

## Skills Accounts Update

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### Background

The Skills Account trial will be focused on two regions in 2008/09 – East Midlands and South East – followed by a national rollout commencing in 2009/10. The published date for final completion of the Skills Accounts roll-out is 2015.

The development of the Skills Accounts model aims to deliver on the World Class Skills objectives to:

- Develop a culture of learning, motivating and empowering more adults to take up and progress in learning
- Drive the implementation of a demand-led funding system for individuals
- Create an integrated employment and skills (IES) service that supports adults from worklessness into sustainable employment and career progression

By 2015, Skills Accounts are expected to:

- Be the key mechanism via which adults access learning, outside of Train to Gain.
- Be the stepping stone to sustainable employment and the achievement of economically valuable qualifications
- Be an important access route for individuals wanting to use the new universal adult advancement and careers service (aacs). The aacs support is key to the success of Skills Accounts
- Be a clear and inspiring record of an individual's skills and careers achievements and future goals, accessible online.

### The Skills Account offer

The focus of the 08/09 trial is on testing the core product and supporting systems and developing a quality experience for both learners and providers. For the 08/09 trials, systems are under development for an individual who opens a Skills Account to receive:

- Welcome materials detailing the benefits of an account and how to access further support – either physical or over email as requested;

### LSC South East Region

Thames Valley Area (Reading)

Pacific House Imperial Way Reading Berkshire RG2 0TF

T 0845 019 4147 F 0118 908 2109 [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)

- A unique learner number, assigned by MIAP Learner Registration Service, which over the course of the year will be linked to qualifications gained, visible to the individual on their Skills Account through the MIAP Learner Record;
- A virtual 'Voucher' of state funding towards a course, representing an individual's entitlement or fee remission, which they can present to an FE provider. Over the course of the year, the intention is that the online account will also show a retrospective record of the true cost of investments made in the individual;
- Online access to manage their personal Skills Account, through which they can access a range of ongoing advice and support services. Account holders will also be given particular follow-up support from IAG services.

Skills accounts are designed to be universal and therefore available and motivational for all adults, but with appropriate targeting for the workless, offenders and the low/no skilled. "Adults" includes 18 year olds who have left school/FE but have not yet reached their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. It is also intended to be flexible for possible expansion, for example, to HE funding or 16-18 year olds, or to manage other public services or resources.

### **Timescale**

There will be two types of trial in 2008/09:

- The Skills Accounts trial in the current Adult Learner Account areas - East Midlands and South East
- The Integrated Skills and Employment (IES) in four regions, including the South East. The introduction of Skills Accounts is a core component of the IES trial.

In 2008/09 in the South East ten FE colleges acting as 'Strategic Partners' will offer Skills Accounts to their learners funded through the Adult Responsiveness Funding stream, commencing in mid September 2008. 25% of their enrolments in September will be offered Skills Accounts, followed by 50% in October and all their learners thereafter. They will work closely with the LSC to develop a quality product and experience which impacts positively on both learner motivation and provider responsiveness. The Strategic Partners are working with us to test systems and processes and inform the development of the trial, and are:

- Eastleigh College
- Fareham College
- IOW College
- City College Brighton and Hove
- Northbrook College
- Sussex Downs College
- East Surrey College
- North West Kent College
- Oxford and Cherwell Valley College
- Aylesbury College

Two private providers, JGA and Brighter Prospects, from the Adult learner Account pilot will also be involved in the trial, and will essentially act as strategic partners along with the 10 FE colleges listed above.

In the first year learners will also be able to access Skills Accounts through the nextstep IAG service. This approach will be rolled out across the region, area by area, from October 2008 to February 2009 as follows:

- October – Hampshire and the Isle of Wight
- November – Thames Valley
- January - Sussex and Surrey
- February - Kent

A detailed implementation plan is being drawn up with the support of the SE LSC Skills Accounts Project Team.

**Paper creator** Penny Askew  
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