

## **A New Year, A New Skill!**

*New research reveals why learning a new skill should top our New Year resolutions*

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It's the New Year and time for a New You. Forget those fly away resolutions to join the gym and get fit - a new study\* commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has revealed that over half (53%) of the English population who have started a new job in recent years claim that this is the way to improve health, increase self confidence, reduce stress and achieve the new, improved you!

With January a key time to start thinking about the future and planning ahead, this nationwide study shows that nearly a quarter of Britain's adults state that learning a new skill is high on their wish list of achievements this year, but that the fear of being too old to learn and money worries are holding them back.

The LSC offers an Adult Learning Grant of up to £30 per week to Adult Learners to help overcome these fears. With a third of the population questioned in the study claiming that money is a limiting factor when thinking about going back to college, the Adult Learning Grant (ALG) is designed to help learners eligible for it with the extra costs that learning can bring.

Self-esteem expert and psychologist, Dr Gary Wood encourages adults to go out and pursue their dreams this New Year, claiming that the benefits of learning a new skill can give a far reaching boost to all aspects of a person's wellbeing, whatever their age.

He comments: "Learning a new skill or getting a new job can really boost your self confidence and inspire motivation to invigorate other aspects in your life, such as enjoying a healthier diet and lifestyle"

Mother of two Louise Clayton left her job as a bakery manager to pursue her dream of becoming a nurse, a career that was more personally fulfilling to her. She says: "Coming back to college was a big test, I didn't think I could do it. I think if you want to do something when you are older, you have to push yourself. It's never too late to do anything. If I can do it, anyone can and the Adult Learning Grant is there to help you along the way."

Trevor Fellowes, Director of Learner Support of the Learning and Skills Council, says:

"The Adult Learning Grant offers learners a helping hand in education, it can be used to help with anything from the cost of books and materials through to childcare costs. The start of a new year is a crucial time to start thinking about your future opportunities and the ALG is there to ease the financial pressures of these important decisions"

If you are thinking about going back to college in September now is a better time than any to start looking for a course to suit the new you. Call 0800 100 900 or visit [www.learndirect.co.uk](http://www.learndirect.co.uk) and sign up today.

**NOTE TO EDITORS:**

Dr Gary Wood and Louise Clayton are available for interviews as well as a number of case studies from around the country, please contact Kate Lupton on 0207 413 3769 or e-mail [kate.lupton@hillandknowlton.com](mailto:kate.lupton@hillandknowlton.com) for further media enquiries.

ALG is available to adults in England aged 19 or over who are studying full time for a first full level 2 (5 GCSE's at grades A\* to C or an NVQ2 or its equivalent) or a first full level 3 (2 A levels or an NVQ3 or its equivalent) qualification.

\* Research conducted by ICM Omnibus, sample 1766, 18-65 year olds