

## **HAPPY FIRST BIRTHDAY ALG! GRANT HELPING OVER 500 NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LEARNERS FULFILL THEIR POTENTIAL**

*Notts learners show value of grants*

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As the Adult Learning Grant today celebrates its one-year anniversary since the national roll-out in 2007, figures show that the scheme has soared to success over the past 12 months, providing financial support to 531 adult learners across Nottinghamshire. Take-up in this first year of national roll-out has hugely exceeded expectations and has proved just how popular the scheme is.

Further research by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has also revealed that adults make fantastic learners, with 77% of adults in LSC funded further education provisions being successful in their courses. This proves that although adults may face some of the biggest hurdles when it comes to going back to education, they make some of the best learners.

In fact, ALG, which offers adults up to £30 per week to go back to learning, was so successful when initially piloted across the UK in 2003-2006, that the national roll-out was brought forward a year.

Claire Cheetham, 40 of Bestwood Village, is ready for a blooming good career after completing her final exam for her BTEC National Diploma in Floristry at New College Nottingham, with help from the Adult Learning Grant (ALG).

Claire left school at 16 and had done a variety of jobs from landlady to childminder but had always wanted to be a florist – especially since her husband Andrew, 47, started work on a wholesale flower market 10 years ago.

With a little persuasion from one of her two children, Tamsin, 10, she decided to try some night classes and from there, with support and encouragement from her tutors and family, enrolled on full time courses at New College Nottingham.

Now she is running her own business, Floral Delights, and does the flowers for things from friends' weddings to functions at a large conference centre.

Claire said:

“My daughter really pushed me to go to college as she thought it would be fun as it would be like going back to school. She likes to get stuck in and help – learning all the flower names and things.

“It’s the first time I’ve been to college. I’d always wanted to but never had the guts. My husband has worked at wholesale flower market for ten years and I got really interested in it. Initially I went with a friend to night classes to see if I liked it. I loved it and the tutors were really supportive and encouraged me to go for it.”

Claire has found the weekly payments through the ALG to be really helpful. She added:

“Getting financial support has been a big help. I heard a radio advert for the Adult Learning Grant and asked a tutor at college about it and I now receive money every week which I use for bus fares, materials for the course – which can add up - and lunches.”

Adult Learning Grant (ALG) payments have helped Caleb, 21, cut down his working hours as a waiter so he can concentrate on studying towards his dream career and helping out his grandma, who struggles to move around.

Currently studying towards a BTEC National Diploma in I-Media at New College Nottingham Caleb hopes this will lead to a place at university and a career as a film director or a specialist graphic artist.

After a brief spell on a catering course Caleb was unsure what to do. While taking a break and sitting at the Arboretum with some friends he was approached by a youth team leader from Groundwork who told him about volunteering projects around Nottingham he could get involved with to further his skills. Caleb didn't follow this opportunity but it got him thinking about options available and he found out about some youth work volunteering projects.

Caleb said:

“After realising catering wasn't for me I wasn't sure what to do. But finding out about the volunteering options available got me thinking and I started doing some volunteering for youth projects like Groundwork and Millennium volunteers. I got involved in making films and really enjoyed it so I learnt how to use cameras and editing equipment and was soon teaching these skills to younger people. I decided to follow it up and did an introductory course to video editing and it spiralled from there.

“Although the Adult Learning Grant doesn't keep up with the money I need to spend it certainly helps with my lunches and the things I need for the course, like portfolio folders and paper. It's also meant I can reduce the amount of time I work so I can really concentrate on the course and also spend more time helping out my grandma.”

Mick Brown, Area Director for the Learning and Skills Council in Nottinghamshire, said:

“It's great to see how the Adult Learning Grants are having a great impact on the lives of adults across Nottinghamshire, offering so many learners a helping hand in education. The grant 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.”

ncn Principal & Chief Executive Geoff Hall 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 this helps them to pursue their dreams.

“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 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](http://www.direct.gov.uk/alg) or call 0800 121 8989 today.

**- ENDS -**

**For more information please contact:**

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**Notes to Editors:**

This press release applies to England only.

**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.

ALG is available to low income adults in England aged 19 or over who are studying full time for their first full level 2 (5 GCSE's 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.

**ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL BY COI  
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