Welcome to the Skills Accounts e-bulletin.

A Skills Account is a personalised online service that allows individuals to take control of their learning and working life.

If thinking about learning a new skill or changing direction in career, a Skills Account is the place to start. A Skills Account will help individuals to:

- Identify the skills they have
- Match their skills needs
- Choose the right course
- Find out if they can get funding to support them
- Track how much has been spent on their learning
- Develop an action plan from their skills and assessment diagnostic questionnaire and access services to help them make their next step.

On 1 August 2009, the second year of the Skills Accounts trials began. The objective is to introduce Skills Accounts into new regions and ensure that the service develops to support new groups of learners. The new trial regions are the South West, Yorkshire & the Humber, the North West, the West Midlands and the South West. In early 2010, we will also be expanding to include London and the North East. Meanwhile, we are significantly increasing the number of providers offering Skills Accounts across the South East and East Midlands. In the West Midlands and areas in the South East, JCP customers will continue to be offered a Skills Account when they contact the nextstep service or enrol on an Employability Skills Programme.

This e-bulletin is one of the ways in which we update partners and stakeholders as the trials develop.

If you would like additional names added to the distribution list, or if you would like to be removed from this list, please contact fatiha.laauich@lsc.gov.uk

In this edition of the e-bulletin:

1. Case study: from hair styling to sculpting giant humans!
2. Skills Accounts expansion and evolution
3. Supporting Materials– *NEW* leaflet and Helpline
4. Contact Information
1. FROM HAIR STYLING TO SCULPTING GIANT HUMANS!

Sarah Horlock, 42, has gone from styling hair to sculpting giant humans thanks to the financial support her Skills Account unlocked for her.

Having left school, Sarah’s career began with an Apprenticeship in Hairdressing. Having two children was followed by time spent caring for her mother, before taking a year to reassess her life. “That’s when I decided to do something different and try to be more creative,” explained Sarah. However, many of the jobs I applied for needed IT skills which I didn’t have.” Sarah then enrolled on an IT course at Reigate College, Caterham (part of East Surrey College), which she enjoyed.

From there Sarah progressed to an Art and Design National Diploma with the aim of becoming a graphic designer. Sarah has had to juggle family commitments, part-time work and her studies. “I was supporting us on part time work, but it wasn’t enough and I was really struggling to pay my fees.”

An adviser from student services then suggested that she open a Skills Account to check what support might be available. Sarah was able to find out that she was eligible for help to meet some of the costs. “I’d never heard of a Skills Account but, my goodness, it made all the difference in the world. I couldn’t have completed the course without it”

Having finished her course, Sarah has now started a degree where she is specialising in character creation and technical effects for film and TV. She is hoping to use her new-found skill as a sculptor for future work. “You can apply it to everything from Madam Tussauds to helping the police reconstruct bones – it’s very interesting and varied.”

The funding cited in this case study was granted to support level 3 qualifications. Please note this learner support funding is available on a trial basis in the South East and East Midlands regions for a limited period only.

2. SKILLS ACCOUNTS EXPANSION AND EVOLUTION

In addition, we will also be targeting new learner audiences as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Income Families (Tax Credits)</td>
<td>North West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carers*</td>
<td>South West</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Including those who care for sick or disabled family members of all ages

Do not forget to visit the improved Skills Accounts website when it goes live in the next few weeks! The updated site will include the following tools which will help learners to take even more control of their learning and working lives:

- Access to a Skills Diagnostic Tool which allows learners to access a personalised Action Plan
- The repositioned Skills Voucher under ‘Funding for Learning’
- Inclusion of a tool to check available funding if you are a carer or on a low income
- Personalised information on national Learner Support funding

The updated Skills Accounts website has been put to the test by students at Leicester College. On 23 October, eight students from Leicester College who do not currently have a Skills Account, reviewed the website and provided feedback on its revised look and feel, functionality and navigation. The feedback was extremely useful in informing final changes to the website.
For more details on the expanded trials and the improved website, please refer to September’s edition of the e-bulletin.

3. SUPPORTING MATERIALS & HELPLINE
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A wide range of Skills Accounts materials are available for you to download from the LSC Campaign Resources Site.

You can use these materials to support your own campaigns and communications. Once you have registered on the site you will have access to collateral and materials relating to all of the different LSC campaigns.

Supporting materials for Skills Accounts include:
- *NEW* A5 size leaflet for learners (LSC-P-NAT-090170)
- A3 posters (LSC-I-NAT-090156)
- Banner stands
- PowerPoint presentation templates
- Web and advertising copy

To order hard copies of the leaflets and posters please email lsc@granbymarketing.com quoting the publication number provided above, quantity required and delivery address.

Please contact your regional representative to order banner stands.

**Helpline**
The helpline offers support to all Skills Accounts stakeholders that would like further information or support. It can be contacted on 0207 413 3400.

4. CONTACT INFORMATION
(Back to table of contents)
For further information about the Skills Accounts trials in your region please contact your regional LSC Skills Accounts team.

**NATIONAL OFFICE**
Julie Gough, Skills Accounts Marketing Project Manager, National Office
020 7904 0904, julie.gough@lsc.gov.uk

We trust that you have found this edition of the Skills Accounts e-bulletin useful! If you have any queries or questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

There will be no edition of the e-bulletin in November. Instead we will be issuing answers to your frequently asked questions!