Welcome to the October e-bulletin from the LSC’s Learner Support Directorate. The e-bulletin provides information about the changes to the ways in which the LSC’s different Learner Support schemes are administered.

In this month’s edition we tell you about the progress being made in processing EMA and ALG applications.

Don’t forget that you can find out more about the Learner Support service online at [www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/lss](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/lss). We are updating this website regularly so please check the website for the latest information.

If you would like your name added to our distribution list please send us an email at [learnersupportupdate@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:learnersupportupdate@lsc.gov.uk).

In this stakeholder e-bulletin:

1. The latest on EMA Applications
2. The latest on ALG Applications
3. Getting through to the helplines
4. Hints and tips for using the Interim LPP
5. Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work – sign up for our e-newsletter
6. Actions you may need to take
7. Previous e-bulletins and more information
Processing EMA applications – the latest

Our number one priority is always to ensure that as many young people as possible benefit from EMA. Over the past few weeks, many learners have had to wait longer than the three-week target we set the Helpline, Assessment and Payment Body (HAPB) to respond to applications. We are very sorry for the inconvenience and concern this has caused to learners and their families.

As at the 28th October we have received nearly 765,000 EMA applications and we are currently working on fewer than 45,000 applications.

More than 432,000 NoEs to have been sent to learners. However, there does seem to be a delay between learners receiving their NoEs and when they are actually registered on the payments system (the Interim Learning Provider Portal) to start receiving their EMA. It would be very helpful if you could encourage learners to bring in their NoEs as soon as possible after they receive them so that they can be registered onto the system.

In the meantime, as we outlined last month, to make sure no learners lose out financially because of the delays, we have temporarily extended the 28-day rule for backdating EMA applications. This means that all learners who apply for an EMA for the 2008-09 academic year by 31st October 2008 will have their EMA payments backdated to the start of their course or learning programme.

There is no need for learners to call the helpline to confirm once an application has been made. We will send out the learner’s NoE as soon as possible and they won’t miss out on any payments.

Learners can continue to apply for EMA at any point during the year.

Please continue to:

- Encourage learners to apply for EMA and reassure them that if they send in EMA applications before 31 October their payments will be backdated to the start of their course.
- Encourage learners to bring in their NoEs so they can be registered onto the system for EMA.
- Help learners to complete their application forms correctly and return them with all the evidence that is required. We have had to return more than 265,000 applications which were not completed correctly.
Processing ALG Applications – the latest

At the 28th October we had received over 31,000 ALG applications, around a quarter more than at this time last year. ALG application numbers are ahead of our forecast figure and we are on track to increase participation during 2008/09.

ALG applications are assessed by a dedicated team and our supplier is notifying learners of the outcome of their application within three weeks; although application forms may take longer in cases where an application form is incomplete or evidence is missing. There is no delay in processing applications.

Please continue to:

- Encourage learners to apply for ALG and reassure them that their forms are being processed within three weeks.
- Help learners to complete their application forms correctly and return them with all the required

Helping learners to accurately complete their application form

We have identified several areas in the application form which are causing confusion, leading to applications being returned to learners.

1. Residency (question A8). Please ensure learners complete this section. Eligibility cannot be determined without it.

2. Learning Achievements (question A10). This section should be used to record previous qualifications. It should not be used to record a qualification the learner intends to study for.

3. Income Details (Part B). All learners must complete this Part B regardless of their age/marital/partner status and provide original documentation to verify their income details.

We will be undertaking a review of the ALG application form in preparation for the 2009/10 academic year and will write to all superusers shortly to tell you more.

Getting through to the helplines

The learner and learning provider helplines remain open. Unfortunately, Liberata is experiencing further difficulties with both helplines, which means that it will be more difficult to get through to the helplines for at least the next few days.
Please continue to bear with us while we try to work through a solution.

In the meantime you can find out the latest about the Learner Support Service on our website at www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/lss. We are updating this website regularly so please check online for the latest information.

Thank you again for your patience.

Learning Provider helpline
0845 600 7979

Learner helpline
0800 121 8989

Hints and tips for using the Interim LPP

We have updated our hints and tips for using the Interim LPP. The latest version of the document has been updated to cover:

- End of learning
- Back payments
- System Time Outs
- Using fields to sort columns
- Changing IDs and passwords

We will upload the hints and tips document very soon at www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/lss/keydocuments.

Summary of previous hints and tips

Over recent weeks we have sent out a number of ‘hints and tips’ for using the Interim LPP in response to questions and concerns from learning providers.

Here is a brief summary of the main ones:

- Allocate learners to locations and groups during the registration process to make it easier to find them when recording attendance;
- Check that the “Enabled” button is ticked when creating or editing study patterns. If you don’t tick the ‘enabled’ button the otherwise the study pattern will not appear in the drop down list for selection when registering your learners. This button is automatically set to enabled
so you are only required to un-tick the button if you want to remove
the study pattern from the drop-down selection on the Registration
page;

- Select a week-commencing date from a Monday when you specify
  the start and end dates for study patterns and programmes of study;

- You can register attendance and make bonus payments more quickly
  by doing them in bulk. Select the ‘set attendance all to’ button on the
  bottom left of the Record Attendance to change all learners in the
  selected list to “Yes” or “No”. You can then edit the exceptions
  individually and amend decisions where appropriate. This
  functionality is available and can be used today;

- Select the ‘Learner Report’ tab to view a list of all learners registered
  with you;

- And finally, remember that three failed attempts to login to the Interim
  LPP will result in your login being disabled; you will need to contact
  the helpline on 0845 600 7979 to re-enable your account.

We will continue to add to our hints and tips when there are important points
to be clarified about the Interim LPP. In the meantime, if you have a question
about the system please email learnersupportupdate@lsc.gov.uk.

**Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work – sign up for our e-newsletter**

We have started to produce an e-newsletter for this new scheme. If you’d like
to sign up to it please email us at freechildcare-adults@lsc.gov.uk.

**Actions you may need to take**

A reminder of the actions you may need to be taking over the next few weeks.
Please:

- Assure learners there is no need for learners to call the helpline to
  confirm once an application has been made. We will send out the
  learner’s NoE as soon as possible and they won’t miss out on any
  payments
• Encourage learners to call the helpline (if absolutely necessary) during off-peak times, i.e. 07:00 – 09:00 in the morning and 18:00 – 20:00 in the evening

• Encourage learners to bring in their NoEs so they can be registered for EMA.

• Continue to encourage Learners to apply for Learner Support schemes. Application forms are available from schools, colleges, local Connexions services and by calling the Learner Helpline on 0800 121 8989

• Sign up for our e-newsletter telling you all about our new childcare scheme – Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work. Email us at freechildcare-adults@lsc.gov.uk

Previous e-bulletins and more information

If you would like to see earlier e-bulletins or find out more about the Learner Support Service or the various Learner Support schemes, including EMA and the ALG, please go to: http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn