



## Learner Support Service Childcare News e-bulletin, January 2010

Welcome to the first edition of 2010 of the LSC Learner Support Directorate's *Childcare News*.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list, please fill in our [registration form](#). If you have any feedback on this publication please email us at [Childcare-news@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:Childcare-news@lsc.gov.uk).

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## Care to Learn

### 1. Urgent - Outstanding information on applications

We currently have just over 500 applications awaiting further information before they can be processed. Many of these are for courses that started in September 2009. We are concerned that:

- Childcare Providers are incurring costs and not being paid for the service they are providing;
- Learners are discouraged from taking up their learning as they have not completed their childcare arrangements.

We urge support workers, Learning Providers and Childcare Providers to provide young parents with whatever information they need for their application. In all cases where a support worker is named on the application form, a letter will have been sent to them as well as the young parent to tell them what was missing from the young parent's application.

Please note that information on specific applications is also available from the Learner Support Service on **0800 600 7979**. Please note that if you are not named on the application form, you will need to have the young parent with you to give permission to discuss their application.

Please circulate the above information to colleagues supporting young parents to complete their application form.

### 2. Reminder – early applications

We would like to remind you to please continue to support learners to complete their application forms and return them to the Learner Support Service in good time, particularly those learners who have started a course in January.

To assist you, and the young parent, included in each application pack are *Application Form Guidance Notes*, which give advice on how to complete each section of the application form. Please make sure that you are aware of the contents of these Notes and share them with learners, Learning Providers and Childcare Providers to ensure that they include all the necessary information for assessment.

As you may be aware, for Care to Learn we will only backdate childcare payments to the start of a young parent's course if we receive the application **within 28 days** of their course start date. If an application is received outside

of these 28 days, payments will usually be backdated to the beginning of the week in which the application is received by the Learner Support Service.

Young parents should therefore make applications for support in good time for the start of their course to ensure they make full use of the funding. Learning Providers and Childcare Providers should ensure that they complete their section of the application form and return this to the young parent as quickly as possible.

We depend on the goodwill of Childcare Providers for the success of our schemes and providing the information we need to make prompt payments to them will help this to continue.

### **3. Reminder – childcare provision**

We told you in the last edition of this e-bulletin that the types of childcare eligible for Care to Learn have changed. We would like to remind you of these changes in this issue:

From **September 2010** Care to Learn childcare support will be accessible to parents using:

- Childcare Providers registered on the Early Years Ofsted Register;
- Childcare Providers registered on either the compulsory or voluntary part of the General Childcare Register;
- Childcare provision offered by schools such as breakfast and after school clubs;
- Relatives who care for their children if the relative lives apart from the child, is Ofsted registered, and is also providing registered care for children they are not related to.

**With immediate effect** the LSC has the discretion to approve support for provision registered on the Care Quality Commission's register on a case by case basis if general provision is not suitable for the child.

**For the remainder of the 2009/10 academic year** any cases where the Childcare Provider does not meet the current published criteria of being registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register or the compulsory part of the Ofsted General Childcare Register will be referred to the LSC for a decision on a case by case basis. If you are supporting a young parent to apply for Care to Learn to fund such childcare, please enclose a letter with the application to explain the circumstances.

Please disseminate this information to Learning Providers and Childcare Providers within your network to ensure that people are reminded of these changes to eligible provision.

## Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work

### 1. Important: Policy changes in 2009/10

Stakeholders, colleagues and Learning Providers will be aware that Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work has been the subject of a considerable amount of consultation and discussion since its launch as a trial scheme in April last year. We have monitored and reviewed the progress of the scheme and considered valuable feedback from stakeholders. This has led us to conclude that slight changes to the eligibility criteria are needed to help us meet the needs of a larger group of learners/potential learners in low-income families who have found it difficult to access support previously.

The following changes to the criteria have been made:

- The requirement for the learner's partner to be working for more than 16 hours a week has been revised. **The requirement is now that the partner should be in work.**
- The requirement for the applicant/learner to not be in paid employment has now been revised. **The requirement is now that the applicant may be in paid employment for up to 16 hours per week.**

**These changes are effective from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010 and therefore will apply for the remainder of the 2009/10 academic year and for the 2010/11 academic year.**

For further information, including details about the resource and marketing materials that have been updated to reflect these policy changes, please see the full [briefing note](#) on the Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work website at

[http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/FINAL\\_Changes\\_to\\_eligibility\\_criteria\\_briefing\\_doc\\_Free\\_Childcare.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/FINAL_Changes_to_eligibility_criteria_briefing_doc_Free_Childcare.pdf).

These policy changes will mean that there are some learners/potential learners who are now eligible to receive support from the scheme under the new assessment criteria. Please ensure that you work with these newly eligible learners and your partners to inform them of the change and to encourage applications for the scheme.

## General information

### 1. For Action: Training Needs Analysis

We are conducting a survey to identify any immediate training needs that you and your organisation have to be able to ensure you can deliver the right support to learners to complete their application form and ensure that you and/or your staff are confident administering our schemes in the 2010/11 academic year and are clear about any policy changes we may have made to any of our Learner Support schemes. We are keen to receive your feedback on this whether you are a Learning Provider or representing intermediary organisations, and so urge you to complete this survey. It will take around 5 minutes to complete and we will provide details of the results and feedback from this survey in a future edition of this e-bulletin.

You can access this survey at the following location:

<http://learnersupport2010.speedsurvey.com>

Please can you complete this survey by **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February**? We would urge you to do it straightaway if you can.

### 2. Young People's Learning Agency

You may be aware that the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) will be replaced by the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) and Skills Funding Agency (SFA) from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2010.

The Learner Support Directorate will operate under the YPLA, including support for adult learners, and we will continue to produce these e-bulletins to ensure that you are kept informed of key information, updates and changes or any of the Learner Support schemes.

The work of the YPLA will focus on helping every young person achieve their potential by continuing to improve the quality of learning and support for all young people.

## Actions you may need to take

A reminder of the actions to be taken over the next few weeks. Please:

- Ensure that you support young parents to provide the outstanding information for their Care to Learn application.
- Please encourage and support young parents to submit their applications as early as possible for the beginning of their course.

- Take note of the information about eligible childcare provision for Care to Learn and disseminate this information to interested colleagues.
- Take note of and disseminate the information about the policy changes to the Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work eligibility criteria. Please ensure you inform learners of these changes and encourage them to apply for support from the scheme.
- Complete the Training Needs Analysis to inform us of your training and support needs.
- Encourage any Providers or advisers not already signed up, to [register](#) to receive this e-bulletin.

## How to find out more

### Learning and Childcare Providers

Learning Providers and Childcare Providers can find out more information about each of these three childcare schemes on the websites:

- [Care to Learn](#)
- [Sixth Form College Childcare](#)
- [Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work](#)

You can also call us on **0845 600 7979**; please select option 3 for Care to Learn and option 4 for Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work and Sixth Form College Childcare.

### Learners

Learners can find out more information about the schemes by visiting [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) and searching for the relevant scheme.

They can also call the learner helpline on **0800 121 8989**. This is a freephone number, which can also be used to access advice about other Learner Support schemes managed by the LSC, including Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and Adult Learning Grant (ALG).