

Leisure and Cultural Services

Concessions Policy

Written by:

Leisure and Cultural Services

May 2017

Version 10

Purpose:

Redditch Borough Council is committed to delivering a coherent, supportive and inclusive approach to how we charge residents, community groups and sports clubs for the services that are provided through Leisure and Cultural Services.

We are dedicated to ensuring that our charging policies and practices supports the Council's Corporate Plan and Strategic Purposes and the wider policy objectives of our partners both within the Public sector and beyond.

Any concessions offered to individual customers and groups are firmly based on the understanding that where the ability to pay for service exists this should be the overriding principle that is adhered to at all times. . A two tiered concession scheme aims to better target those on low income to offer a higher rate of concession whilst reducing the cost to new users.

The Council is also committed to preventing price being a barrier to participation and ensuring that our residents have access to services that will mean they can become and remain physically active and engaged in their community for wider health and social benefits.

As such this policy and the participation measurer that will overview performance in these areas, looks to identify how and where we will support members of the local community to access services.

Objectives:

- To ensure that access to leisure and cultural facilities is affordable for all residents across the borough and that price does not prevent access.
- To promote health and wellbeing in key target groups by reducing financial barriers to accessing cultural and leisure facilities.
- To set out clear concession categories within the policy to offer sound and reasoned direction to guide employees and customers.
- To ensure continuity in the concessions we offer across all of our services in Leisure and Culture.
- To contribute to addressing the councils strategic purposes of:
 - Provide good things for me to see do and visit.
 - Help me to be financially independent.

- Help me to live my life independently (Health and Wellbeing).
- To contribute to the work of Worcestershire Health and Well Being Board, the Children and Young People’s Plan, the CCG Strategic Plan and the Work of the Redditch Strategic Partnership by making physical activity an everyday choice within Redditch.
- To underpin the key aspects of the Sport and Physical Activity strategy, increase participation, player pathways and elite performance.

Scope:

This policy is limited to anybody that uses the services provided by Leisure and Cultural services and is a resident of Redditch.

Definitions:

The following definition will apply in connection with this policy:

Age Profiles:

- Junior = 0 - 15yrs
- Adult = 16 – 59yrs
- Senior = 60+Yrs

Carer - a person assisting an individual to access sport, cultural and leisure activities regardless of whether said assistance is paid or unpaid.

Leisure and Cultural Services – Community Centres, Art and Events, The Abbey Stadium, Sports Development, Forge Mill and Bordesley Abbey, The Palace Theatre, Parks and Open spaces.

Redditch Resident – A person who resides within the Redditch boundary and/or pays council tax to Redditch Borough Council.

Eligibility Criteria – The evidence base required to demonstrate why the concession is to be offered and maintained.

Eligibility:

The following are to receive a **25% discount** on the standard rate usage of facilities (exclusions apply; please see service specific areas for more information).

People receiving any of the following:

- Universal Credit (In Work)
- Housing Benefit

The following are to receive **50% discount** on the standard rate usage (exclusions apply; please see service specific areas for more information).

- Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based)
- Income Support
- Employment Support Allowance (Income Related)
- Universal Credit (Out of Work)
- Incapacity Benefit
- PIP

1. The concession card will be available for use across various leisure and cultural services and will be issued via the Abbey Stadium based upon their preferred operating platform and system.
2. The concessions policy covers all Leisure and Cultural services for concessionary discount as approved.
3. Eligibility is subject to the following:
 - An applicant will be required to provide proof of their eligibility at set periods and upon request to confirm that their eligibility remains in place.
 - The concession card must be produced at each visit for the discounted rate to be applied.
 - Should the concession card be lost the cost of replacement will be set by the service as part of the annual fees and charges policy and charged as deemed appropriate.
4. The concessionary discount is to be applied to the standard rates and charges for casual usage only. Membership, group bookings and all other discounted offers are not subject to the concession price unless otherwise advertised by the operator.
5. The concessionary entitlement shall be reviewed six monthly and annually as part of the fees and charges policy and shall be promoted twenty eight days prior to any changes.
6. Redditch Borough Council reserves the right to review concessionary cards and rates at their own discretion and make alterations as deemed necessary.
7. The head of service (HOS) has the flexibility to offer up to, an additional 30% discount of agreed fees and charges to allow for market variation and sales opportunities. This responsibility can be delegated to service managers.

