 25%.

Apprentices aged 16-24 may be fully government funded up to the funding band maximum.

Unfunded Courses

Fees for unfunded courses will be set to reflect the full cost of providing the course. Fees must be approved by the CEO before the course is promoted.

Fee reductions will not apply to unfunded courses. Course fees are payable in full in advance of starting the course.

Where a learner does not qualify for funding or an Advanced Learning Loan, SS&L may consider a payment plan on a case-by-case basis. This applies to courses costing more than £100 and lasting more than 100 days. A 50% upfront payment will normally be required.

Course reselling: in some cases, SS&L will resell a course provided by another organisation. In these circumstances, all fees are payable on enrolment and instalment plans will not be available. The course provider will set the fee, which may include an administration charge.

Young People Aged 16-18

A 16-18-year-old cannot be funded until after the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they turn 16, usually known as Year 11. In accordance with DfE funding rules, learners aged 16-18 undertaking DfE-funded courses will not normally be charged compulsory tuition, registration or examination fees.

SS&L may charge learners aged 16-18 for unfunded courses and for exam or resit charges where the required attendance or progress requirements have not been met.

Advanced Learning Loans

For learners wishing to apply for an Advanced Learning Loan, SS&L will provide a funding and information letter containing the information needed to apply to the Student Loans Company (SLC).

Learners aged 19-23 who do not already hold a full Level 3 qualification may be legally entitled to full funding for an eligible Level 3 qualification. SS&L will explain the funding options and the implications of choosing an Advanced Learning Loan where a learner may be eligible for full funding before a loan application is made.

Reduction of Fees

Learners entitled to full funding will be required to provide evidence to confirm their eligibility.

Fees for learners who do not meet the specified fee-reduction terms and conditions may only be changed or reduced with the express permission of the CEO.

If a learner enrolls after the course start date, the CEO may approve a pro-rata reduction in the fee.

Payments

The course fee covers tuition and examining body costs and may also include materials and resources.

Fees can be paid by credit or debit card.

All fees are due in full at enrolment. SS&L may offer a payment plan for courses costing more than £100 and lasting more than 100 days. A 50% upfront payment is required, and all remaining instalments must be paid no later than two months before the planned course end date.

Payment by instalments is not available for courses lasting less than 25 hours.

Learners who withdraw before the expected end date will still be required to pay their fees in full. In exceptional circumstances, a refund may be considered; please see the Refunds section.

Examining and awarding body fees may include registration, certification and administration costs. These will generally be included in the overall course fee, but additional charges may apply.

Charges may apply for exam retakes, re-entry or rescheduling where a learner has been absent without extenuating circumstances. These charges must be approved by the CEO and paid before the examination entry is made.

SS&L reserves the right to change course fees. The price confirmed at enrolment will apply to that enrolment. Promotions introduced after enrolment cannot be applied retrospectively.

If a learner wishes to transfer to another course after the cooling-off period, they must make a request in writing. Any transfer of fees must be approved by the CEO and will take account of the cost of learning already delivered. A £25 administration charge will apply.

Payment on behalf of a learner

Where an employer or other sponsor has agreed to pay all or part of a course fee, the learner remains responsible for the fee until SS&L receives payment from the sponsor. This does not apply to apprenticeships.

Learners whose employer or another sponsor has agreed to pay their fees will be required to sign the learner payment section of the enrolment documentation. They may also be asked to provide a letter or purchase order from the third party confirming that it will pay the full course fee.

Financial Support

Learners should apply for discretionary learner support or bursaries at enrolment. Financial support may be awarded where the relevant eligibility criteria are met.

If a learner's personal circumstances change and they are concerned about paying outstanding fees, they should contact SS&L as soon as possible.

- Please see the Bursaries policy for further information on available bursaries.
- Please see the Discretionary Learner Support policy for further information on support.

Refunds

A 7-day cooling-off period applies to enrolments, or 14 days where the purchase is made online. During the applicable cooling-off period, a full refund will be given if the learner tells SS&L that they wish to withdraw, provided this is before the course start date.

If a course is cancelled by SS&L, or confirmed as already full, learners will receive a full refund of fees paid.

Where a learner withdraws because of exceptional personal circumstances, or because SS&L has not delivered the course or service as could reasonably be expected, an application for a refund or credit must be made in writing to the CEO.

Any other requests for refunds must be made in writing and be approved by the CEO.

Responsibility and Liability

SS&L will follow the requirements relating to financial contributions under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Learners are responsible for paying all course fees due from the point of enrolment.

If fees are unpaid:

- The learner's work may not be marked or submitted for an award.
- References for employment beyond confirmation of dates and courses attended may not be issued.
- The learner may not be permitted to progress to the next year of study or enrol on another course at SS&L.
- The learner will not receive any certificates.
- Outstanding debt may be referred to a debt collection agency for recovery.

Learners who complete their course earlier than planned must continue to pay any remaining fees.

Learners must tell SS&L about any change in their circumstances that may affect their eligibility for fee remission between enrolment and the start of each course.

Learners should contact SS&L as soon as possible if they are concerned that they may be unable to make an outstanding fee payment.