

Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work e-bulletin

January 2009

Welcome to the January e-bulletin about the Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work scheme.

From April 2009, Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work will provide childcare support for low income families with children, where one parent is working and the other parent (aged 20 or over), is out of work and looking to participate in learning that will lead to work.

The scheme will provide up to £175 per child per week (or £215 in London) to help pay for childcare and transport costs.

For a brief background on the scheme, please read the 'basic facts' in item 6 of this e-bulletin.

In this edition, we are outlining the timescales for introducing the scheme in April and explain how you can pre-order application packs to distribute to learners.

Each month, we send out an e-bulletin to keep you informed about the progress being made towards the introduction of the scheme. If you would like to be added to (or removed from) our distribution list, please email us at freechildcare-adults@lsc.gov.uk

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1. Introducing the scheme in April

As you are probably aware, at the end of November 2008 the LSC terminated its contract with Liberata and confirmed the appointment of Capita to take on the full range of Learner Support schemes, including Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work.

In the last edition of this e-bulletin we confirmed that following the change of supplier the Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work scheme will begin to support learners from April 2009 and will be rolled out nationally.

We are pleased to say that the transfer to Capita has gone well and we are on track to introduce Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work in time for April.

Application packs are now available for order (please see item 2 for details) guidance for the scheme will be available in the next two weeks.

We will start processing applications in March and we will start making payments from April.

Helpline number change - Important

We are now ready to make changes to the Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work helpline numbers to bring the scheme in line with the other LSC Learner Support schemes. These changes will bring a number of benefits:

- learning providers, childcare providers and other stakeholders will have a single telephone number for all Learner Support queries; and
- learners will benefit from free phone calls to a dedicated learner helpline

From Monday 2nd February the helpline numbers for Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work will be:

- **0845 600 7979 for Learning Providers** – Please select option four, 'Free Childcare for Adults'. Option four also handles enquiries about the 6th Form College Childcare Scheme.
- **0800 121 8989 for Learners** – Learners should select option four, 'Free Childcare for Adults'. This freephone number for learners will also give advice about other schemes Learner Support schemes managed by the LSC, including the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and the Adult Learning Grant (ALG).

Don't worry if you forget that these numbers have changed, you will still be able to get through to us on the old number and we'll remind you of the new number when you call.

All calls about Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work will be answered by a dedicated team who are trained to deal with specific enquiries about the scheme.

2. Application packs – order yours today

You can now order Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work application packs for the 2008/09 academic year.

Each application pack contains an application form and guidance notes to explain how to complete the form. We would like you to order a number of application packs and distribute them to eligible parents who may be interested in benefiting from the scheme.

You can order a number of application packs from LSC Publications by calling: **0845 602 2260** or emailing: **lsc@prolog.uk.com**.

Please make sure you quote ref: **LSC-P-NAT-080223** to make sure you get the correct application pack.

3. Regional seminars – application and administration walkthrough

We have set up a series of regional seminars during February and March to raise awareness of the scheme and to provide an end-to-end walkthrough of the Learner Support Service from a Childcare Provider and Learning Provider perspective.

Many of you have already booked your place and we're looking forward to meeting you. Don't worry if you haven't booked and would like to attend, there are still some spaces left at the following seminars during February and March:

Preston	Monday 2nd February
Cambridge	Tuesday 3rd February
London	Wednesday 4th February
Durham	Thursday 5th February
London	Tuesday 10th February
Surrey	Wednesday 11th February
Lincoln	Thursday 12th February
Norwich	Friday 13th February
Redruth	Tuesday 17th February
London	Wednesday 18th February
Birmingham	Thursday 19th February
London	Friday 20th February
Liverpool	Tuesday 24th February
Newcastle	Wednesday 25th February
Leeds	Thursday 26th February
London	Friday 27th February
York	Monday 2nd March

Nottingham	Tuesday 3rd March
Birmingham	Wednesday 4th March
London	Thursday 5th March
Somerset	Tuesday 10th March

To book your place at one of the above seminars or to find out more please go to www.livegroup.co.uk/freechildcare

4. Promoting the scheme to eligible parents

As with all learner support schemes, we will produce promotional materials for you to distribute to learners and eligible people with an interest in the scheme. We are working on leaflets and posters at the moment and hope to make them available to you soon.