Procedures:

1. All applications for the concession card should be made directly to the Abbey Stadium to determine eligibility.
2. All requests for concessionary discount at other leisure and cultural services must be discussed and proof provided to the relevant service. Please see service specific profiles for guidance.
3. Concession card holders will be asked to declare any changes in their personal circumstances which may impact on their eligibility for discounted rates. Failure to do so may result in the card being terminated.
4. The following table shows the proof of Eligibility required when requesting a concession card and the maximum duration a card will be issued for with our review:

% Discount	Evidence Required	Duration
25%	-Passport/birth certificate confirming DOB -Formal benefit letter dated within the last two months.	Six monthly (due to nature of changeable circumstances).
50%	-Passport/driving license/ official document proving DOB -Formal benefit letter dated within the last two months.	Annually

Responsibility: The implementation and monitoring of this policy is the responsibility of Redditch Borough Council's Leisure and Cultural Services department.

Dispute resolution: Any concerns, comments and disputes must be made directly to the manager of the appropriate service area in line with Redditch Borough Council's Complaints Policy. All queries will be responded to within ten working days. The final decision on all disputes resides with the Head of Service.

Hardship guidance: In cases where the change in fees and charges or concessions policy adversely affects a group's ability to access our services; a transition plan can be negotiated and agreed upon with the relevant service manager in conjunction with the Equalities Team, to enable those residents affected to continue to fully access our services. The hardship plan will consider the principles of a transition period and offer a flexible arrangement, gradually increasing the fees in affordable increments up to a maximum of a twelve month period dependent on each individual group's financial circumstances and ability to pay. Each case must be submitted to the appropriate service manager and will be treated individually to prevent barriers to our services whilst delivering continuity. All transition plans must be adhered to and completed by 31st March 2019.

Delegated authority has been given to the Leisure and Cultural Services Head of Service to vary the Concessions Policy in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Cultural Services within the first 12 months of operation to address any unforeseen issues that emerge.

Service specific profiles and guides

Palace Theatre																
<p>The purpose of the concession provision is to support the sustainability of groups delivering a range of culturally beneficial activities which in turn support the operational and strategic purpose for the Palace Theatre and the wider community it serves.</p> <p>The Theatre applies a discount on a sliding scale to local community, theatre society & registered charity hiring the Palace Theatre for their productions.</p> <p>The Borough Council acknowledges that there are differences in the quality, public appeal and financial viability across these sectors and the concession scale targets those in most need whilst supporting the more able providers to be sustainable.</p> <p>The maximum discount for qualifying Local Community groups, Theatre Society's & Registered Charity is a maximum of 15%, the discount reduces on a sliding scale based on the volume of ticket sales achieved for performances.</p> <p>The concessionary scale is detailed in fig1 below</p>																
Ticket Sales	<65 %	66 %	67 %	68 %	69 %	70 %	71 %	72 %	73 %	74 %	75 %	76 %	77 %	78 %	79 %	80 >
Discount received	15%	14 %	13 %	12 %	11 %	10 %	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%	0%
<p>Eligibility Criteria</p> <p>The discount scheme will only be available to groups or organisations who can meet at least one of the following criteria;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Community (based within the Redditch boundary & non profit making) • Theatre Societies (non-profitmaking noted in the societies constitution)with a close association to the Redditch area. • Registered Charity 																
<p>Application</p> <p>Eligibility will be assessed on application to the Theatre Manager at the initial booking and contractual stage of all applications. All ticket sales will be reconciled within one week of the final performance and a detail sales account provided to the hirer. The overall percentage discount will be applied against total seats sold against the total seats available for sale</p>																
<p>Exemption</p> <p>None</p>																

Sports Development

Talented Athlete Scheme (Abbey Gold Scheme)

Redditch Borough Council supports sportspeople of a County or National level to access free sporting facilities at the Abbey Stadium. This is to support and help athletes meet their potential, and understanding that funding for training and development is not always available. The scheme supports talented athletes where funding for training may not be available and allows those athletes with financial difficulties to continue their development and training in the sport locally at Abbey Stadium. The scheme has a positive impact on the Redditch community with agreement from the athlete to become a local sporting ambassador, attending physical activity events across the Borough during the lifetime of their membership. The impact a positive role model has on the local community can improve social cohesion, increase participation rates and reduce segregation. Membership on the scheme is restricted to 5 places per sports club and has an average of 10 memberships per year.

The scheme is administered by the Sports Development Team.

