

**REPORT TO: NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE -
19 AUGUST 2002**

REPORT ON: ADULT EDUCATION FUND (GRANTS TO INDIVIDUALS)

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT

REPORT NO: 617-2002

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek Committee approval for extending the eligibility criteria of the Adult Education Fund to include those undertaking study within adult literacy programmes.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Committee is asked to acknowledge the benefit of the small individual grants to adults with disadvantage undertaking part-time vocational courses of study, when funds are unavailable from other sources.

2.2 The Committee is asked to approve the extension of eligibility criteria to include non-accredited, vocationally relevant courses of study for adults with literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other language and/or lip reading needs.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The extended criteria, once approved, will continue to operate within the monies allocated annually to the Adult Education Fund in the Department's Revenue Budget.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Access to skills, knowledge and information for those facing additional communication barriers will be increased.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Adults undertaking part-time vocational study can apply for grant aid through the Adult Education Fund for assistance with course fees, travel expenses, childcare costs and books/materials. Those whose difficulties with literacy/communication prevent them from undertaking accredited courses cannot, currently, qualify for aid with expenses involved in attending literacy/English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)/lip-reading courses. Approval of this eligibility modification would increase access opportunities for those most in need of basic education.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 The Adult Education Fund is made up of three components

grants to Adult Education Associations
grants to Community Groups
grants to Individuals

6.2 Grants to Individuals (maximum award £200) are available to adults experiencing disadvantage in order to assist with the costs of part-time courses of study where there were no other sources of help.

6.3 In the years 1996 to the present, these small grants have proved invaluable to adults undertaking basic qualifications which increase their chances of employment – often a very small award can remove barriers such as costs of bus fares and makes the difference between an individual undertaking a course and not.

6.4 Current criteria ensure that awards are available only to those undertaking accredited courses with a vocational relevance. As a consequence, a number of adults regularly attending

literacy classes and English classes for speakers of other languages are excluded from the possibility of assistance. While there is no doubt that these courses have a vocational relevance, because the content is either below accredited level or too focused on a specific need, students are penalised: unemployed adults may be regularly paying bus fares to attend or walking impressive distances across the city to attend a literacy session.

- 6.5 The addition of the following sentence into the eligibility criteria will have the effect of allowing the most educationally disadvantaged access to funds on the same basis as those learning at a higher level:

Awards may also be granted for the following part-time non-accredited courses: adult literacy, numeracy, lip reading and English for speakers of other languages.

7.0 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Director of Support Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information were relied on to any material extent in the preparation of this report.

Director of Neighbourhood Resources and Development

Date

7 August 2002 sm/pp/dm (Amended 30.07.02)