

## Learner Support Service stakeholder e-bulletin, March 2009

Welcome to the March e-bulletin from the LSC's Learner Support Directorate.

In this month's edition we tell you about some further improvements to the Interim Learning Provider Portal and give you updates on a number of our schemes.

If you would like your name added to the distribution list please email us at [learnersupportupdate@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:learnersupportupdate@lsc.gov.uk)

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## **Plans for the future Learner Support Service**

### **Training and support survey**

In last month's e-bulletin we let you know that we will be replacing the Interim Learning Provider Portal (ILPP) with a new system for registering and making payments to learners. We said that this would lead to some basic changes to the way in which you use the system for registering learners and recording payment decisions.

We asked you to give us your feedback on what training and support you may need and also an idea of your understanding of EMA and ALG policy through our online survey. Thank you to those of you who have given us your views. To date we have had a great response rate with 1250 completed surveys. We will use your feedback to continually improve our communications and to inform the training and support we provide to you over the coming months.

### **Confirming Capita as our service provider**

We are happy to confirm that we have contracted with Capita to provide a service for us for four years to the end of the 2013 academic year. They will be delivering our helplines, application processing and payments services and will assist us to continually improve the range of services that we offer to both learners and learning providers. The contract covers services for the following schemes; EMA, ALG, Care to Learn, Sixth Form College Childcare, the Residential Support Scheme, Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work, and the Dance and Drama Awards.

## **Interim Learning Provider Portal Update**

### **Continuing improvements to our systems**

We have continued to work on improving the performance of the Interim Learning Provider Portal (Interim LPP), particularly the payment decision processes. We are pleased to say that the changes we have introduced have made a noticeable difference to the time it takes to "refresh screens" and the ability to better filter groups of learners. We have received a large number of reports from individual Learning Providers telling of significantly reduced times to input attendance data.

We are aware that on two occasions in the last couple of weeks we have had to suspend the current system for about an hour and we would like to apologise for any disruption this may have caused, especially as these occurred at busy times .

We are continuing to look at ways to further improve the stability of the current system. However, our main focus now is to develop the replacement system in readiness for summer 2009, and to ensure that it is not only quicker and more stable but also delivers enhanced functionality.

We hope that these recent developments will improve the user experience, and in the coming months we will keep you up to date on the development of the long term replacement for the Interim LPP.

### Security reminder

You are reminded of the need to keep User IDs and passwords private. At no time should IDs and passwords be kept in open view. To avoid the possibility of an unauthorised person obtaining these details, passwords should not be written down and you should not key them in when overlooked.

If you think a user's details *have* been compromised, these must be changed. If the user is a Standard User, these details can be updated by the Super User. However, if the user is a Super User, you must contact the Learner Support Service to update these details.

When users leave, or no longer have a need to access the system, their User ID's should be made inactive. Any new users should have their own unique User ID and password created.

If you need further help or advice on this important issue, please contact the Learning Provider helpline on **0845 600 7979**.

### EMA Guarantee

This year we have introduced the EMA Guarantee. This will apply to the majority of these learners and will mean that they will not have to re-apply to claim their EMA. We will be shortly writing to all EMA learners to inform them of the introduction of the Guarantee and will advise those who the Guarantee does not apply to of what they need to do. For providers, this will not change your beginning of year actions in relation to enrolment.

### EMA and ALG Application forms and support materials for 2009/10

2009/10 EMA and ALG application forms – available now for pre-order

You can pre-order a number of 2009/10 EMA and ALG application packs from LSC Publications by calling: **0845 602 2260** or emailing: **lsc@prolog.uk.com**.

For EMA please quote ref: **LSC-P-NAT-090013**.

For ALG please quote ref: **LSC-P-NAT-090014**.

Please note that application packs will not start to be sent out until April 2009.

### **2009/10 EMA Support Materials – available now for pre-order**

Support materials to help learning providers promote and support EMA are now available:

- EMA My Choice DVD – explains the benefits of EMA and how this has helped five young people stay on in learning who would otherwise have dropped out. Ref: **LSC-P-NAT-080004**
- A5 GCSE envelope – contains a leaflet that explains about options and choices after young people get their GCSEs, including advice about Apprenticeships, 'A' levels and Diplomas. It also gives a brief description about EMA. Ref: **LSC-P-NAT-080005**
- EMA resource pack – designed to support you in classroom-based learning and highlight the post-16 options available to young people. Ref: **LSC-P-NAT-080120**

The following guide will also be available from Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April:

- A guide to EMA for providers working with young people – assistance with advising young people and their families on the support provided by EMA. Ref: **LSC-P-NAT-090006**

You can download the guide from our website by clicking on this link:  
[http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Practitioners\\_guide\\_09-10.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Practitioners_guide_09-10.pdf)

### **2009/10 ALG Support Materials – available now for pre-order**

Support materials to help learning providers promote and support ALG are now available:

- Business Card Holder – holder for ALG business cards posing high level eligibility questions and contact information (100 business cards included). Ref: **LSC-P-NAT-090041**

You can order more cards if needed. Please quote ref: **LSC-P-NAT-090040**

- A4 Laminated Card – a quick reference guide to ALG for providers.  
Ref: **LSC-P-NAT-090042**
- Birthday Card – targeting prospective new applicants, individuals turning 19 years old, providing basic scheme and contact information.  
Ref: **LSC-P-NAT-090039**
- Leaflet – provides high level scheme information, eligibility criteria and contact information suitable for distribution by student services. Ref: **LSC-P-NAT-090038**
- Poster – references potential maximum grant amount (£30) and contact details for further information. Ref: **LSC-P-NAT-090045**

You can pre-order 2009/10 support materials from LSC Publications by calling: **0845 602 2260** or emailing: **lsc@prolog.uk.com**.

## Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work

From April, Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work will support adults (aged 20 and over) by paying for childcare and travel costs while they are undertaking learning that leads to work. The aim of the scheme is to encourage the non-working parent within a family to participate in learning or training that will help lead them into sustainable employment.

### Application and administration seminars

During February and March 2009 we held a series of seminars 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.

These events have now finished and over 890 of you attended giving us your feedback and comments. You can view directly the slideshow presentation from the events by clicking on the link:

[http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/FCTLW\\_Seminar\\_Presentation\\_Feb-March09.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/FCTLW_Seminar_Presentation_Feb-March09.pdf)

We are reviewing the feedback collected at these events and will respond to your questions in the coming weeks by updating our Frequently Asked Questions section of the website.

## Application packs now available

Remember you can now order Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work 2008/09 application packs from LSC Publications by calling: **0845 602 2260** or emailing: **lsc@prolog.uk.com**.

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

Application packs for the 2009/10 academic year will be made available at a later date.

## Find out more about Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work

You can sign up for our Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work e-bulletin by sending us an email at [freechildcare-adults@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:freechildcare-adults@lsc.gov.uk) to receive all the latest information.

You can find out more about the scheme by visiting our website at [www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/childcaretraininglearning](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/childcaretraininglearning) or calling us on **0845 600 7979**.

Learners can find out more by calling **0800 121 8989** and selecting option 4.

## Care to Learn

### Policy changes

Care to Learn helps teenage parents stay in learning by contributing to the costs of their childcare and associated travel while they learn. We are making some changes to the policy for Care to Learn. Some of these are effective immediately. Others will come into effect in the 2009/10 academic year.

These changes relate to:

### Childcare providers

- Childcare Provider review – effective immediately
- Childcare provided by relatives - effective immediately

### Applications and Eligibility

- Application forms for 2009/10– effective for learning that starts on or after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009
- Young parent's residency status – effective from September 2009

## **Fees and Payments**

- Backdating payments – effective from September 2009
- Review of summer retainer payments – effective summer 2010
- Review of Learning Provider administration fees – effective September 2010
- Review of Childcare Provider network broker payments – effective September 2010

We have produced a briefing note that provides details of the above. You can see it by visiting the site <https://caretolearn.lsc.gov.uk/> or you can view it directly at:

[http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/C2L\\_briefing\\_note\\_March2009.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/C2L_briefing_note_March2009.pdf)

Later in the year we will be issuing a **regular childcare bulletin** to keep you updated about the LSC's childcare support schemes (including information on Free Childcare for Training and Work). If you would be interested in receiving this, please send an email to [Childcare-news@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:Childcare-news@lsc.gov.uk). Please ensure you tell us the type of organisation you work for in the subject header of the email (e.g. childcare provider, learning provider, Connexions support worker, other type of support worker or other type of organisation). Letting us know the type of organisation you work for will enable us to better support all our stakeholders in the future.

## **Care to Learn leaflets**

A leaflet for Care to Learn is now available for download via the following link: [http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Care\\_to\\_learn\\_leaflet\\_2009-10.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Care_to_learn_leaflet_2009-10.pdf)

From April 14<sup>th</sup> you will be able to order the leaflet from LSC Publications by calling: **0845 602 2260** or emailing: **lsc@prolog.uk.com**.

## **Individual Learner Records (ILR)**

Discretionary support funding (dSF) is intended for learners who are facing financial difficulty and who may be economically or socially disadvantaged. It can help with the costs of childcare (for learners aged 20+), residential lodgings or course-related learning costs, such as the purchase of books, materials or equipment.

You can help us to gauge how discretionary learner support funding (dLSF) is used by making sure you populate field L49 of the Individual Learner Record (ILR) in all instances where a learner benefits from dSF. Additionally, you should populate field L34 of the ILR with code 37 for learners benefiting from residential bursaries.

dSF can make the difference between a learner continuing in learning or not, and by adhering to this request, you can help demonstrate the critical importance of dLSF, and strengthen the case for the drawing down of further, additional funding in the future.

You can find full details of dLSF guidance and requirements for 2008/09 at: <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-fundingguidancerequirements200809-may08.pdf>

The tables shown in Annex E of the document will show you details of the codes you can use to populate the relevant fields.

## **Actions you may need to take**

Below is a reminder of the actions to be taken over the next few weeks.

Please:

- Pre-order 2009/10 EMA and ALG application forms and support materials from LSC publications (see item 3 for details).
- If you haven't done so sign up for our e-bulletin telling you all about our new childcare scheme – Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work. Email us at [freechildcare-adults@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:freechildcare-adults@lsc.gov.uk)
- Order 2008/09 application forms for Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work from LSC publications (see item 4 for details).
- Deactivate the IDs of users who have left your institution.

## **Keeping you informed**

We will keep you up to date with the Learner Support news via this monthly e-bulletin.

If you would like to find out more about the Learner Support Service or the various Learner Support schemes, including EMA and the ALG, please go to <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn> or call us on **0845 600 7979** .