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Merton
Adult
Learning



Merton Adult Learning

Pound Plus Policy 2020 - 2021



Table of Contents

Pound Plus Policy	3
Who is this policy for?	3
What is this policy for?	3
Why Merton Adult Learning Service uses <i>Pound Plus</i>	3
How we measure <i>Pound Plus</i>	4
What we use <i>Pound Plus</i> savings and income for	5
How we will further develop <i>Pound Plus</i>	5

Pound Plus Policy

Who is this policy for?

This policy is for Merton Adult Learning staff and sub-contracted providers.

What is this policy for?

Pound Plus was developed in 2013 to help adult learning services across the country show how they add value to the money provided by government for community learning. It does this by looking at the additional investment (or savings made) in community learning which can be estimated in monetary terms and explaining how this is then used to support the most disadvantaged learners in the borough.

Pound Plus shows how learning providers make the most of public funding. This is important because making the most of the income which supports community learning helps increase participation in adult learning at a time when government funding is reducing.

Pound Plus adds up various elements that contribute to adult learning, such as direct income, cost savings, value for money and fees. It also looks at how this income or saving is re-invested in community learning. According to the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), “*the ‘Pound’ represents the public pound, the ‘Plus’ is everything else that you can generate in addition to your non-formula community learning funding allocation, such as fee income, funding from other sources, resources in kind and other sources of revenue / sponsorship / volunteering*”.

Pound Plus helps to show that the money provided by government can deliver learning over and above the amount of the initial investment. In other words, it can help prove that for every £1 of public funding given to Merton Adult Learning, it creates additional investment to get more local residents into the learning that they need.

Merton Adult Learning receives funding from the GLA and the ESFA to run its learning provision. The GLA and ESFA has Funding and Performance Management Rules for Grant-funded Providers 2019-20 which require all organisations to publish a *Pound Plus* policy. This policy explains how *Pound Plus* fee income / savings are invested for the people who most need, and can least afford, community learning provision.

Why Merton Adult Learning Service uses *Pound Plus*

In order to get more and different adults into learning in Merton, it is important that we work hard to generate additional income and revenue. This is even more important now as government funding is more restricted.

Pound Plus lets Merton Adult Learning Service measure how much extra value is being added to community learning by additional income, cost efficiencies and savings. We create this extra value through our subcontractors charging course fees to those who can afford it, working with partners, developing volunteers, applying for extra funding and grants, and making sure our

systems are effective. *Pound Plus* provides a way for the additional value created to be recognised and recorded.

Merton Adult Learning Service delivers quality training and support that contributes to wider community learning, but this activity is not always easy to measure or report. *Pound Plus* is a useful way to measure the value added to our main government adult learning funding, and to demonstrate how well the Service contributes to community learning and development. It also allows us to measure some of the social impact of learning such as on health, wellbeing and employability.

Pound Plus lets Merton Adult Learning Service invest more in community learning so we can deliver support and courses to our most disadvantaged residents in a way that would not be possible with just the basic government allocation of funding. This is very important in Merton as one of our key strategic objectives is to widen participation in learning, especially by providing opportunities for our priority groups who are disadvantaged either socially or economically.

Although not everything can be measured in a financial way and *Pound Plus* cannot capture all the wider benefits of Merton Adult Learning and its partnerships, it does help to show how much extra value is added each year to the basic funding.

How we measure *Pound Plus*

Pound Plus is measured by the learning providers who are subcontracted to deliver courses for Merton Adult Learning, as well as by the central planning team. Joint strategic and curriculum planning by all the organisations who are part of Merton Adult Learning also allows us to make sure that the money saved or created is used to benefit learners. In particular, additional funds or savings are directed to our priority groups and to those who might otherwise not be able to take part in learning.

The *Pound Plus* framework lets us estimate the additional financial contribution made towards the cost of delivering community learning. These are the main things that Merton Adult Learning looks at and measures:

- **Additional funding** – this comes from:
 - Fee income
 - Bids for additional funding
 - Funding from other government departments (e.g. income from local authorities to deliver targeted programmes such as health, offenders; guidance interviews from the National Careers Service; public health funding)

- **Savings** – these come from:
 - ‘In-kind’ contributions (e.g. free publicity for courses, recruitment of learners, access to learning provider staff and time, reduced or free cost for hire of premises, use of equipment or consumables)
 - Volunteer activities (including learner support in the classroom or in other activities, learning champions, curriculum development, signposting, advice, infrastructure or delivery support).

- **Active partnerships** – these include:
 - Working with other learning providers to share expertise
 - Working with local people, services and organisations to create a joined-up approach to adult learning and wellbeing
 - Working with other agencies and council services
- **Efficiencies** – these include:
 - Sharing services (e.g. back office services, marketing, IT support, finance, HR)
 - Sharing premises
 - Pooling resources (e.g. with other adult learning services)
 - Sharing professional training and development for staff and tutors
 - More coordinated planning (e.g. with other council departments)
 - Reviewing operational systems to minimise waste
- **Rationalisation** – this includes:
 - Improving and re-focusing of the curriculum offer
 - Better progression pathways
 - Reduced duplication of provision

What we use *Pound Plus* savings and income for

All *Pound Plus* savings and income is used to help deliver Merton Adult Learning Service's Strategic Plan and Community Learning Objectives. These objectives include planning and commissioning learning that can:

- Focus on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate
- Offer more provision in the local community
- Extend and widen provision at no cost to those unable to pay
- Support progression on to further learning and work
- Support key skills around literacy, numeracy, language and digital skills
- Contribute to family learning, health and social well-being
- Develop stronger and more engaged communities
- Develop new courses and curriculum (including a focus on pre-employment training and health/wellbeing)
- Expand our outreach work to more communities and individuals
- Upgrade our equipment (including mobile IT resources for community venues)

How we will further develop *Pound Plus*

We are committed to using *Pound Plus* to help us deliver more learning to more people in Merton. To do this we will:

- Ask our subcontracted learning providers to build *Pound Plus* calculations into all their planning and delivery
- Encourage financial contributions from learners where they can afford it
- Encourage financial contributions from employers where appropriate and feasible
- Encourage financial and in-kind contributions from community partner organisations.
- Increase the involvement of volunteers in the delivery of Community Learning.
- Use annual data to create a set of baseline Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relating to *Pound Plus* to evidence how additional income and/or efficiencies are adding to the GLA & ESFA allocation
- Use these KPIs to set appropriate targets for future years.
- Review and evaluate progress as part of the annual quality cycle against KPIs
- Develop and strengthen our internal partnerships with other Merton Borough directorates (including enterprise, jobs and skills, libraries, early years, regeneration, community development), supporting services which strive to meet the needs of residents.
- Develop and strengthen our external partnerships across Merton (including employers, community centre, schools, faith groups, hostels, sheltered schemes, job centres and children's centres).
- Develop and strengthen our external partnerships across the adult learning sector (including the GLA, the ESFA, other local authority learning providers, FE Colleges, independent training providers).
- Look to develop sponsorship, grants, tenders and bids for additional funding from central government departments, charities and trusts
- Look for funding from other sources (including income from local authorities to deliver targeted programmes such as health, offenders; guidance interviews from the National Careers Service; public health funding).