

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ALG! GRANT HELPING OVER 600 LEICESTERSHIRE LEARNERS FULFILL THEIR POTENTIAL

Date of issue 25th June 2008

Press release number em-70ALGifrstyearLeics.doc

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 612 adult learners across Leicestershire. Take up since the pilot began in 2003 takes the total figure to 2092, hugely exceeding expectations and proving 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.

Shaheen Popat, 32, of Thurmaston, is working towards a dream career in fashion, with help from an Adult Learning Grant (ALG).

Keen on fashion from a young age, Shaheen used to unpick her clothes so she could see how they were made up, but she finished school at 16, was married at 18 and had three

children, Aadil 12, Adam 13 and Mariambibi 6, but she was always keen to return to college and to get a career in fashion.

With the children a bit older, and with help from ALG, she's now preparing her final pieces for a fashion show to mark the end of a BTEC in Contemporary Cultural Fashion at Leicester College. Next year she'll be studying the foundation degree at Leicester College which she hopes will lead to a teaching job in pattern cutting.

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

"It's great to see how the Adult Learning Grants are having a great impact on the lives of adults across Leicestershire, 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."

Leicester College Principal Maggie Galliers said:

"The Adult Learning Grant has been really useful to our students and we're pleased that students like Shaheen 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 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 121 8989 today.

- ENDS -

For more information please contact:

Helen Clarke at COI News and PR on 0115 971 2787

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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