

## **ADULT STUDENTS IN BURY TELL SECRETARY OF STATE HOW GRANTS HELP WITH EXTRA COST OF LEARNING THAT CAN CHANGE THEIR LIVES**

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Adult students from Bury College will meet Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, the Rt Hon John Denham, when he visits the college on **Friday 14 September**, and tell him how the new Adult Learning Grant (ALG) is helping them get back into education.

Mr Denham will also open the Aspire Centre, the college's new exam and sports centre.

- **Media are invited to attend for interviews/pictures at 2.30pm on Friday 14 September at The Aspire Centre, Bury College, Market Street, Bury BL9 0BG.**

The ALG is a £35m investment by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) that will make a significant contribution to improving the skilled workforce. It gives eligible adults up to £30 a week to help with the extra costs that taking a college course can bring. After a successful pilot since 2003 in 25 areas including Lancashire, where 1,137 people received ALG in 2006/7, the ALG is now available to all eligible adults across England.

John Denham said:

“Lord Leitch has set out some key challenges for us if we are to become world leaders in skills by 2020. Adult Learning Grant can help us meet those challenges

working in tandem with other initiatives such as the new entitlement to free tuition for 19-25 year olds without a Level 3 and the new learner accounts. The £30 a week that Adult learning Grant offers will make a massive difference to the 30,000 individuals each year who will get it.

“Pilots have already shown that the grant opens up opportunities for low skilled, low income adults to gain new skills and qualifications, which will improve their employment prospects and provide a route to a better life. In some colleges one hundred per cent of learners receiving ALG have completed their course.”

Mr Denham’s visit to Bury College will give him the chance to hear from the students themselves how the ALG helps make it possible to learn new skills that can be life-changing.

Among them will be young mum Clare Carroll from Preston who went back to college in 2005 after her second child was born, to do an Access to Midwifery course. Clare, who works part-time job as a health-care assistant at the local hospital, says that she’d be lost without the ALG. The money goes towards books and stationery and £5 a week goes towards paying for the college crèche, which is discounted as she and her husband receive working tax credits.

Without ALG, Clare says that she would have to work more hours at the hospital and less time looking after her children and studying.

John Korzeniewski, LSC Regional Director North West, said: “Bury College, a Beacon College, is one of the many colleges that play a vital role in making sure that people in the North West can be equipped with the right skills and knowledge to provide the workforce our employers need to remain competitive in a global market.

“The Adult Learning Grant offers people over 19 a helping hand to get back into learning and it is great that the Secretary of State can hear from individuals at grassroots level who already have, or in the near future will have, benefited from it.”

Bury College Principal Lauran Chatburn said: “Bury College is an outstanding college. It is wonderful to see this recognised at a national level as well as locally. This visit will be an opportunity for the Secretary of State to see for himself the remarkable campus and facilities available at Bury College, and positively endorses the decisions thousands of individuals make each year to study with us.”

In support of the drive to encourage individuals in England to learn, a new Skills Campaign, ‘Our Future, It’s In Our Hands’, has been launched by the Learning and Skills Council. The campaign aims to celebrate learning by encouraging people to take control of their own future and learn a new skill.

With over 17,000 learning providers in the UK, it has never been easier for adults to continue learning after compulsory education and improve their earning potential. Individuals keen to move their careers forward and learn a new skill should call 0800 0113030 or visit the dedicated website;

[www.lsc.gov.uk/inourhands](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/inourhands).

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**Notes to Editors**

**Learning and Skills Council:**

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are

responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

### **Adult Learning Grant:**

The Adult Learning Grant (ALG) is a weekly grant designed to help adults studying full-time with the costs of learning. The grant is income assessed and pays up to £30 per week (around £1,000 a year) for full time learners aged 19 and over who are studying for a first full Level 2 (5 GCSEs 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.

The Adult Learning Grant is important because skills shortages continue to have a negative impact on UK productivity and competitiveness in the face of fast-growing economies. ALG aims to encourage individuals return to education by offering a helping hand to contribute to things like books, travel and learning materials while they study. ALG has been piloted since 2003, achieving coverage of the whole of England in September 2007. Potential ALG applicants should visit Student Services at their local college, call 0800 100 900 or visit the website [www.direct.gov.uk/alg](http://www.direct.gov.uk/alg)

### **Media Enquiries**

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