Welcome to the pilot specific edition of the June e-bulletin. All our e-bulletins contain updates about the ways in which the LSC’s Learner Support schemes, including EMA and ALG, are administered.

This is an additional supplement for those of you in the two pilot areas that are testing the new application systems: the South West and South Yorkshire.

If you are not in a pilot area you may find it helpful to also read the main stakeholder e-bulletin available at www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/lss. All past issues of the e-bulletin will also be made available at this address.

If you would like your name added to our distribution list please contact: Ben.Petter@hillandknowlton.com

In June’s stakeholder e-bulletin for the pilot areas:

1. Service update – updated provisional timetable: June 2008
2. Training events
3. EMA application resource pack
4. Entry to Employment declaration forms
5. Residency checks for learner support
6. How to order application forms
7. Helpline numbers for Learners and Learning Providers
8. Keeping you informed
9. Background to the new Learner Support Service
1. Service update - provisional timetable: June 2008

In the last e-bulletin we outlined a provisional timetable for the changes to the application and administration processes to the Learner Support schemes. There have been some important changes to this timetable so please take a moment to read through this item.

We regret to inform you that the online application system has been delayed. Our plan was to focus on the online application in the pilot areas but we have taken the decision that it is not yet “fit for purpose”, that we should delay its release, and implement our contingency plans.

We are now making paper application forms available in the pilot regions and are writing to all 16 year olds in the pilot areas. In addition, learners can continue to apply on the telephone. Further detail is set out below and we are working closely with local colleagues in the pilot regions to monitor scheme take-up.

We would like to thank you for your continuing support.

The Online Application system has been delayed

We regret to inform you that there is a delay to the launch of the new online learner application system and eligibility checker. We have experienced some issues with the new online system in testing, and we want to ensure that it is absolutely right before we make it available to learners. We are working hard to make the required changes and we will have the online application available as soon as possible.

We want to apologise to the pilot regions for this delay. At this stage we cannot give a reliable revised date, and indeed we think it best to work on the presumption that the on-line applications will not be possible for some time. We will continue to keep you updated through future editions of this e-bulletin.

We will be making paper forms available to ensure learners can apply

We have decided to make paper forms available in the pilot regions because of these delays. Although this does mean that we will not learn as much as we would have liked about the new application channels this year, it allows us to ensure we give all learners access to an EMA application.

We are working with local LSC colleagues to plan how we distribute forms in July and August. This will include distribution of application packs to colleges and learning advisors. If you have ordered materials from LSC publications this year but were not sent the full quantity, we will forward you a stock of application packs and we ask you to distribute these to your learners.

If you wish to order forms from LSC Publications, you can do so immediately – see section 6 for details on how you can do this.

We will be writing direct to young people in the pilot areas.

We have already sent pre-populated application forms to all the 17 year old people who were on EMA last year, to make it easy for them to re-apply this year.

We are now going to write to all 16 year olds (i.e. school leavers) in the pilot areas, telling them about EMA and enclosing an application form. Obviously this will include young people who do not intend to enter courses that are eligible for EMA or who live in households with incomes above the eligibility level, but this blanket approach means that no-one should miss
out. Indeed, we will monitor take-up and it is possible that it will be boosted by this approach.

**Learners can still apply on the telephone**

Learners can also apply for EMA and ALG by calling the learner helpline on **0800 121 8989**. This is a free phone number which supports learners with their applications for the 2008/09 academic year. By calling the learner helpline, learners can check their potential eligibility, make an application and find out more about the other nationally administered schemes. We have increased the capacity of our call centres to cater for the anticipated increase in demand.

**Introducing the Learning Provider Portal**

During the summer, the new Learning Provider Portal (LPP) will replace EMASYS. It will enable you to monitor attendance of learners and make decisions about payments. As we outlined in the last e-bulletin, the LPP will be very similar to EMASYS.

We will make a steady transition to the new Learning Provider Portal so we are sure to manage the risks of the introduction of the new IT.

The first step in this transition will be a temporary attendance monitoring and payment service for those Learning Providers who need to make payments to new starters from week commencing 7th July, predominately work based learning providers. This solution will be very simple and be absolutely focussed on supporting you in making payment decisions for your learners.

We will be writing to EMASYS superusers in the next few days to inform them of this temporary solution. This superuser email will include details on how to access and use the system, and the process for monitoring attendance and making payments.

**Administering other nationally administered schemes**

Arrangements for the other nationally administered schemes (Sixth Form College Childcare, Residential Support Scheme, Dance and Drama Award and Care to Learn) will remain unchanged until later in the year.

**2. Training events**

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We have organised a series of training seminars in June and July for administrators who are using the new Learning Provider Portal (LPP). At the time of writing there have been 8 such events, which have been well attended and feedback has been positive.

We are targeting anyone who uses EMASYS and ALG systems. The training seminars are particularly relevant to those people who have not used EMASYS before, e.g. administrators who have previously only dealt with ALG, and new Entry to Employment (e2e) providers.

