



Learner Support Service Childcare News e-bulletin, September 2009

Welcome to the LSC Learner Support Directorate's Childcare News September e-bulletin.

In this edition we give you information on Care to Learn application forms and the roles in delivering the scheme, guidance on filling in Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work application forms, frequently asked questions, and give you information on products that are available for the childcare schemes from the Learner Support Directorate.

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In this issue:

Care to Learn

1. Care to Learn application forms
2. Application form guidance notes
3. Roles in delivering Care to Learn

Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work

1. Guidance on filling in the application form
2. Frequently Asked Questions
3. Update on marketing activity and promoting the scheme
4. NAEGA Conference

General

1. Guidance for Providers
2. Childcare Big Picture

Actions you may need to take

How to find out more

Care to Learn

1. Care to Learn application forms

Earlier this month we issued an interim bulletin giving you information on the availability of application packs: unfortunately, at that time, stocks of application packs for Care to Learn had run out. As you will be aware application forms are not available to download this year, as previously, and so we have had a higher than normal demand for application packs; we have distributed 20,000 packs so far.

We are pleased to let you know that stocks were replenished by 11th September, and you can continue to order copies as normal. To order application packs you can call the helpline on **0845 600 7979**. Learners can request an application pack from the helpline by calling **0800 121 8989**.

2. Application form guidance notes

Application packs for Care to Learn contain a copy of the application form as well as some guidance notes, which give information to the learner, their advisers, Learning Providers and Childcare Providers, to help them to fill in the form.

You can download a copy of the application form guidance notes from the [Care to Learn website](#), along with Guidance on how to administer the scheme within your organisation. Please download a copy of these guidance notes to use when supporting learners to complete their application form. Please also make colleagues and advisers aware that these are available and encourage them to download a copy.

3. Roles in delivering Care to Learn

In this bulletin we would like to clarify the roles of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Learner Support Service (LSS) and Connexions in delivering Care to Learn.

The **LSC** is the body that is responsible for funding all post-16 education that is mainly delivered by schools and colleges (excluding Universities). The National Office is based in Coventry. The Learner Support Directorate is part of the LSC with responsibility for a range of financial support schemes for young people and adults, such as Care to Learn and Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work; it operates out of Sheffield.

The LSC employs the services of a private organisation that we refer to as the **Learner Support Service**. The LSS undertakes the following activities on our behalf:

- Operation of a learner helpline and a Provider helpline
- Assessment of application forms
- Issuing payments to Childcare Providers.

Connexions offers advice and help to young people. It is the role of Connexions staff to offer information, advice and guidance to young parents including supporting them with their applications for funding and with sourcing appropriate learning or training, and a childcare provider. Connexions have no role in assessing applications or making payments.

If you have any queries regarding Care to Learn please contact the Learner Support Service helpline on **0845 600 7979** for Providers and **0800 121 8989** for learners.

Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work

1. Guidance on filling in the application form

It is important that the application form for Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work is completed fully and accurately before it is sent to the Learner Support Service (LSS). We have had to send back a number of applications to the applicant, to request more information. This is because some questions have not been filled in or because incorrect evidence has been sent through with the application. This process means learners have to wait longer for a decision on their eligibility for the scheme.

To help you to support learners to fill in their application form for the scheme, we are producing an *Application Form Resource Pack* that will outline areas where mistakes are often made and give more information on how to complete specific questions within the form. We will let you know when this will be available in the next e-bulletin.

To help you to give support to learners filling in their application form in the meantime, we have outlined some of the commonest mistakes that are being made:

- Applications received have parts missing. Some applications come in that include only the parts that the learner and their partner complete. The Learning Provider and Childcare Provider parts are sometimes not sent to the LSS. It is important that

all parts of the application form are returned together. Incomplete forms will be returned to the learner because these cannot be processed. Payments will only be made once an application has been fully assessed as eligible for the scheme.

- Applications received have the learning details missing. **It is important that all the learning details are completed fully.** The course information is important for us to be able to monitor which types of courses learners are undertaking. Details of the learning hours are important so that the assessment team are able to ensure that the number of childcare hours claimed for are reasonable when compared to the amount of learning being undertaken. Details of the term dates are important so that the assessment team know which weeks require the usual weekly childcare costs to be paid and which weeks require a retained payment to be made.
- Applicants have not ticked that their learning is part of a progression route. **If the question relating to the course being part of a progression route is not ticked the learner will be deemed ineligible.** It is a requirement of the scheme that the course undertaken is part of a progression route into employment. More details about what is classed as a progression route can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions in the next section of this bulletin.
- Applications received do not include childcare details. **It is important that all childcare details are completed fully.** The application cannot be fully processed unless details of the start and end dates for the childcare provision, the hours of childcare and the costs of the childcare are included. Without this information the LSS cannot draw up a payment plan for eligible learners and no payments can be made.

2. Frequently Asked Questions

In these e-bulletins we hope to give you some advice on administering the scheme through frequently asked questions. This month, we would like to give you the answers to the following:

Are LSC-funded courses that are delivered through a Third Party Provider eligible for this scheme?

Yes, however, the arrangements for the administration of this scheme will be different for different types of Third Party Providers, details are below.

Third Party Delivery using an Independent Provider

This is where a private/independent Provider (who does not receive any funding direct from the LSC) is commissioned by an LSC-funded Provider to deliver a course/s on their behalf.

The LSC has formal relationships only with its Providers, and does not link to any contractual relationships that those Providers may have in place with other companies to deliver certain LSC-funded courses.

