Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of the Learner Support Partnership Team Update.

We have developed this Update in response to feedback from local and regional LSC colleagues who want to know more about Learner Support and their role in helping learning providers deliver this support to learners.

The content of this first issue is very general, and does repeat some information already communicated through the LSC Friday Bulletin. In future we intend to build on the detailed policy information given here, and add strategic management information and examples of best practice in delivering learner support. We hope this will be of benefit to colleagues working with stakeholders on learner support.

The document will be updated every two months and emailed to you in the first week of every other month. To begin with we are cascading this through your Area Director, but we would like to build a distribution list to allow us to email you directly in future. If you wish to be added to this distribution list, please email us at learnersupportupdate@lsc.gov.uk

We would welcome your feedback on this document and how useful you find it. Please email your comments to learnersupportupdate@lsc.gov.uk

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What is Learner Support?

The Learner Support Programme includes, for example, Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), Adult Learning Grant (ALG) and Care to Learn.

By removing finance as a barrier, the effective delivery of financial support to learners contributes to increasing their participation, achievement and attainment in learning.

Government priorities for young people’s and adults’ learning will continue after the Machinery of Government changes take effect in 2010. Indeed, in the white paper ‘Raising Expectations: Enabling the system to deliver’ (March 2008) it was stated that a single point of contact for learners of all ages who need financial support will continue, and be administered through the Young People’s Learning Agency until 2013.

More information on each of the strands of the Learner Support Programme can be found on the LSC website at http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/

Learner Support Policy Messages

Adult Learning Grant (ALG)

The following message has been sent directly to learning providers via a super user email and is included here for your information and any further necessary action:

It has come to our attention that there is some confusion amongst learning providers around Letters of Entitlement (LoE) for ALG.

We can confirm that both the ALG Notices of Entitlement (NoE) - which are now being issued to eligible applicants - and the Letters of Entitlement (LoE) - which were issued to eligible applicants as an interim measure - are both valid documents for the enrolment of learners for the ALG scheme. Please ensure that this information is disseminated to all learning providers that are dealing with the administration of the scheme.

On enrolling learners for ALG, providers must ensure that each learner is assessed against the valid learning criteria laid out in the scheme guidance, i.e: that they meet the minimum number of Guided Learning Hours we require and that the course the learner is enrolled on will enable the individual to achieve their first full Level 2 or first full Level 3 qualification. New functionality for confirming this will be added to the Learner Support System (LSS) over the coming weeks. In addition to this, we will also be clarifying additional processes for those learners already involved, to coincide with this release.
**Education Maintenance Allowance**

**EMA Guarantee**

From 2008/09 a learner is eligible for EMA at the same amount for a period of up to three years; this is known as the EMA Guarantee. Successful first time applicants are guaranteed a minimum level of support even if their household income changes. Should household income decrease from year to year, a learner will be entitled to reassessment at the beginning of the next academic year.

Previously a young person had to make a new application for each academic year. This meant that a young person could be eligible for EMA at 16 but ineligible in subsequent years. The EMA guarantee, coupled with the Higher Education Student Support guarantee, will give a young person the security to allow them to look ahead to completing their programme of study and progressing to Higher Education with confidence and no doubts about the financial support they will receive.

**New E2E arrangements**

From 30th of June 2008 all E2E learners are eligible to receive the maximum £30 weekly EMA payment regardless of their household income. This is intended to encourage young people not in education, employment or training to enter training and eventually progress onto other provision. It will ensure that financial support is not a barrier to young people wishing to enter training. The extension is available to learners who enrol on LSC funded E2E programmes aged 16 to 18.

**Discontinuation of September Bonus**

Q) Why has the September bonus been withdrawn?
A) Bonus payments within EMA are reviewed annually to evaluate their impact on take up and learner progression and are not guaranteed. Consultation with learning providers and other stakeholders showed that the September bonus was the least effective and least well understood of the bonuses. Based on this information the decision has been taken to withdraw the September bonus as it represented poor value for money and did not meet the objective of encouraging returning learners to enrol for a second year of post-16 learning. The new bonus arrangements also provide a better balance, fairer and more equal approach to bonus payments between the FE and work based routes.

**Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work**

As colleagues will by now be aware, a new childcare scheme will be trialled from January 2009 to benefit 50,000 parents on a low income who participate in training or learning. The scheme is called Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work.

‘Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work’ will support adults aged 20 years and over by paying for childcare and travel costs while they are undertaking training or learning leading to
work. The scheme is specifically aimed at families on a low income where one partner is working and the other is not in work but looking to go into learning or training.

The scheme will be trialled in 67 local authorities from January 2009 and will be extended across England from September 2009.

A series of stakeholder events are being held across the country to raise awareness. Please let your providers know about these. LSC colleagues are also welcome to attend. More details on these events are available from http://www.livegroup.co.uk/newchildcareschemeforadults/

More details on the new scheme can be found on the Money to Learn pages of the LSC Internet Site.

Learner Support Service Update

Update on Delivery of EMA Payments

A press notice has been issued to provide an update on the current situation with EMA processing delays. Full details are available on the intranet.

Learner Support Service e-bulletin

As many of you know, the way in which we administer the nationally delivered elements of the Learner Support Programme (Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), Adult Learning Grant (ALG), Care to Learn, Dance and Drama Awards, Sixth Form College Childcare Scheme and Residential Support Scheme) is changing.

