

## It's never too late to learn!

**Date of issue** 20.09.07  
**Publication number** LSC-PR-LOR-070018

It's term time again, and it's not just about going back to school – adults are gearing up for the academic year, too. If you've thought about going back to college, it's not too late; there are many courses for you to sign up to at your local college until the end of September. From nursing to plumbing, an adviser will be there to help find the right course for you.

Going back into education can be a daunting prospect, especially if you left school early due to financial reasons. The Adult Learning Grant (ALG) has been designed by the Learning and Skills Council as a helping hand for adults to overcome the financial barriers to returning to or staying in full-time education. The grant is available for full-time learners, aged 19 or over, who are studying for a first full level 2 or 3 qualification<sup>1</sup>, and pays up to £30 a week.

Jackie Dent, a 39-year-old mother of three, from Watford, is all set to start her career in midwifery after receiving an Adult Learning Grant that helped her achieve the qualifications she needed to join a degree course this month.

“ALG helped me survive,” says Jackie. “I was actually better off studying. Mainly, the grant went towards paying household expenses, but I did also count on it for various 'treats' for the children – or even getting my hair done.”

ALG is important because skills shortages continue to have a negative impact on UK productivity and competitiveness in the face of fast-growing economies.

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<sup>1</sup> NVQ level 2 is equivalent to 5 GCSEs A\*-C. NVQ level 3 is equivalent of 4AS / 2 A-levels.

Skills Minister David Lammy says:

“Financial pressures can often prevent people gaining the qualifications they need for work. The grant is designed to open up opportunities for low-qualified, low-income adults to gain new skills and qualifications and, in turn, improve their employment prospects. The grant is in place to help make this happen. In some colleges, one hundred per cent of learners receiving ALG have completed their courses.”

David Hughes, LSC Regional Director in London, adds:

“We found that many people wanting to learn new skills are held back due to financial constraints. The Adult Learning Grant helps people overcome this barrier and achieve the qualifications they need to progress in the job market. The pilot programme held in London showed that many learners who may not previously have embarked on a course were successful because of ALG.”

As at 11 September this year, over 8,700 applications had been received, exceeding expected take-up for this period. There’s still time to find out if you are eligible for an Adult Learning Grant. Call 0800 100 900 or visit [www.learningdirect.co.uk](http://www.learningdirect.co.uk) and sign up today.

-Ends-

#### **Notes to Editors:**

##### **LSC**

The Learning and Skills Council 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 Pilot**

Nationally, ALG has helped 16,200 learners achieve Level 2 and 3 qualifications through the pilot programme, with 17,500 expected to be helped in the first year of the national roll out.

11% of learners say they would not have participated in further education if not for ALG; and 19% say they would not have completed their course.

**Media Enquiries**

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Issued on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council by Government News Network (GNN) London.

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