It’s not too late to book one of these training seminars. We currently have vacancies in:

- Plymouth – Thursday, 3 July
- Gloucester – Wednesday, 23 July
- Bridgwater – Wednesday, 30 July
We have now added two additional dates for the South West:
- Bournemouth – Wednesday, 16 July
- Truro – Thursday, 17 July
To find out more about these events and to register for a place please log onto
www.livegroup.co.uk/lssportals

3. EMA application resource pack
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The EMA application resource pack is now available at
http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/YorkshireandtheHumber/App_form_RP_2008-09_Final_Version_2_.pdf and has been designed to take you through the steps for completing an application form in detail. This year the pack will only be available online.

4. Entry to Employment declaration forms
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Learners enrolling on Entry to Employment (e2e) from June 30th will be eligible for EMA of £30 per week. They will not require an income assessment in order to be eligible as long as they meet all other criteria to receive EMA.

In order to support these young people we are asking e2e providers to complete an e2e declaration for each learner that they intend to enrol. The declaration can be downloaded from http://ema.lsc.gov.uk/resources/support-materials/ and should be returned with the learner’s application form.

A superuser email with more detail will follow shortly.

5. Residency checks for learner support
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From the 2008/09 EMA/Learner Support/Academic Year, Learning Providers will no longer be required to perform a residency check to determine a learner’s eligibility for Learner Support. Instead, learners will self-certify their eligibility when they complete their application form by selecting the appropriate section that describes their circumstances. The application form guidance notes provide advice and guidance to learners on how to complete this section, and learners can also ring the helpline for assistance.

Although Learning Providers no longer need to check residency eligibility for Learner Support, this does not remove the need to check a learner’s residency eligibility for entitlement to free education, which should be completed at enrolment. It is important that Providers continue to check a learner’s entitlement to have their education fees paid, because the residency eligibility criteria for free education, and the criteria for Learner Support have some important differences.
6. How to order application forms and marketing materials
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Paper application forms will no longer be limited within the pilot regions.

**Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)**

To order paper application forms and marketing materials for EMA please contact LSC Publications (also known as Prolog):

LSC Publications  
PO Box 5050  
Sherwood Park  
Annesley  
Nottingham  
NG15 0DJ  
Tel: 0845 602 2260  
Fax: 0845 603 3360  
Minicom: 0845 605 5560  
email: lsc@prolog.uk.com

Please remember to quote the publication numbers when you place your order. A full list of EMA publications can be found at [http://ema.lsc.gov.uk/resources](http://ema.lsc.gov.uk/resources).

**Adult Learning Grant (ALG)**

ALG application forms and other marketing materials are also available from Prolog on 0845 602 2260 and Learn Direct on 0800 100 900.

Please remember to quote the publication numbers when you place your order. A full list of ALG publications can be found at [http://alg.lsc.gov.uk/resources/resourcematerial](http://alg.lsc.gov.uk/resources/resourcematerial).

**Care to Learn**

Care to Learn paper application forms can be obtained from the DirectGov website at [www.direct.gov.uk/caretolearn](http://www.direct.gov.uk/caretolearn) or by calling the Learning Provider helpline on 0845 600 7979.

Application forms and marketing materials are also available in Prolog. Please remember to quote the publication numbers when you place your order. A full list of publications can be found at [http://caretolearn.lsc.gov.uk/resource](http://caretolearn.lsc.gov.uk/resource).

**Sixth Form College Childcare**

The Sixth Form College Childcare application form is available from the Learner Provider Helpline on 0845 600 7979.

**Dance and Drama Awards**

For Dance and Drama Awards, learners should contact their chosen DaDA School directly for an application form and details of applying for audition.

Dance and Drama Award leaflets are also available in Prolog. Please remember to quote the publication number - **LSC-DD1**.
7. Helpline numbers for learning providers and learners
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There are specific telephone helplines for learning providers and learners. Please check below as the numbers differ depending on the academic year.

**Learning provider helplines:**
- **2007/08 applications:** If you have any queries or payment issues about applications being made in the **current** academic year, please continue to call the existing number 0800 056 2811
- **2008/09 applications:** 0845 600 7979

**Learner helplines**
- for **2007/08 EMA queries (i.e. current academic year):** 0808 101 6219
- for **2008/09 EMA applications:** 0800 121 8989

8. Keeping you informed
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We obviously want to make sure that you are kept up to date with our plans for the Learner Support Service.

We are posting all the e-bulletins and other information on the provider pages of the LSC site at: [www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/lss](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/lss)

We have produced a number of briefing packs to help inform you of the changes we are making to learner support. There are packs available for:
- Connexions advisors;
- Work based learning providers;
- Next Steps and Learn Direct;
- Student support advisors; and
- School administrators.

These packs are now available online at [www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/lss/](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/lss/).

We would like to hear from you about other ways in which we could keep you informed. For example:
- are there other internal communications vehicles that we could forward this e-bulletin through?
- are there aspects of the changes you would like more information on – please contact us at: [mftlearnersupportupdate@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:mftlearnersupportupdate@lsc.gov.uk)

9. Background to the new Learner Support Service
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If you would like to know more about the Learner Support Service or Learner Support schemes which include the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and Adult Learning Grant (ALG) please go to: [http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn). You can also view all previous e-bulletins at this address.