

## Learner Support e-bulletin August 2010

Welcome to the August edition of the *Learner Support e-bulletin* from the YPLA's Learner Support Directorate.

This bulletin is aimed at learner advocates with a responsibility for the promotion and administration of Learner Support schemes (including Education Maintenance Allowance and Adult Learning Grant); providers; local authorities; and other partners interested in these schemes.

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### 1. Update from the Learner Support Service

The Learner Support Service has recently sent out Super User emails outlining the rules regarding payment decisions for the end of academic years and exceptional late payments.

Please note that payment decisions cannot cross EMA and ALG years. For the end of the 2009/10 year no flexibility will be available on late payments and Providers must ensure that all payment decisions are up to date by 27 August 2010.

However, there are certain groups of learners for which the Learner Support Service will allow Learning Providers to inform them of payment decisions for the 2009/10 academic year after the 27 August. These are outlined in an

email that was sent out on 17 August. Learning Providers will need to complete a pro-forma to submit to the LSS for these learners.

It is important to note that late payment pro-formas will not be accepted after 30 September under any circumstances.

For full information on this you should check the latest news on LAPS or call the helpline on **0845 600 7979**.

Please ensure that you are aware of what you will need to complete, and that you have returned this to the LSS before 30 September 2010.

## **2. Learner Support 2010/11 Guidance published**

Guidance documents for EMA, ALG, Care to Learn and discretionary Learner Support, for the 2010/11 academic year, have now been published.

These are available to download from the 'Resources' section of each scheme's website, which you can access from [www.ypla.gov.uk/learnersupport](http://www.ypla.gov.uk/learnersupport).

Each guidance outlines the criteria for the scheme, giving information on administering this within your organisation.

These documents will be useful to those involved in the administration of Learner Support schemes, and should replace any previous versions that you have.

Please note that these documents may be updated during the course of the 2010/11 academic year, and you should check the website to ensure that you are using the most up-to-date document.

## **3. EMA Valid Provision Criteria 2010/11**

The EMA Valid Provision Criteria document has been updated for the 2010/11 academic year, and has been published to the EMA website: <http://ema.ypla.gov.uk/resources/guidance>

This document should be read in conjunction with the 2010/11 EMA Guidance, and contains information on the valid provision criteria used to assess the eligibility of learning provision for EMA purposes.

Published alongside this document is a pro forma, which Providers can download and complete.

## 4. Applying for Learner Support schemes

In order to receive support from the start of a learner's course, they must apply within 28 days of the course start date. Applications that are received by the Learner Support Service (LSS) outside of these 28 days will only be eligible for backdated payments to the Monday of the week in which the application was received.

It is important that learners are encouraged to apply as soon as possible for support from Learner Support schemes, and certainly within the 28 days, to ensure that they are eligible for support from the start of their course, and from the point at which they are in need.

Providers may wish to include this information in any literature on financial support that they give to learners.

Learners can get an application pack by calling the Learner Support Service on **0800 121 8989**, or for EMA, ALG and Care to Learn, from the Directgov website. Included in the application pack are guidance notes, giving advice on how to fill in the form.

Learners can get more information on Learner Support schemes, their eligibility criteria and further help on completing their application by calling the LSS on **0800 121 8989**.

## 5. Application resource packs

We are aware that a number of learners may approach their Learning Provider, or student services, for support in completing their application. We have produced new resource documents, *Application Resource Packs*, to support those working with learners. These documents give a high-level walkthrough of the 2010/11 application form, for EMA, ALG and Care to Learn. They outline the mandatory fields on the application form, common mistakes made when completing the form and helpful hints on what is required.

These are available to download from the scheme websites:

<http://ema.ypla.gov.uk>; <http://alg.ypla.gov.uk>; and  
<http://caretolearn.ypla.gov.uk>.

These documents complement the application form guidance notes and support that the Learner Support helpline can provide, and can help to prevent the application form being returned to the learner owing to missing information.

You may find it useful to download a copy for your reference.

## 6. EMA leaflet available to download

You may be aware that marketing materials for EMA are not available to order for the 2010/11 academic year.

We have produced an A4-sized, two-page outline of EMA, that provides an overview for learners on what the scheme is and how to find out more information. This is available for download only, from the EMA website at <http://ema.ypla.gov.uk/resources>

Those working with young learners may want to download a copy and print this off to discuss the scheme with them.

You may be aware that the two EMA posters – My Money and My Choice – are available to download from the website.

## 7. Learner Support scheme websites

We have recently made some changes to the structure of the Learner Support scheme websites, to make their navigation more simple and consistent between schemes.

This may mean that if you have saved any links to your favourites they may no longer work. All the same information is available on the websites. All key documents will be under the 'Resources' section, including scheme Guidance and application resource packs; the sites also contain key eligibility criteria and Frequently Asked Questions.

You can access information on all Learner Support schemes from the YPLA website at [www.ypla.gov.uk/learnersupport](http://www.ypla.gov.uk/learnersupport)

## 8. Changes in the way you can sign up for *Learner Support e-bulletin*

We have changed the way that you sign up to receive this e-bulletin.

If you would like to receive the *Learner Support e-bulletin* regularly, you should email [childcare-news@ypla.gov.uk](mailto:childcare-news@ypla.gov.uk) with your contact details, and what organisation you work for.

If you would like to unsubscribe, you should email the same address.

You may also be aware that we produce the *Childcare News* e-bulletin, which gives information on Learner Support childcare schemes. If you would like to sign up to receive this e-bulletin, please also include this in your email.

If you are aware of any colleagues who are involved in the administration of Learner Support schemes and are not signed up to receive this, please forward them a copy of this bulletin and encourage them to register.

Please note, we hope to improve the way you can sign up and will update you through this e-bulletin.

## **9. How to find out more**

More information on Learner Support schemes is available at [www.ypla.gov.uk/learnersupport](http://www.ypla.gov.uk/learnersupport)

Learning Providers can call the helpline for support on **0845 600 7979**.

Learners can find out more information from the helpline on **0800 121 8989**, or visiting [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) and searching for the relevant scheme.

If you have any feedback on this publication you can email [learnersupportupdate@ypla.gov.uk](mailto:learnersupportupdate@ypla.gov.uk).