

DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF – LIFELONG LEARNING & CULTURE CRITERIA

In order to qualify for Discretionary Rate Relief your organisation should meet all the criteria listed below. The total budget available for Discretionary Rate Relief is cash limited. If the total relief assessed exceeds the available budget, all payments will be reduced proportionately.

1. Organisations must be working in one of the following areas:
 - Sport and Active Leisure
 - Arts
 - Heritage
 - Open Spaces
 - Children's play and young people's leisure
 - Events and festivals that contribute to a vibrant and cosmopolitan city culture

2. Organisations must be undertaking activities that contribute to one or more of our key outcome areas:
 - Making York More Eventful: Enjoying, participating in, and taking the lead in cultural events and activities
 - Engaging in Learning: Developing creative expression and talent, becoming more informed and acquiring skills for life
 - Being Healthy: Enjoying good physical and mental health and having an active lifestyle
 - Making a positive Contribution: Being involved with the life of the city and its many communities
 - Taking Pride and Pleasure in the Environment: Appreciating and understanding the city and its surroundings
 - Economic Well-being: Enjoying the economic benefits of a thriving cultural sector
 - Staying Safe: Being protected from harm and neglect
 - Infrastructure Planning: Improving the quality of the city's cultural infrastructure

3. The organisation's activities must actively increase participation amongst one or more of the target groups:
 - Children and young people (5-24)
 - Older people
 - People with mental or physical impairments
 - People on low incomes
 - People of different cultures

4. Organisations must be non-profit making. Further, the level of their revenue reserves must not be in excess of:
- 10 times the amount of the gross rates payable, or
 - £10,000
- (whichever is the higher).

In assessing the level of reserves for this purpose, the assessment will be restricted to “free“ reserves which are available in reasonably liquid form (e.g. not tied up in facilities) and are not required to meet legal requirements.

Higher reserves may be allowed if:

- your organisation can demonstrate that they are being kept for a specific, acceptable, development project, or
 - you have charitable status and your organisation's reserve policy meets the requirement of the Charity Commission or
 - it will be unable to pay the rates without putting its financial viability at risk.
5. Membership must be open all sections of the community. Organisations should provide some availability of facilities to non members e.g. schools or casual users, to encourage participation.
6. Any fees charged must be affordable. (“Affordable” will be interpreted as not being so expensive as to inhibit participation by the wider community. For example, consideration will be given to whether reduced fees are available to encourage younger and older participants and those on low incomes.)
7. Organisations must be primarily for the benefit of people who live or work in York, (i.e. at least 80% of users fall in this category). Organisations whose services are aimed at a wider audience and who do not meet this 80% threshold may be given assistance on a sliding scale based on the percentage of York users over the last 12 months.
- Alternatively, organisations who do not meet the 80% threshold may be given up to 100% relief if they provide discounts for YorkCard holders in respect of their core services (as a minimum in line with the level of discount that the Council itself applies). This provision will not apply to any organisation that already receives grant funding from the Council which assists the organisation in providing YorkCard discounts.
8. Organisations must have a policy of equality which encourages access for people with disabilities and of different cultures and gender.