Access includes the gym and swimming facilities, and is restricted to off-peak times.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the scheme you must:

- Attend school or college, work or reside within the Borough and;
Currently compete at county, regional, national or international level in a Sport England recognised sport, in any age group

*National is deemed as either being a member of a national team/squad or currently being ranked in the top 10.

*County is deemed as someone who has been invited to compete for Worcestershire in the last year in any Sports England recognised sport.

- Agree to take part in Council organised or sponsored promotional events for which only travelling expenses will be paid during membership of the scheme and for two years afterwards and;
- Agree to become a local Sporting Ambassador during your membership of the scheme and support the work of the Sports Development Team on up to 3 occasions per year.

Application

To become an Abbey Gold member, you will need to complete an application form which is processed through the Sports Development Team.

Supporting evidence from your governing body will be required upon application (e.g. a letter from your Governing Body confirming that you are currently representing the sport at a county or national level). We are not able to accept copies of sport rankings, team selection lists or newspaper clippings.

Once your membership has been confirmed, Abbey Stadium will be informed of your membership and will be able to arrange your induction.

Exemption

There will be no change to the current scheme and it will continue to be offered due to the benefits that the scheme provides to the community.

Civic Suite Room Bookings

The previous Civic Suite Concessionary Policy had been used for over 20 years and provided 'free of charge' use as long as there was no additional cost to the Council and that it didn't conflict with Council business. It was created to support local organisations to service their residents and communities.

As part of the commercialisation agenda the concessions review and new policy has evoked a need to review all existing room hire arrangements to ensure a fair and equitable approach is honoured across leisure and cultural services.

The recommendations for eligibility moving forwards have been designed to support local groups to service the community and its residents where there is a not for profit or cost recovery model in place.

The revised procedure now includes a matrix which outlines the criteria required to gain different levels of discount for existing and new customers.

Eligibility Criteria

First Tier – 25% Reduction for groups – this will be determined by the following criteria:

1. Registered Charity
2. Community Interest Company
3. Social Enterprise
4. A not for profit community group

Second Tier – a 50% Reduction for groups listed above – who also meet the following criteria:

5. The Charity / CiC / Social Enterprise can clearly demonstrate where they support the Council's Strategic Purposes.
6. The Organisation/Group/Charity is either Redditch Based or provides a Service to Residents in Redditch.

Third Tier – a 75% Reduction for groups listed above – who also meet the following criteria:

7. A group that doesn't charge an annual membership and provides all its services 'free of charge' to its users.

In order for a group to achieve the second tier discount they must have first met the criteria set out in tier one. In order for a group to receive the maximum discount of 75% they must have met criteria in both tier one and two.

Application

The organisation must declare their interest in a concessionary rate to the room bookings staff upon making a booking. This can be done via email, telephone or in person.

Suitable evidence will be required to establish the groups entitlement for example registered charity number, copy of financial records proving the organisation doesn't make a profit/ doesn't charge for services or membership and a case study demonstrating their support of Redditch Borough Councils strategic purposes and how they provide a service to Redditch Residents.

Exemption

Council business remains an entitlement thus is not chargeable. Political parties' members groups and political groups of elected council members will remain exempt from charges.

Existing free of charge customers will be honoured and may continue as long as bookings continue as *regular.

** Regular- once a quarter for regular hire or within twelve months for annual events.

Concessions only apply to customers using the facilities Monday-Friday.

Community Centres

The community centres service operates a six tier pricing structure which offers a set rate dependent on the organisation. No additional concessions are offered as there is already an element of discount reflected in the various rates.

The purpose of different rates is to ensure that the each group is charged fairly and in line with a. what they charge for attendance b. any profit they make; in addition to the contribution they make to the wider community. The current tiered structure is already based on 'the ability to pay' and 'reducing barriers' so is deemed fit for purpose.

Eligibility Criteria

Standard rate 3: Established group rate who charge an entry fee to more than 30 participants. 100% charge.

Standard rate 2: Middle band catering groups with 15-30 charged participants. 20% discount from the top rate.

Standard rate 1: Business start-up rate who cater for 15 or less participants whilst they try to establish themselves as a regular booking. 30% discount from the top rate.

PreSchool rate: Applicable to pre schools hiring the centres for long periods of time which recognises the operation of a business vs the customer value. 60% discount from the top rate

Voluntary rate: For registered charities and groups who provide free access to the end user. Not for profit. 70% discount from the top rate.

