

14 May 2008

Adult Learners' Week 2008

17 May

Adult Learning Grant helping Lisa nail her dream job

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As Adult Learners' Week kicks off on 17 May the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) will be celebrating the Adult Learning Grant (ALG), a grant 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 budding beauty therapist Lisa McCreddie from Kettering.

Lisa, 28, lives with her husband Stuart, a car valet, and two children, Carley, 10, and Chloe, eight. She started an NVQ Level 2 in Beauty Therapy in June at Tresham Institute, with help from the Adult Learning Grant (ALG).

Lisa left school at 16 with no real interest in studying and started a job in a factory. Soon after, she got pregnant with her first daughter, Carley, and left work to

manage her difficult pregnancy. The next daughter followed and in-between looking after her children she did short stints working in shops.

Lisa is not finding any problems practising. Her six sisters, aged from 18-30, are taking advantage of her specialist training and visit her house on a regular basis to get their nails done.

Lisa said:

“Once my children got a bit older I was really keen to have a career. I’d always thought about doing a beauty course, I love doing nails and I’d already done a four day nail course. But you can’t just go and work in a beauty salon, you need to go to college.

“My sisters love the fact I need to practise. They all live in Kettering so they come round on a regular basis so they can get their treatments done – things like getting their eyebrows plucked. It’s good for me to get the chance to practise – they’re like my private little models!

“The ALG cash has been really helpful to me – it comes on a Friday so it’s useful for me to get my stuff for the course from ebay over the weekend. It’s only 30 quid but I really rely on it”

“The college finishes in June, then I’m going to do the Level 3 and then hopefully I’ll get to be a beauty therapist.”

Andrew Cheal, Acting Area Director for the Learning and Skills Council in Northamptonshire, said:

“The Adult Learning Grant is a real incentive for people across Northamptonshire 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.”

“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, making the extra cash a bonus.

“To find out if you’re eligible for the grant visit the 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.

Mark Silverman, Tresham Institute Principal and Chief Executive said:

“We are dedicated to ensuring our students receive all the help possible to pursue their studies. The Adult Learning Grant has certainly been really useful to our students and we’re pleased that students like Lisa are getting the help they need to pursue their dreams through the grant.

“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.

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