



Important Information on SHEP Fees, Reduced Fees, Funded Places & Payment Methods

Summary

Thank you for your interest in training, or further training, with SHEP. Our philosophy is to keep our training **as affordable and as accessible as possible**. The vast majority of our courses have a participant fee which we try to keep to a minimum (and in the main the fees charged have not increased since 2008). We believe our training offers tremendous value for money. In general, the training fee to each participant is less than €8 per hour.

Because we are core-funded by the HSE, **all SHEP courses are subsidised**. Every participant benefits from this HSE support because without it the standard course fee for all courses would be significantly higher.

The HSE core grant to SHEP is used to cover most of the coordination and administration costs of SHEP courses. Fees collected from participants are used to pay the costs of the two Trainers (and where applicable the module Trainers) who co-facilitate the course and to contribute towards costs such as supervision, promotion, administration, and the presentation of certificates.

In order to make the courses accessible to those less well-off we also offer (in so far as possible) a **Reduced Fee** and in limited cases a **Funded Place**. We also offer an interest-free **Fees Payment Plan** option.

The payment of fees is arranged between the participant and SHEP Finance Team who can be contacted if you have a query. It is a deliberate policy in SHEP not to involve Trainers in the collection of participant fees: this is to allow the Trainers to focus on their work with participants. However, should you experience difficulty the important thing is to talk to someone in the Project, and this may include approaching a Trainer if this is what you wish to do.

Depending on the course you may be able spread the payments over a number of months

Our preference is to receive the balance of the fee in one payment when the course place is being offered. We appreciate this is not possible for everyone. For the moment, for most courses, SHEP operates an interest-free **Fees Payment Plan**. This means that the cost of the course may be paid over a number of months (though not longer than the length of the course) on a monthly basis, by Standing Order. If this option is available, and if you wish to apply for it, you will need to complete the Payment Plan Form and Standing Order Mandate (which you will receive with your letter of offer) and return them to SHEP by the agreed date before the course commences. Please do not arrange the standing order independently of SHEP - it needs to be done through the SHEP Finance Dept.

You may be able to source some grant support yourself

Some participants have been supported by their employers or by their Local Development Partnership to undertake training with SHEP. Other participants have received assistance from the Department of Social Protection. St Vincent de Paul has also provided support to some applicants who met certain requirements. SHEP cannot make such applications on behalf of participants, but we encourage you to make your own enquiries.

SHEP offers a Reduced Fee for some courses

SHEP recognises that for some people, the course fee, even though it is a subsidised fee, may still be prohibitive. The **SHEP Bursary Fund** (to which people and companies have made donations) is a small fund which helps us to make some of our courses more accessible to those facing financial difficulties. We also get some funding from the HSE each year to support concessions. The number of Reduced Fee places available for any SHEP course will depend on money available in the SHEP Bursary Fund, along with any funding available

from the HSE. Priority is generally given to SHEP's two foundation courses (the SHEP Certificate in Personal Development and the SHEP Certificate in Social Awareness and Community Empowerment).

Exceptionally, a Funded Place may be available

Unlike the SCPD, where in recent years SHEP has applied each year to the Department of Social Protection for a grant to support a small number of participants on each SHEP Certificate in Personal Development Course with fully funded places, **this option is not available for the Introduction to Advocacy course.**

Eligibility to apply for a Reduced Fee place

You may apply for a Reduced Fee place if you are

- i) a social welfare recipient or
- ii) a full-time student or
- iii) if you are experiencing financial hardship.

Criteria are as follows:

- i) a social welfare recipient in receipt of one of the following Social Welfare benefits/allowances:
 - Blind Person's Allowance
 - Carer's Allowance
 - Carer's Benefit
 - Disability Allowance
 - Working Family Payment
 - Farm Assist
 - Illness Benefit
 - Invalidity Pension
 - Job Seeker's Allowance
 - Job Seeker's Benefit
 - One Parent Family Payment
- ii) Supplementary Welfare Allowance full-time student: you may apply for a reduced fee place by submitting a letter setting out your case.
- iii) financial hardship: if you are in receipt of one of the following payments and are experiencing financial hardship - *Guardian's Payment, Pre-Retirement Allowance, State Pension Widows/Widower or Surviving Civil Partner's Pension*; or if you are in other difficult financial circumstances, you may apply for a reduced fee place by submitting a letter setting out your case.

There is a very limited amount of money available in the SHEP Bursary Fund for reduced fees. We cannot guarantee therefore that all applicants will be successful. Please note reduced fees will be awarded to those who meet the eligibility criteria on a **'first-come, first-served'** basis. **Early applications have an advantage.**

How to apply for a Reduced Fee or a Funded Place:

To apply, you must complete and submit the standard **Course Application Form** and also enclose the following:

- A completed **Reduced Fee / Funded Place Application Form**
- **Evidence** of your receipt of the relevant Social Welfare payment or (if you are **not** a social welfare recipient) a letter setting out your case for a Reduced fee Place

How applications are processed

All of the applications for Reduced Fee places will be assessed by the Director. All applicants for Reduced Fee places will be notified of the result when course places are offered. In so far as possible all applicants for Funded Places will be notified of the result when course places are offered. For those who don't qualify for a Reduced Fee or a Funded Place it is important to remember that, **for most courses, a Payment Plan can be arranged** to pay the remainder of the fee in instalments over the duration of the course. Details of how to do this will be enclosed with the course place offer.

You must apply for each course

It is important to note that Reduced Fee or Funded Places must be applied for each time you apply for a course – if you received a Reduced Fee or a Funded Place previously you must apply for it again for your next course and there is no guarantee you will be successful.

What happens if you have financial difficulties?

The Project understands that from time to time a participant may experience difficulties with the payment of fees. The Project will be as supportive as possible and will make every reasonable effort to accommodate participants with financial difficulties. However, if such a situation arises, it is essential for the participant to contact either the Financial Administrator, the relevant Training and Development Officer, or the Director (in confidence) as soon as possible so that a suitable arrangement can be put in place.

A participant who has not paid the fee in full (and who has not made arrangements with SHEP to pay the balance) will not receive a Certificate (or a Statement of Attendance).

What happens if you leave the course before it ends?

It is the policy of The Social and Health Education Project that if a participant leaves the course before it ends he/she is liable to pay in full the cost of training delivered up to his/her last date of attendance, as well as a sum amounting to 20% of the cost of the remainder of the course and that in such instances the initial deposit is also forfeited.

Don't hesitate to contact us if you need assistance

Thank you again for your interest in SHEP training. If you are unsure about any of this and need assistance please don't hesitate to ring us at the main office on (021) 4666180 or on
(087) 7728089 for courses run in Kerry
(085) 8626844 for courses run in Limerick.