

LEICESTER ADULTS URGED TO CLAIM EDUCATION CASH THEY'RE DUE

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Adults on track to change their life for the better may be missing out on payments of up to £30 a week.

Government figures show that despite some 29,000 adults having already been assessed as eligible to receive support from the Adult Learning Grant (ALG) this year, around a quarter still haven't claimed the money they could be due.

Since the national roll out of ALG in September 2007, over 42,000 people have received ALG, vastly exceeding expectations and making the scheme very successful.

Two Leicester College students are fine examples of how ALG can give you a helping hand to head in a new direction.

Nathan Law, 22, who has lived in Eyres Monsel, Leicester, for most of his life, is closer to fulfilling his childhood ambition to work in computing, thanks in part to ALG.

He left school with no qualifications and ended up doing a series of unskilled jobs, but then decided that despite being a self-taught computer expert, he really needed to get an IT qualification to improve his job prospects, but the everyday costs of going back to college was a draw back. He has now completed a BTEC First in IT and is close to completing a BTEC National before beginning a degree in Software Engineering so he can eventually become a programmer.

Nathan Said:

“I left school with no GCSEs so ended up in dead-end jobs, but I knew that I wanted to do something with my life, so looked into doing an BTEC First IT course. When I was told that I was eligible for the £30 per week Adult Learning Grant, it was a real bonus. This money has meant I could buy stationery and presentation folders essential for my course work. Without this extra money I couldn't have afforded to do the course.”

“I'm now on the two-year national IT course, then hope to go on to university which will stand me in good stead to get a job as an IT practitioner. I do regret leaving school when I did as might have been in my final year of university by now, but at least the Adult Learning Grant as helped give me a second chance.”

Faheema Bhattay, 24, from Evington, had no career plans after her GCSEs and was happy to work as an examinations officer at the local school, but she realised she wanted a greater challenge.

Faheema said:

“After I finished my GCSEs I found a job as an examinations officer. I got lazy and felt I could carry on doing this but it was quite dull and I realised that getting an

education was important if I wanted an enjoyable job. I began my A-levels for the sake of it but the excellent teaching at Leicester College really motivated me and I'm now currently in my second year at Leicester University. From there it will be a PGCE and then I want to be a teacher."

Mary Rogers, Area Director for the Learning and Skills Council in Leicestershire, said:

"Adult Learning Grants can make a real difference to the lives of adults who are studying. People can receive up to £30 a week and this can be used to help with anything from the cost of books and materials, through to childcare costs and really does give critical support to adults who might not otherwise have the opportunity to go back to learning. With all this to offer it's important that those studying make sure they claim the money they're due."

If you have received a letter of entitlement please contact your local college or the learner entitlement support line on 0800 121 8989. If you are thinking about going back to college, ALG could help you. To find out more information and whether you are eligible, visit www.direct.gov.uk/alg or call 0800 121 8989

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Notes to Editors:

Learning and Skills Council

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

The Adult Learning Grant (ALG) is a weekly payment designed to help adults overcome the financial barriers to learning. Up to £30 a week during term time is available to adults over the age of 19 who meet the eligibility criteria. It is available to low income adults in England aged 19 or over who are studying full time for their first full level 2 (5 GCSEs at grades A* to C or an NVQ2 or its equivalent) or a first full level 3 (2 A levels or an NVQ3 or its equivalent) qualification.

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