Welcome to the Skills Accounts e-bulletin which focuses on:

1. Skills Funding Agency
2. Case Study: Leicester College
3. Spotlight on... My Skills Needs

1. Skills Funding Agency

From the 1 April 2010 the Skills Funding Agency and Young Peoples Learning Agency will replace the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The Skills Funding Agency will be the body responsible for all publicly funded adult skills training in England outside of higher education.

The Skills Funding Agency’s main function will be to direct public funding quickly and efficiently to further education colleges and other skills learning providers, whilst ensuring people and businesses can access the skills they need by providing a number of routes into learning from Apprenticeships to Train to Gain.

The new adult advancement and careers service (aacs) originally proposed in the Leitch Report as part of the reform of adult information advice and guidance services, will be a key strand of the Skills Funding Agency. This national service will be created by combining the current Careers Advice Service, Skills Accounts and nextstep services under a common brand from August 2010.

Supported by the aacs, Skills Accounts will continue to offer a personalised service in a single, easily accessible place, to help adults make informed choices about the options and support available to them. This will ensure that adults are able to access the detailed advice and guidance they need on their best routes to enter and progress in learning and work.

2. College at the forefront of the Skills Accounts initiative

Since the start of the trials in 2008/09, more Skills Accounts have been registered and activated at Leicester College than at any other college in the country. The Leicester College experience provides valuable insight for other institutions looking to integrate Skills Accounts into their adult offer.

In the first year of the trials, Leicester College secured commitment to the Skills Account trials from the senior management team and staff from all college departments that have a role to play in the Skills Accounts process. This was critical to success, and demonstrated full college support for the initiative and acted as a vital tool to cascade information and training through all areas of the college, enabling staff to see the potential benefits for students at first hand.

Holding briefing sessions for support and teaching staff to explain the purpose of Skills Accounts and to demonstrate the content and facilities raised awareness throughout the college. All front line staff were encouraged to log onto the Skills Accounts website to experience the registration process and the potential benefits for students firsthand.

To encourage as many learners aged 19+ as possible to register for a Skills Account, the college placed a highly visible link to the Skills Accounts website from its own home
Continually updating the Skills Accounts website is important to ensure it contains accurate and relevant information that supports individuals to make informed choices about further learning.

Incorporating Skills Accounts into the application and enrolment process has helped to raise awareness with potential learners from their initial engagement with the college and has placed Skills Accounts at the core of the learner support, information and guidance services on offer at Leicester College. Improved content on the site also means it is well suited to be incorporated into some of the adult programmes aimed at improving Skills for Life and employability skills.

Linda Burnam, Student Services Manager at Leicester College made this comment about the affect the service has had on the college:

“Skills Accounts have been a positive addition to the support services offered by Leicester College. By incorporating Skills Accounts into the information and guidance services we offer, we have been able to increase the support we offer to our students at every stage of their learning journey.”

The full case study is available here.

3. SPOTLIGHT ON... My Skills Needs

The My Skills Needs section of the Skills Accounts website helps your customers to think about which jobs they might be suited to, based on their skills and interests.

Customers can use some of these services without logging onto their account to assess their skills and interests and to identify jobs they are suited to. They can also access practical, impartial careers advice to help them make informed choices about their future.

By logging on to their account your customers can access:

**Skills Diagnostic Tool**
- This tool offers an objective assessment of their strengths, skills, abilities and areas for development in key competences that underpin success at work.

**Action Plan**
- They can work through a template of questions to develop their own action plan to assist them to work towards their future goals

**Skills Action Plan**
- They can view their personal development plan created as a result of a one to one discussion with a nextstep adviser.

Visit the Skills Accounts website to get a fuller understanding of the My Skills Needs section. For further information about Skills Accounts, log on to www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/skillsaccounts/

FURTHER INFORMATION

There will be no Skills Accounts e-bulletin in March. Please continue to visit the Skills Accounts website to access the full range of services and information.

A wide range of Skills Accounts materials are available for you to download from the LSC Campaign Resources Site. Alternatively refer to the Delivery Partner Guidance Manual, section 9, for details of how to order copies of the supporting materials for Skills Accounts. www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/skillsaccounts/skills-accounts-guidance/

Providers can get support (including technical issues and feedback) by contacting their Regional LSC contacts.