

# Adult Community Learning

## Punctuality and Attendance Policy and Guidance

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SUPPORTED BY  
**MAYOR OF LONDON**



# Punctuality and Attendance Policy and Guidance

## Context:

Research shows that learners who are dropping out of provision may only be 'dipping out' for a while, to meet other commitments. Despite the complex combination of barriers to learning that some learners present, there appears to be few differences in the demographic characteristics of adults who commit fully to their studies and those who do not.

Adult Community Learning want to ensure that we are using a broad range of effective strategies to support learners' attendance and punctuality. We also need to ensure we identify and prevent drop out before it happens wherever possible.

There are a range of strategies that can encourage learners to fully commit and persist with their learning. Motivation is a key factor in a learner's level of commitment, having multiple disadvantages and their effects may impact on a learners' potential to achieve and weaken their motivation. Tutors, and support staff need to make themselves aware of the reasons that may affect attendance and punctuality and encourage the learner to explore strategies to overcome these issues.

Adult Community Learning is committed to identifying and addressing the issues which impact on learners' punctuality and attendance. Not only will this encourage full participation and therefore improve retention and achievement figures but will also support learners to develop strategies that will enable them to progress in all areas of their lives.

## Aims of the policy:

1. To support Adult Community Learning learners to achieve and progress by developing good attendance and punctuality
2. To improve retention and success rates on Adult Community Learning courses
3. To ensure learners' support needs are accurately identified for them to attend regularly and be on time for classes
4. To ensure that all staff are aware of and carry out their roles and responsibilities
5. To ensure learners are aware of their responsibilities
6. To ensure that there is a consistent and effective approach across the Service

## Measurement of the impact of this policy:

- Retention and achievement rates
- Fewer courses cancelled due to low attendance
- Feedback from learners.
- Tutor/venue feedback
- Monitored through the observation process

## Definitions:

**Punctuality:** This may be a one off, or persistent lateness for classes affecting the quality of teaching and learning, either for the individual or the whole class.

**Attendance:** How many sessions a learner attends, how many they miss and their pattern of coming to the class.

For the purposes of recording and managing attendance, if a learner arrives 15 minutes or more after the class start time then they are late.

### **Appendix 1**

Guidance on reasons and suggested support

### **Appendix 2**

Guidance on action for instances of unnotified lateness or absence

# Policy

1. Those learners identified at risk shall have a support needs assessment
2. Line managers will ensure all tutors are aware of support needs in their class and use this information to plan their teaching and learning (as evidenced in schemes of work and lesson plans)
3. All tutors will keep an up-to-date group profile for each course with the support and differentiation needs for each learner on it
4. All learners are aware of Adult Community Learning expectations around attendance and punctuality.
5. All learners will have a course/progress review
6. If a learner has three consecutive unauthorised absences during a course with no known plan to return, they will be withdrawn from the course
7. Registers must be kept for every lesson, including marking learners as late where required
8. Team Leaders must have an action plan for implementing and monitoring attendance and punctuality across their curriculum, based on this policy

## Guidance and planning to deliver the policy:

### **1 – Learners identified at risk will have a support needs assessment.**

Tutors must complete a support needs assessment with each learner.

### **2 - Line managers will ensure all tutors are aware of support needs in their class and use this information to plan their teaching and learning (as evidenced in schemes of work and session plans).**

All tutors must be informed of this policy via line management processes and induction training whilst delivering at centres/learning venues. Line managers are to ensure that tutors are aware of the support needs of their learners and using this to plan their lessons effectively to support all learners.

### **3 - All tutors will keep current group profile for each course with the support needs for each learner on it.**

All tutors are expected to compile a group profile for each course they deliver which must include relevant information gleaned from the support needs assessment. The amount written about each learner will vary depending on the information given.

### **4 - All learners are aware of Adult Community Learning expectations around attendance and punctuality.**

All learners must be informed of the policy at induction stage and whilst ground rules are being set, and as and when necessary if issues arise regarding their punctuality and attendance.

### **5 - All learners will have a course/progress review.**

Tutors are expected to carry out course reviews with each learner on the course to discuss their progress. Punctuality and attendance should form an integral part of the review discussion. The time allocated to each learner will vary depending on lesson time available.

### **6 - If a learner has three consecutive unauthorised absences during a course (including last 3 sessions) with no known plan to return, they should be withdrawn from the course.**

All tutors, and Hub Staff are required to follow the Adult Community Learning Retention and Achievement policy, full details and guidelines are given in the Definitions of Retention and Achievement document. Tutors and Hub Staff are to call and establish reason for dropping out and note this on the register.

### **7 - Registers must be kept for every lesson, including marking learners as late where required**

Tutors are required to keep registers for each of their courses which are saved in Learner Track. Tutors must indicate instances of absence and late time (in minutes) for each learner (a learner is late for 15 minutes or more) using the relevant codes as indicated in the key section of the register. Tutors, and Learning Hub Officer must use the register to monitor attendance and punctuality for each course and take relevant action where necessary.

### **8 – Venue Staff and Curriculum Team Leaders must have an action plan for implementing and monitoring attendance and punctuality on their courses based on this policy.**

Venue Staff and Curriculum Team Leaders must work with tutors to agree a policy (based on the guidelines) which allows for a flexible but consistent approach across the service. Venue Staff and Curriculum Team Leaders will be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the policy in their venue/curriculum. It is expected that in outreach venues, curriculum managers are responsible for ensuring this happens.

**Appendix 1 Guidance notes on reasons for lateness or poor attendance and suggested support:**

<b>Reasons for lateness or poor attendance</b>	<b>What we can do to support the learner</b>
<p><b>Life events:</b> Occasionally, learners will have a one-off reason as to why they are late or cannot attend a class, such as a sudden illness for themselves or a family member, travel or childcare problems or an emergency.</p>	<p>Encourage the learner to phone or text the tutor/venue if they are not able to attend a make a session if a personal problem comes up.</p> <p>If this starts happening regularly, the learner may be experiencing other problems that they are trying to cover up. In this case, try talking to them about what may be causing their lateness/ poor attendance.</p>
<p><b>Appointments:</b> Learners will have appointments at various times, such as hospital appointments etc</p>	<p>Talk to learners about their commitments before the class starts. Ensure that they are aware of the commitment they are taking on and that they know they must try to attend all the sessions. If they have appointments such as doctors,' hospital, meter readings etc, they may not know that they can change the days and times of these. Let them know that if they cannot change their appointment then that is fine Discuss and agree a course of action that will allow them to catch up. Example session materials emailed to them to practice, extra homework or attend study support sessions to catch up on the work.</p>
<p><b>Childcare:</b></p>	<p>Talk to learners about their childcare needs. See if they can suggest any solutions themselves. Try to fit them into classes that fit with school timetables/crèche facilities. Investigate local childcare/crèche facilities. Look at family learning opportunities where a crèche is provided, or learners can learn with their children.</p> <p>Speak to centre/venue managers and find out what support is available, such as lists of Islington childminders and applying for the Adult Learner Support Fund which can offer help with childcare costs</p>

<p><b>Carer:</b> Learners with caring responsibilities may regularly feel that they cannot attend a session or may arrive late due to their caring duties. They may feel tired, emotional, and unable to cope. They may not be getting any support with caring responsibilities.</p>	<p>Talk to the learner about their responsibilities; ensure they are aware of the support needs folder with information on support they can get. Negotiate with them if appropriate regarding start times and consider deferring them to a course in the future.</p> <p>Be mindful that it may have taken a lot of energy and courage for learners who have caring responsibilities to come along to do a course.</p> <p>Talk to them about this. Deferring the course may put them off forever! – If we cannot offer anything suitable; can they see an IAG (Information Advice and Guidance) worker to discuss other options? – do not let them go away with nothing!</p>
<p><b>Poor health:</b> This could be physical or mental ill health. This is more likely to give more sustained problems with attendance and lateness rather than one offs.</p>	<p>Check the information on their support needs assessment.</p> <p>Always try to find out as much as possible about why the learner is not attending or is coming late.</p> <p>Discuss with the learner what can be done to support them both by the Centre Manager and/or tutor in the class.</p> <p>Ensure they are aware of the support needs available to them in the Islington folder.</p> <p>Find out from the learner if they are having a particularly bad episode/period if they would like to defer to the next course or carry on with support.</p> <p>Listen to the learner – most learners manage their health and know what is best for them. Others may need assistance – do they have a support worker mentioned on their support needs assessment? – can you discuss with the support worker what the problems are (you need learner’s permission for this)? This may be helpful for you, the learner, and the support worker.</p>
<p><b>On medication:</b> Learners on medication may suffer from a range of side effects that could affect their attendance and lateness, such as drowsiness.</p>	<p>Check the information on their support's needs assessment.</p> <p>Discuss with the learner the effects of their medication and what can be done to support them both by centre/venue manager and tutor in the class.</p> <p>Where required a risk assessment needs to be completed to identify any arrangements in event of fire, such as a Personal Evacuation Plan</p>
<p><b>Substance use:</b></p>	<p>Check the information on their support's needs assessment.</p>

<p>Learners using substances may be more likely to have erratic attendance and be late for sessions.</p>	<p>Always try to find out as much as possible about why the learner is not attending or is coming late.          Discuss with the learner what can be done to support them both by centre/venue manager and tutor in the class.          Ensure they are aware of the support needs in Islington folder.</p> <p>Are they attending substance use support? If not, signpost them to support and make the learner aware of the consequences of their erratic attendance.</p>
<p><b>Homelessness/ housing problems:</b>          Learners with housing problems may be more likely to have erratic attendance or be late for sessions.</p>	<p>Check the information on their support needs assessment.          Always try to find out as much as possible about why the learner is not attending or is coming late.          Discuss with the learner what can be done to support them both by centre/venue manager and tutor in the class. Ensure they are aware of the support needs in Islington folder.</p> <p>Many of our learners are in temporary or overcrowded housing. This may well mean that they have nowhere to study, so consider this if you are giving work to do out of class and ensure you mention libraries/ study support sessions. Poor housing is a major cause of mental / physical health problems.</p>
<p><b>Other:</b>          Learners may drop out for a variety of reasons, such as not liking the course/ the teacher/the subject, finding the course to easy/ difficult, has language/ literacy/ numeracy needs, having taken on too much, along with range of other issues.</p>	<p>Always try to find out as much as possible about why the learner is not attending or is coming late. Refer to the support needs assessment for more information and use the results of initial assessment to see if they may have been put in the wrong course or are doing too many courses.</p> <p>Support learners to re-enter a course at a later date. Help learners to take responsibility for their attendance, but also support learners to re-start a class, there may be several factors why the learner has been unable to complete at this time.</p> <p>Learners should not be left feeling useless or stupid. Discuss motivational issues with them; suggest a personal development course if you feel this would be useful for them. Give the learner confidence to come back – make them feel welcome – encourage them not to feel alone. Why not ask another learner to chat with them about problems they have had.</p> <p>Why not start a monthly learner discussion group, where learners can get together to discuss problems and support? – encourage learners to feel they have control of the learning environment – they can suggest courses, support ideas, focus groups, etc</p>



## Appendix 2

### Guidance on action for instances of unnotified lateness or absence

