

**SKILLS
ACCOUNTS**



SKILLS ACCOUNTS E-BULLETIN MAY/JUNE 2009

Edition Eleven

**Our
future.
It's in
our hands.**



Welcome to the eleventh edition of the Skills Accounts e-bulletin.

A Skills Account is a personalised service that helps individuals take control of their learning and working lives.

By registering for a Skills Account, an individual is able to access a range of careers advice and support, along with advice about their eligibility for Government funding to contribute to the cost of learning.

Trials of Skills Accounts began in the South East and East Midlands on 29 September 2008. The aim of the first year of the trials has been to ensure that what is being offered through a Skills Account meets with **individuals'** needs and expectations.

This e-bulletin provides our partners and stakeholders with the latest information on Skills Accounts and will keep them updated during the trials.

If you would like additional names added to the distribution list or, if you would like to be removed from this list, please contact shagufta.mustafa@lsc.gov.uk

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1. EVALUATING THE SKILLS ACCOUNTS TRIALS

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The Skills Accounts trials are being evaluated to determine how best to roll out the service nationally from September 2010. The evaluation will focus only on those aspects which improve the quality of the service we offer to individuals.

Earlier this year, an external independent research team, RCU consultants, conducted their first **qualitative analysis of key stakeholders' experiences of the Skills Accounts** trials. This included:

- Visits to providers and stakeholders in the trial regions
- Focus groups with learners



We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who took part in the evaluation, the results of which will feed into the development of the service, especially for the 2009/10 national trials.

2. MARKETING SKILLS ACCOUNTS – A PROVIDER'S EXPERIENCE

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Robert Walker is Customer Support Services Manager at Eastleigh College, a strategic learning provider trialling Skills Accounts in the South East region. Robert has been at the forefront of introducing students to Skills Accounts as the promotion of the service has sat naturally with the customer service team.

Having noticed a gap in their guidance offer to 19+ learners, Eastleigh College has recently appointed an Adult Guidance Officer to remedy this situation. Robert believes that this new appointment will dovetail nicely with the Skills Accounts service, particularly around provisions for Level 3 funding that have recently been introduced to the trials in the South East.



He says, "As part of the application process to draw down money for Level 3 funding, students will be required to attend an interview with the Adult Guidance Officer. During this interview they will be provided with the advice and guidance they need, whilst we check that they have a Skills Account and they are comfortable using it. We have been piloting the role of the Adult Guidance Officer since February and feel that this will make a significant difference to our adult learners."

"From the college's perspective, Skills Accounts are easy to administer and well understood by college staff. Skills Accounts are now an integrated part of the enrolment process and information about the service has been included in all communications to learners wishing to enrol on courses this September."

Share Your Best Practice

We would like to hear more from you about what you are doing to promote Skills Accounts. Please send your examples and experiences to shagufta.mustafa@lsc.gov.uk.

3. THE NATIONAL LEARNING DIRECTORY (NLD) - MAKE THE MOST OF IT!

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Skills Accounts users need to get the best possible information on the courses available to them. It is vital that providers ensure that the NLD is updated with any new courses or amendments to existing courses for 2009/10. This is important throughout the year but especially now, when learning providers are preparing for September enrolments.

The NLD is crucial to the success of the Skills Accounts trials. If this information is not maintained, learners will not be able to find courses through the Skills Account website. Furthermore, it will also make it more difficult for CAS and **nextstep** advisers to help individuals.

If you require further information about the NLD please refer to the January edition of the Skills Accounts e-bulletin which can be found here: [Skills Accounts January E-Bulletin](#)

More information is available from:

<http://www.advice-resources.co.uk/Learning+providers/newproviders.htm>

4. THE FUTURE OF THE TRIALS

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As we enter the second year of the trials, we are seeing a positive and successful story developing for Skills Accounts. The Skills Accounts team has worked closely with providers and partners to develop and create a service that is helping individuals take control of their learning and working lives. The ambition for Skills Accounts is great and your continued support and involvement is needed to achieve these goals.

The 2009/10 Skills Accounts trial will expand nationally through a carefully planned process. At this stage it is proposed that the first phase will be involve extending the trial from the current two trial regions to five new LSC regions in late summer this year. The remaining LSC regions and the National Employer Service (NES) will join the trials towards the end of the year.

We are currently looking into the possibility of developing new functions and targeting new audiences in different trial regions. These will potentially include:

- o How Skills Accounts can help Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD)
- o How Skills Accounts may help carers or individuals in receipt of Working Families Tax Credits (WFTC)

Once the details of the national roll out of the Skills Accounts trials have been confirmed, we will share more information with you about the new audiences, regions and the timing of expansion. Your contribution is vital to the success of these trials and we are grateful to everyone who is helping to make the trials work for individuals.

5. SUPPORTING MATERIALS & HELPLINE

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There is a range of Skills Accounts materials available for you to download from the LSC campaign resources site: lsc.gov.uk/campaignresources

You can use these materials to support your own campaigns and communications. Once you have registered on the site you will have access to collateral and materials relating to all of the different LSC campaigns.

Supporting materials for Skills Accounts include:

- DL size leaflet for learners
- A3 posters
- Banner stands
- PowerPoint presentation templates
- Web and advertising copy

Helpline

The helpline offers support to all Skills Accounts stakeholders that would like further information or support. It can be contacted on 0207 413 3400.

6. CONTACT INFORMATION

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For further information about the Skills Accounts trials in your region please contact your regional LSC Skills Accounts team:

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We hope you have found this edition of the Skills Accounts e-bulletin useful! If you have any queries or questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please look out for the next edition of the Skills Accounts e-bulletin on 26 June 2009.