Function rate: For private hire of facilities mainly used for parties. 40% discount from the top rate.

Application

Customers will be assessed via telephone/email/in person when making a booking with the community centres team, to establish which rate is applicable for their organisation. This rate will be discussed and agreed at booking process and will be reviewed regularly to ensure the chargeable rate is still relevant.

Exemption

There will be no change to the current scheme and it will continue to be offered. The need for a six tier pricing structure means that more flexible discounted rates were needed as opposed to the policy's standard 25% and 50% discount. Due to the commercial element of room bookings; it would be challenging to offer further concessions based on individual circumstances when our bookings are made by groups.

Parks and Open Spaces

The purpose of the concession provision is to help support the sustainability of groups delivering a range of community beneficial activities that support the operational purpose for parks and green spaces in addition to Redditch Borough Council's strategic purposes.

We acknowledge the differences in commercial company's and entities that have the capacity to significantly benefit from access to the Boroughs parks and open spaces in comparison to not for profit organisations.

The parks service applies a discount of a set percentage to reflect these acknowledged differences in provision. The available discount for qualifying groups is 50% and 25% from the set commercial rate in line with this policy.

New fees have been introduced to take into account access to the Boroughs parks and green space for commercial filming, stills photography and sound recording. These activities were offered free of charge historically but there has been no resistance to the fees which have been presented during the trial.

Eligibility Criteria

- Registered Charity (25% discount)
- Not for Profit Organisations (25% discount)
- Students who can demonstrate that there is a definite educational requirement (50% discount)
- Non funded partners with shared health and wellbeing objectives (50% discount)

Application

Eligibility will be assessed on application to the Parks and Green Space Stewardship team at the initial booking and contractual stage of all applications. Evidence for any one of the above criteria is noted by an Officer.

Exemption

- All food catering provision in Parks and Green Spaces are managed through a competitive tendering process and also take into account any onsite catering restrictions.
- For events that take place in Parks and Green Spaces are governed by and administered by the Arts and Events Team, please refer to the Arts and Events guide.
- The provision for organised sports pitch provision and any applicable concession is noted in the Abbey Stadium guide who administer the sports pitch provision
- The above criteria excludes all Borough led initiatives and activity provision e.g. park run

Arts and Events

The Arts and Events Team deliver a diverse range of events across the calendar year including Holocaust, Bandstand, Street Theatre and Firework events. The number of people attending the events varies in size from a few hundred to many thousands.

The charging structure sets a commercial rate at 100% charge for businesses and then offers a concession, based on the eligibility criteria below.

The charging structure is also based on the description of 3 sizes of events – small, medium and large. The size of the event is based on historic attendance and may consider other factors such as weather. If an event has an ‘unexpected’ attendance then reconciliation for the appropriate rate will be made following the event.

Size	Classification	Commercial Rate
Small Event	100 attendees or less	£50
Medium Event	101-499 attendees	£100
Large Event	500 attendees or more	£150

Eligibility Criteria

- Businesses and stalls that make a profit are charged at the commercial rate.
- A concession of 50% off the commercial rate is available for community craft stalls that sell items to cover their costs and make a minimal profit.*
- A concession of 75% off the commercial rate is available for registered charities and ‘not for profit’ organisations/ stalls.

Application

Customers will be assessed via telephone /email/ in person when making a booking with the Arts and Events Team, to establish which rate is applicable for their organisation. This rate will be discussed and agreed at the booking stage.

Exemption

The catering provision at events is excluded from the concessions policy and is managed through a competitive tendering process which also takes into account any onsite catering restrictions.

*Craft stalls making a minimum profit will be deemed by and monitored by the service manager. The term ‘minimum profit’ will allow for up to a 50% profit of the stall charge.

Forge Mill Museum and Bordesley Abbey

There are two elements to concession provision within these facilities including :

- Customer concessions on admission
- School trips
- Concessions available on room hire

There is a set fee for admission which has further concessions available in line with the policy and set out through the fees and charges process. There is commercial charge for room hire with concessions available dependent on the customer group.

Eligibility Criteria

The admission fee for the museum is set out in fees and charges. The following groups of people are entitled to a concession on this rate.

- 25% discount for those who fall within the first category in this policy (in work benefits)
 - 50% discount for those who fall within the second category (out of work benefits)
- The criteria for these concessions is laid out in the main body of this policy*

Room hire follows the same process as the Civic Suite. There is a set commercial rate and the table below demonstrates the concessions available and criteria.