We are also planning a national promotional campaign to raise awareness of the scheme and tell potentially eligible parents about its benefits. We anticipate that the campaign will include radio, magazine and online advertisements starting in April.

Additional resources to help you

We have produced a number of materials to help you prepare for the new scheme and give you the facts and information you need to support learners and answer some of the questions they may have:

- Quick reference guide summarising scheme facts
- Adviser roles to explain how you can promote the scheme and support learners
- One-page comparison of all three learner support childcare schemes
- Learner journey explaining the steps that learners go through to apply for the scheme
- Back issues of this e-bulletin

You can access all of these materials by visiting our website at www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/childcaretraininglearning/resourcesto_help.

5. Actions you may need to take

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

- Order 2008/09 application packs, Call 0845 602 2260 or email lsc@prolog.uk.com quoting ref: LSC-P-NAT-080223;

- Distribute application packs to eligible parents who may be interested in benefiting from the scheme;
- Sign up for one of our regional seminars telling you more about the application and administration process, see item 3 for more;
- Talk to eligible parents about the scheme and encourage them to take part. You can access materials to help you at www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/childcaretraininglearning/resourcestohelp .

6. Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work – basic facts

As a reminder, and to help you answer basic questions about the scheme, we have outlined the basic scheme facts below.

In 2007 the government announced a commitment to make £75 million available to fund free childcare for 50,000 workless parents to help them to access learning or training that leads to sustainable employment. The scheme will be launched nationally from April 2009.

The scheme is aimed at families where one parent is working but the second parent is not and wants to undertake learning or training as a route to finding work.

Our research shows that childcare costs are a major barrier to participation in learning. The new scheme will help us to encourage more adults back into education.

We have prepared some frequently asked questions (FAQs) to help you get up to speed on the new scheme. The following are just some of the answers we have prepared. You can view all of our FAQs at www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/childcaretraininglearning/FAQs .

When will Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work be available?

The scheme will start to support learning from April 2009, with application packs being available in February 2009.

Who is eligible for Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work?

The scheme is aimed at families where one parent is working over 16 hours per week but the second parent is not and wants to undertake learning or training as a route to finding work.

If the family has a child or children under 14 (or 18 for children with disabilities), and a household income of £20,000 or less in the previous tax

year, the non-working parent may be eligible for free childcare while they are in learning or training.

For full details of the eligibility criteria please visit the FAQ section on our website at

www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/childcaretraininglearning/FAQs .

Which courses are eligible for this scheme?

Unwaged courses up to and including Level 3, which are funded by the LSC, are eligible for Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work.

There are no minimum or maximum course length criteria for courses supported by the new childcare scheme. Taster courses through to 'A' levels are eligible, providing that the course provides a clear learning outcome and is part of a progression route into sustainable employment.

How much support is available?

Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work will pay childcare (and transport) costs of up to £175 per week per child (or up to £215 per week per child in London).

The weekly maximum will be used first to pay for childcare costs. However, if the cost of childcare is *less than* the weekly maximum, the learner can also claim transport costs for travel between their home and the childcare provider. Please note, the total of the two payments must not exceed the weekly maximum amount.

7. How to find out more

Online

Visit our website at

www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/childcaretraininglearning .

Telephone

We have set up helpline numbers to answer questions you or potential learners might have.

From 2 February, if you are a learning or training provider please call 0845 600 7979 (Select option 4 for Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work).

Learners should call 0800 121 8989 from 2 February onwards (Selecting option 4 for Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work).

Regular e-updates

We produce monthly e-bulletins to keep you informed with the latest developments in introducing the new scheme. We will make the e-bulletins available online, however, if you would like to receive a copy by email please let us know at freechildcare-adults@lsc.gov.uk

Learners

Learners can find out more about the scheme by visiting www.direct.gov.uk/freechildcareforlearning