

Skills Accounts Quick Reference Guide for Learning Providers

October 2009

This guide provides an overview of Skills Accounts; the benefits they can bring, your role within the trial and highlights the current Skills Account offer.

For further detail please see the complete guidance available on the LSC Website www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/skillsaccounts/.

1. Introduction

A Skills Account is a personalised online service that allows individuals to take control of their learning and working life.

If thinking about learning a new skill or changing direction in career, a Skills Account is the place to start. A Skills Account will help individuals to:

- Identify the skills they have
- Match their skills needs
- Choose the right course
- Find out if they can get funding to support you
- Track how much has been spent on their learning
- Develop an action plan for their skills and Assessment and access services to help them make the next step

Skills Accounts will:

- Be an integral part of the new Adult Advancement and Careers Service (aacs).
- Aim to be a mechanism, by which adults will access their entitlement to funding for training. Aspiration that by 2015 for up to £1.5bn ALR budgets may be available to learners with a Skills Account.
- Be a single portal to a range of information & advice on skills.
- Offer your organisation a chance to influence thinking, and shape a new service which is in second year of trials.

2. Opening an Account

A Skills Account is available to all customers; there is no cost involved and can be opened in a number of ways:

- As part of the trials, selected colleges and training providers will be registering individual's interest for a Skills Account.

- An Individual can open a Skills Account online by following 5 registration steps through www.direct.gov.uk/skillsaccounts



- The Careers Advice Service helpline (0800 100 900) can register an individual's interest for a Skills Account.
- The **nextstep** service can open a Skills Account for an individual and provide additional support.
- ESP Providers in trial areas can also open Skills Accounts as part of an individual's programme.

3. Features & Benefits

How will this add value to the service I deliver?

- Skills Account **supports you in building longer term relationships**. In time Skills Accounts will produce increased knowledge and data on learners and address barriers to learning.
- In the future Skills Accounts will **help to create a more informed learner**, who is more likely and better placed to take advantage of the adult learning offer; driving up improved recruitment, retention and demand led provision.
- Skills Accounts is a tool to **help you deliver your core business**, supporting face-to-face information and advice and providing additional sources of information to support your customers all in one place (course finder, job profiles, Learning Record and Learner Statement).
- Funding tools which help to identify the different areas of funding available and

check to see if individuals are eligible for support to help with the cost of learning.

- Careers support tools are available such as the Skills and Interests Assessment allows individuals to identify their skills and match them to over 700 Job Profiles and via the Course Finder, **ensuring that learners are accessing appropriate provision that will support them into work.**

A Skills Account provides an individual with:

- A range of information and advice on skills, careers and financial support all in one place inc. a "Call Me/ Mail an Adviser" function.
- Personal service and resource an individual can manage and use during their learning and working life, allowing a greater breadth of choice and ability to act on targeted entitlements.
- Access to an online record of learning; verified by a Learning Provider which can be shared with employers if chosen.
- Individuals will also be able to create a personal online learning record to include skills and interests, hobbies and voluntary work which can be accessed and updated at any time.
- A Learner Statement allowing an individual to keep track of money spent on learning including how much money the Government has contributed towards their achievements. It helps individuals understand and appreciate the actual cost of courses.

4. Role of a Learning Provider

- To promote and champion the Skills Account vision and support the delivery of Skills Accounts.
- Ensure staff are fully briefed and aware of the Skills Accounts proposition.
- Embed Skills Accounts as part of your business processes.
- Ensure the National Learning Directory (NLD) is up to date with all the courses you offer.
- Provide feedback and help shape the Skills Account service.

5. What is new in Skills Accounts?

Through a Skills Account individuals will be able to access the:

- **Diagnostic Tool** - this is a web based tool that provides an objective assessment of the customer's strengths, skills, abilities and areas for development in key competency areas which underpin success at work.
- **Eligibility Checker** - access to funding tools which help to identify the different areas of funding available and check individuals' eligibility for support to help with the cost of learning.
- **Skills Accounts are currently available in** the South East, East Midlands, West Midlands, Yorkshire and Humber, South West and North West LSC Regions.
- **From early 2010** Skills Accounts will also be available in the North East, East of England and London LSC Regions.

As the Skills Account service develops, the online offer will become more closely integrated and aligned with other information and services delivered through Directgov – for example, Careers Advice content.

6. Contacts and further information

If there are any questions then please contact your regional LSC contact:

Ben.Blackledge@lsc.gov.uk	0118 908 2166
Penny.Askew@lsc.gov.uk	0118 908 2111
Tricia.Allison@lsc.gov.uk	0118 908 2266

Customer Feedback can be made on the Skills Account website using the feedback form under 'contact us'.

Individuals can get support (including technical issues) by

- Calling the Careers Advice Service **0800 100 900**
- Using the new 'Call Me' and 'Mail and Adviser' functions on the website.

Visit www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/skillsaccounts/ for operational guidelines and FAQs.

Visit www.lsc.gov.uk/campaignresources for details of marketing collateral available.