

15 May 2008

Adult Learners' Week 2008
17 May

**ADRIAN GROWS GREEN CAREER WITH HELP FROM ADULT
LEARNING GRANT**

Em-54ALWLINCSALG-may2008.doc

As Adult Learners' Week kicks off on 17 May the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) will be celebrating the Adult Learning Grant (ALG), designed to help adults overcome financial barriers to learning.

Introduced in June 2007 the ALG is a weekly grant designed to help adults studying full time with the costs of learning. The grant pays up to £30 per week for eligible full time learners aged 19 and over who are studying for certain qualifications.

Since the grant became available ALG has supported over 1,600 people going back to learning in the East Midlands, including gardener Adrian Taylor, 36.

Adrian quit his job of 11 years at a chocolate factory to pursue his horticultural dream at the University of Lincoln's Riseholme Campus, Riseholme College, a specialist college for the Horticultural and Land-based sector.

He began a National Certificate in Horticulture and has since progressed onto the Advanced National Certificate, with help from the ALG.

Adrian moved from his parent's home to enjoy student life on the Riseholme campus but the costs soon mounted up. During his first course ALG wasn't available and he admits it was more of a struggle.

Adrian said:

“I’d had enough of work at the factory. I couldn’t go any higher so I needed to change tack. I’d had lots of experience working with my dad who does this kind of work and I’d always enjoyed it so I decided to give it a go. The first year doing the National Certificate was tough and money was tight. It’s definitely difficult going back to college when you’re used to earning so I did build up some debts.

“I was keen to progress onto the Advanced Certificate so I could get the skills and knowledge to start my own business as a gardener. Finding out about the ALG was great. I get £30 a week and it’s really helped me. I’m also doing some work one or two days a week so I can really put my course into practice. With my wages and the ALG I’m starting to get some way towards paying off my debts and getting help for day to day things for my course.”

Nick Rashley, Area Director, LSC Lincolnshire and Rutland said,

“The Adult Learning Grant is a real incentive for people across Lincolnshire and Rutland to learn and embrace new skills to improve their job prospects. It’s fair to say that many people recognise the importance of continuing to learn but feel restricted by money. Up to £30 a week can really make the difference when it comes to buying course materials or even putting it towards childcare.

“Adult Learners’ Week is the perfect opportunity for everyone to think seriously about investing in their future and explore the financial grants available to them. Learning a new skill or enhancing those you already have is one of the smartest investments to increase your worth and could result in a £2,000 to £3,000 increase in annual salary.

“Beyond the attractive financial benefits of investing in your future learning a new skill can help boost confidence and facilitate a job move. Going back to learning allows people to

gain the qualifications they need to pursue a job with great job satisfaction and improve their sense of self worth.

“To find out if you’re eligible for the grant visit www.direct.gov.uk/alg or telephone 0800 100 900.”

Developed as part of a new Government initiative to improve the levels of both vocational and academic skills in the UK, ALG is intended to be a helping hand for adults who want to learn more skills, but have certain financial worries.

Val Braybrooks, Dean of Riseholme College, said:

“We are dedicated to ensuring our students receive all the help possible to pursue their studies. The Adult Learning Grant has certainly been a lifeline to many of our students, including Adrian.

“It’s a great incentive for people to learn new skills as £30 can go a long way. We would certainly encourage students or those thinking about studying to see if they are eligible.”

If you are thinking about going back to college this year it’s time to start looking at your options. ALG could help you – to find out if you are eligible visit www.direct.gov.uk/alg or call 0800 100 900 today.

Notes to editors

1. Adult Learners’ Week 2008 begins on 17 May. The annual week long national campaign is celebrated in over 40 countries and is designed to inspire people to pursue adult learning.

2. The Adult Learning Grant (ALG), a new service from the Learning and Skills Council, is a weekly grant designed to help adults studying full-time with the costs of learning. The grant pays up to £30* per week (around £1,000 a year) for full time learners aged 19 and over who are studying for a 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.

3. The Adult Learning Grant is important because skills shortages continue to have a negative impact on UK productivity and competitiveness in the face of fast-growing economies. ALG aims to encourage individuals return to education by offering a helping hand to contribute to things like books, travel and learning materials while they study.

4. For more information, go to www.direct.gov.uk/alg

5. The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive 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.

**ISSUED ON BEHALF OF LSC BY COI NEWS AND PR. FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION CONTACT HELEN CLARKE: 0115 9712787**