

PRESTON MUM CALLS FOR ADULTS TO CLAIM EDUCATION CASH THEY ARE DUE, SAYING: "I DID IT, SO CAN YOU!"

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A Preston mum who went back to college with help from an Adult Learning Grant (ALG) is urging more adults to follow her lead after it was revealed significant numbers of Lancashire adults may not be claiming the education cash to which they are entitled.

Clare Carroll, from Ribbleton, is an example of how you can change your life for the better, no matter what your age or circumstance. She became a mother at 15 and could not stay on at school to complete her qualifications. Without family support, she ended up in a mother and baby unit for two years.

Going back to learning and gaining new qualifications has given Clare the chance to completely turn her life around and head in a whole new direction. She has shown that if she can do it, anyone can – especially with a helping hand from an Adult Learning Grant. An ALG allows adult learners up to £30 a week to help with the extra costs that learning can bring.

Government figures show that despite some 29,000 adults having already been assessed as eligible to receive support from the ALG this year, around a quarter still haven't claimed the money they could be due. If you have received a letter of

entitlement please contact your local college or the learner entitlement support line on 0800 121 8989.

The turning point for 26-year-old Clare Carroll came when she married in 2003. After her second child was born, with her husband's encouragement, she went back to college in 2005 to do a 'progression' course that would lead to a 12 month Access to Nursing and Midwifery, the qualification she needed for her chosen career. Last year, she passed her Access to Nursing and Midwifery Course at Preston College. Clare now works a maternity unit at Royal Preston Hospital as a health care assistant, and is currently on maternity leave looking after the latest addition to her family, her three-month old daughter Emma Louise.

To help Clare financially during her Access Course, Preston College arranged a range of support including an Adult Learning Grant (ALG). Clare would have been lost without the ALG. The money went towards books and stationery and £5 a week goes towards paying for the college crèche, which was discounted as she and her husband receive working tax credits.

Clare said: "I would encourage more people to apply for an Adult Learning Grant as it has helped me to get where I am today. The cash provided that extra incentive to get into college and helped me to pay for my books. It definitely made a difference to my life."

Willie Mills, Principal of Preston College, said: "Here at Preston College we are proud to support the Adult Learning Grant, which opens the door to further education for so many people who have been unable to benefit from it because of financial restrictions. I hope that Clare Carroll's story will inspire others to find out about the Grant too."

John Korzeniewski, North West Regional Director for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), which funds ALGs, said: “Adult Learning Grants change people’s lives by giving them the financial help they need to continue learning. The LSC recognises that going to college or doing a training course may mean unforeseen costs such as course books or even childcare, and that’s where ALGs can help.

“Clare’s story shows exactly where an ALG can lead. If you are studying or about to return to education it’s important that you find out about the help that’s available for you, and whether an ALG could help you change your life.”

To find out more about courses at Preston College, call 01772 225522.

If you are thinking about going back to college, ALG could help you. To find out more information and whether you are eligible, visit www.direct.gov.uk/alg or call 0800 121 8989.

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Notes to Editors:

This press release applies to England only.

Learning and Skills Council

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

ALGs are available to adults in low income households in England aged 19 or over who are studying full time for their 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.

**ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL BY COI NEWS &
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