Therefore, where an LSC-funded Provider has contracted with an independent Third Party Provider (who does not receive any funding direct from the LSC), any learners who are undertaking LSC-funded courses at the independent Third Party Provider must be linked to the lead Provider who is LSC-funded. This is because it will be the lead, LSC-funded, Provider who will need to:

- Complete the Learning Provider section of the learner's application form;
- Complete the monthly attendance monitoring forms; and
- Receive and distribute the payments for travel costs to the learner.

Independent Third Party Providers will not be allowed to undertake any of these activities.

Third Party Delivery using an LSC-funded Provider

This is where an LSC-funded Provider is commissioned by another LSC-funded Provider to deliver a course on their behalf. For example, a local authority (who receives funds from the LSC to provide certain courses) contracting with their local FE college (who is also LSC-funded) to deliver these courses on their behalf.

A Third Party Provider that is already LSC-funded would be able to undertake the following activities as though they were the lead Provider:

- Complete the Learning Provider section of the learner's application form;
- Complete the monthly attendance monitoring forms; and
- Receive and distribute the payments for travel costs to the learner.

What is considered as a progression route into sustainable employment?

For this scheme we state that the course a learner undertakes must be part of a progression route into sustainable employment. A progression route could include the learner doing a course that will lead them onto a higher level of qualification that will then lead them into sustainable employment or it could include the learner undertaking a specific course of learning that is required to enter into a specific job.

Progression routes will be different for each individual learner depending on their current skills and what type of employment they want to aim for. The Learning Provider (along with the nextsteps adviser where appropriate) should discuss course options with each learner and confirm on the application form that the course is part of a progression route for that learner.

Learning Providers will not need to track learners who received this funding once they have completed their course. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) along with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) will be undertaking an evaluation to assess the impact of this new scheme; as part of that evaluation they will be contacting learners to determine their outcomes after receiving this support.

3. Update on marketing activity and promoting the scheme

In order to raise awareness of Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work, we have recorded an audio feature featuring actress, singer and mother Suzanne Shaw, to promote the scheme. She explains what the Free Childcare scheme is, who is eligible and talks from her own experiences about the benefits of learning a new skill – with the aim of inspiring eligible parents to take up training courses during the September/October intake. The audio feature was sold to radio stations earlier this month, with a particular focus on the local areas with the greatest number of potential recipients for the scheme.

Additionally, we have included adverts for the Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work scheme in some key publications, such as Early Years Educator, Flying Start, Practical Pre-School and Professional Childcare magazines. With these we hope to encourage Childcare Providers to promote the scheme to parents.

Please continue to promote the scheme to eligible learners and encourage them to apply for support. You can order leaflets to distribute to learners, and posters from LSC Publications by calling **0845 602 2260** or emailing lsc@prolog.uk.com, quoting the following reference numbers **LSC-P-NAT-090091** (leaflet) and **LSC-P-NAT-090090** (poster).

We would like to thank you for your work in promoting Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work to learners so far. It is important that you ensure you have up-to-date information available in your promotional materials, for example prospectuses, and on your website. You can visit www.direct.gov.uk/freechildcareforlearning for the latest information on Learner Support schemes for learners on this scheme, which you can use to update your website; alternatively, you may want to place a link to our website so that potential learners can easily access the information directly.

We are keen to ensure that information on Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work is accessible from a number of different sources to ensure that learners can more easily find out about the scheme and how to apply.

More detailed information about the scheme and resources for Providers and stakeholders can be found on our Provider-facing [Money to Learn website](#).

If you have undertaken any particular or innovative action in order to promote Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work that was successful in increasing the number of learners receiving this support, we would like to hear from you! If you would like to share your success and good practice, send us the details of what you did and how you achieved this to Childcare-news@lsc.gov.uk.

4. NAEGA Conference

The Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work team will be attending the NAEGA conference on 7th – 9th October at the Redworth Hall Hotel in Darlington. NAEGA is the major UK association for adult guidance practitioners.

At this you will have the opportunity to come and talk to us about the Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work scheme and how you can help to advise adult parents on this scheme.

For more information on the event, please visit the conference website at <http://emmm.co.uk/naega09/index.html>

General information

1. Guidance for Providers

You may be aware that we have produced some Provider Guidance documents for all of the schemes. These are available for download only from the [Money to Learn website](#).

These Guidance documents give information on the eligibility criteria for the schemes, and information on how best to administer the scheme within your organisation including some examples of best practice.

Please ensure that you refer to these documents if you have any policy queries. If, having read the document, you still have a query you can call the Provider helpline on **0845 600 7979**.

2. Childcare Big Picture

As you are aware we have produced a poster outlining the eligibility criteria for childcare support schemes from the LSC and Jobcentre Plus. This is a useful reference document giving key information about our childcare schemes, so we would encourage you to order a copy.

You can order copies of the Big Picture from LSC Publications by calling **0845 602 2260** or emailing lsc@prolog.uk.com, quoting the reference number **LSC-P-NAT-090083**.

Please also encourage Learning and Childcare Providers to order a copy for their reference.

Actions you may need to take

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

- Order application packs for Care to Learn and Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work.
- Assist learners with filling in all the parts of their Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work application forms.
- Continue to promote Care to Learn and Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work to eligible parents.
- Send us your examples of good practice in promoting Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work to Childcare-news@lsc.gov.uk
- Download a copy of each of the Guidance documents for the childcare schemes and ensure you refer to this information if you have any policy queries.
- Order a copy of the Childcare Big Picture for your reference.

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 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).