

£75 million Pledge to Help Parents Train for a Brighter Tomorrow

- Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work Scheme will benefit families in the East Midlands –

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Struggling parents from across the East Midlands who want to get back into work could benefit from a new £75m initiative introduced by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide them with vital childcare support while they learn.

The Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work Scheme will pay up to £175 per week per child, providing real help now for childcare and travel costs for out of work parents across the East Midlands.

Children's Minister Beverley Hughes said:

“We know that for those who can, work remains the best way to lift families and children out of poverty. We also know that high quality childcare not only supports parents back into employment but that it promotes and improves positive outcomes for children, helping to ensure that all children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can reach their full potential.

“This initiative will give parents the peace of mind that while they train to get into employment, their child is benefiting from high quality

childcare. That is why I am delighted to be working with the Learning and Skills Council on this programme and greatly look forward to seeing its impact on children and parents across the country."

The nationwide scheme is open to families in England with one partner in work, an annual household income of £20,000 or less per year, a child or children aged 14 or under and a child or children aged 18 or under with disabilities. An advisor will help parents to enrol for their chosen course and will advise parents on the childcare options available to them.

Mike Hoyer, Student Services Guidance Advisor at Lincoln College said:

"The new childcare scheme will help remove the financial barriers to education that parents aged 20 or over on low incomes face. It will be of great help in them getting the right skills to get back into work. Eligible parents can study any course that will help them into a job, ranging from a short refresher in maths to a more formal qualification in subjects ranging from social care to construction. Any parent who thinks they may qualify for help from the scheme should contact our Guidance Team in Student Services for more information."

With the option of job shares, flexi-hours and part-time work, there are many options for families to create a more secure future through employment.

To apply for the Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work scheme, or to find out more please visit www.directgov.uk/freechildcareforlearning or call the Learner Support helpline on 0800 121 8989.

- Ends -

Notes to Editor

About the Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work scheme

- The scheme is now available across England
- The scheme is aimed at families (with dependent children) where one adult isn't working and the other is, but on a low income (under £20k in the previous tax year).
- The objective is to encourage the workless adult (aged 20 or over when their learning/training starts) to take up the free childcare provision and get into learning or training that will improve their prospects of progressing into sustainable employment.
- Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work will be paid directly to the Childcare Providers, not to the eligible parent.
- The 2007 Budget announced £75m to provide free childcare for 50,000 workless parents accessing training leading to work. The Learner Support Directorate put in a proposal for funding to deliver this new scheme and in February 2008 it was agreed by Ministers that the LSC will be the delivery agent for this scheme. The original budget announcement was made by Ed Balls on 7 September 2008.

About the campaign

- This is the launch of an integrated marketing campaign supporting the Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work scheme. It includes a radio and print advertising campaign, as well as digital media

About LSC

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. www.lsc.gov.uk

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