First Tier – 25% Reduction for groups – this will be determined by the following criteria:

1. Registered Charity
2. Community Interest Company
8. Social Enterprise
9. A not for profit community group

Second Tier – a 50% Reduction for groups listed above – who also meet the following criteria:

10. The Charity / CiC / Social Enterprise can clearly demonstrate where they support the Council's Strategic Purposes.
11. The Organisation/Group/Charity is either Redditch Based or provides a Service to Residents in Redditch.

Third Tier – a 75% Reduction for groups listed above – who also meet the following criteria:

12. A group that doesn't charge an annual membership and provides all its services 'free of charge' to its users.

Application

Customers visiting the museum will be assessed on entry at the museum on producing a valid concession card.

Customers will be assessed via telephone /email / in person when making a booking with the Museums Team, to establish the rate that is applicable.

Exemption

Redditch residents and those paying council tax to Redditch Borough Council are entitled to free admission to the museum on a Wednesday.

Youth Theatre

The Palace Youth Theatre (PYT) offers 6 weekly sessions, on 2 evening a week during term time, to children and young people at the Palace Theatre. The age range of those attending is from 5 years old to 18 years old. As a part of PYT we run a weekly session for young adults with learning difficulties.

PYT offers 3 types of weekly sessions –

- 1. Out There** – Focuses on developing drama skills, personal development and community performances.
- 2. On Stage** – Focuses on the annual stage production taking place in July.
- 3. AIM (Adventures in Movement)** – For young adults with learning difficulties from aged sixteen.

The costs for PYT are within Fees and Charges and set on an annual basis.

The concessions available on the prices set out in fees and charges are in line with this policy and offer a 50% and 25% discount dependent on the paying parent/guardian's eligibility.

Eligibility Criteria

- 25% discount for those who fall within the first category in this policy (in work benefits)
- 50% discount for those who fall within the second category (out of work benefits)
- An additional 10% discount is available for one sibling attending the same sessions.

The criteria for these concessions is laid out in the main body of this policy

Application

Customers will be assessed via telephone /email / in person when making a booking with the Youth Theatre, to establish the correct rate that is applicable. Appropriate evidence will be required to determine eligibility, in line with the guidance in the main body of this text.

Exemption

None

Allotments

The purpose of the concession provision is to encourage those residents that can demonstrate that price is a barrier to full access of the service and to encourage increased activity and improve customer's health and wellbeing to those on low income.

The Allotment fees structure operates across the three plot size allotment offer (see fig 1 for detail) tier pricing structure offers a % concession rate from the full price dependent on the status of the hirer.

The discount offer for plots with mains water is set at a lower percentage discount which reflects the additional cost for the service provision.

Allotments concessions are in line with the policy and will offer a 50% or 25% discount based on the criteria set out in the earlier policy body.

Eligibility Criteria

- 25% discount for those who fall within the first category in this policy (in work benefits)
- 50% discount for those who fall within the second category (out of work benefits)

The criteria for these concessions is laid out in the main body of this policy

Application

Eligibility will be assessed on application to the Parks and Green Space Stewardship team at the initial booking and contractual stage of all applications. Evidence for any one of the established criteria is noted by an Officer and proof of status will be reviewed in line with the policy recommendations.

Exemption

Plots where water is available will be exempt from the concession scheme and will be charged on a full cost recovery basis divided equitably on a site by site basis between all plot holders as per the conditions of hire.

The Abbey Stadium

The centre provides free of use access during all public swimming sessions for all Redditch residents aged 60 + and between 5 – 16 years of age.

Eligibility Criteria

Only available to Redditch residents over the age of 60 and between 5 – 16 years of age.

Residency is classed as payment of own/parents/guardians council tax to Redditch Borough.

Application

Application is made at The Abbey Stadium on production of current evidence of residency and date of birth. Once approved, the applicant will purchase a concession card and their details are then input directly on the till operating system.

Exemption :

All free swimming will remain based on the evidence requirements as detailed above.

This will apply to just the Abbey Stadium after the council withdraws operation from the Kingsley Sports Centre.

Please see the Armed Forces Policy for further guidance regarding memberships and offers.

Reviewed by	Date	Next review
Author: Samantha Skilbeck	23 rd June 2017	2018
Approved by:		