The most recent instalment of the Learner Support Service e-bulletin, to keep all colleagues across the LSC informed of these changes, can be accessed through the internet at: https://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/Iss/ebulletins/

Older copies of the e-update, and further information including Q&As and Communications and Training materials, are also held at this location.

Learner Support Regional Contacts Group

The Learner Support Regional Contacts Group consists of representatives from each of the LSC regions, who meet regularly with colleagues from the Learner Support Directorate to discuss matters relevant to learner support, including any processing issues and policy feedback.
We would encourage Partnership Team colleagues who would like to raise any issues about learner support, or to share examples of good practice regarding learner support from their area, to get in touch first with their Regional Contact. These are listed below. All contacts are LSC colleagues and their details are available through Outlook.

**West Midlands**  
Martin Latham – Partnership Adviser, Staffordshire  
Christine Lane – Partnership Adviser, Shropshire  
Sue Rowley – Administrator, Shropshire  
Jane Taylor – Partnership Adviser, Black Country  
John Powell – Partnership Manager, Birmingham and Solihull  
Victoria Moore – Partnership Adviser, Birmingham and Solihull  
Rooqia Begum – Equality and Diversity Manager, Birmingham and Solihull

**East Midlands**  
Alex Reader – Partnership Manager, Nottingham  
Erica Williamson – Young People’s Learning Manager, Leicestershire

**East of England**  
Antony Baxter – Partnership Adviser, Suffolk  
Sally Turner – Partnership Adviser, Essex

**South West**  
John Joyce – Regional Partnership Adviser, Gloucestershire  
Lynn Morton – FE Co-ordinator, Gloucestershire

**South East**  
Suzanne Aldridge – Economic Development Adviser, Berkshire  
Cheryl McDermott – Partnership Adviser, Oxfordshire  
Gerrard Marsden – Partnership Manager, Hampshire and IoW

**North West**  
Edmund Grant – Contract Manager Discretionary Funding, Greater Manchester  
Ajay Sethi – Young People’s Learning Manager, Greater Manchester  
Janet Jackson – Partnership Director, Lancashire

**North East**  
Beverley Dewar – Partnership Adviser, Darlington

**Yorkshire and the Humber**  
Bavna Mukhtar – Provider Development Advisor, West Yorkshire  
Julie Lane – Provider Development Manager, The Humber

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**Learner Support Service Field Force**

As part of our commitment to support all learning providers, we have established a Field Force with a dedicated representative for each region.
The main focus of the Field Force is to:

- Support learning providers in using the Learning Provider Portal (LPP) – both the Interim LPP and final LPP;
- Support learning providers with specific problems in using the Interim and final LPP;
- Identify and share good practice in the administration of Learner Support;
- Support all stakeholders working with learners to maximise successful applications for the Learner Support Schemes; and
- Raise awareness regionally of the Learner Support Service including all 6 schemes of EMA, ALG, Care to Learn, Dance and Drama Aware, Sixth Form Childcare, Residential Support Scheme.

The first point of call for all learning providers must be the helpline. The helpline has full access to Learner Support systems (including the LPP) and will be able to resolve most queries.

If you require additional support, beyond that offered by the learning provider helpline, please contact your local field force representative using the details below. As the Field Force spend much of their time travelling, we strongly advise you to contact your representative by email initially.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Contact Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bryan Walsh</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bryanwalsh@liberata.com">bryanwalsh@liberata.com</a></td>
<td>NORTH WEST: All areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phone: 07976 468 256</td>
<td>WEST MIDLANDS: Staffordshire, Shropshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Betteridge</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kathybetteridge@liberata.com">kathybetteridge@liberata.com</a></td>
<td>NORTH EAST: All areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phone: 07909 934601</td>
<td>YORKS AND HUMBER: All areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EAST MIDLANDS: Derbyshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachael Norman</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rachaelnorman@liberata.com">rachaelnorman@liberata.com</a></td>
<td>EASTERN: All areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phone: 07989 693 788</td>
<td>EAST MIDLANDS: Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leicester Shire, Lincolnshire and Rutland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SOUTH EAST: Thames Valley (Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Bucks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Rogers</td>
<td><a href="mailto:billrogers@liberata.com">billrogers@liberata.com</a></td>
<td>LONDON: All areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phone: 07989 693 717</td>
<td>SOUTH EAST: Berkshire, Surrey, Sussex, Kent and Medway, Hampshire and Isle of Wight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula French</td>
<td><a href="mailto:paulafrench@liberata.com">paulafrench@liberata.com</a></td>
<td>SOUTH WEST: All areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phone: 07814 169 402</td>
<td>WEST MIDLANDS: Herefordshire and Worcestershire, Coventry and Warwickshire, Birmingham and Solihull, The Black Country</td>
</tr>
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Guidance for Providers and other Stakeholders

A suite of Guidance has been developed for 2008/09 to assist learning providers and other stakeholders in the delivery of learner support.

The Guidance is accessible for providers through the LSC website. Please could colleagues with responsibility for learner support bring this to the attention of their partners.

Please be aware that the Guidance will be updated when policy or operational changes make this necessary. Please advise your providers to check the website regularly to ensure they are using the most up-to-date copy.

The documents available are:

- Education Maintenance Allowance Guidance for providers 2008/09
- 2008/09 Education Maintenance Allowance Guidance for Providers of LSC-funded Entry to Employment and Programme led Apprenticeships
- Adult Learning Grant (ALG) Guidance 2008/09
- Care to Learn (C2L) Guidance 2008/09
- Sixth Form College Childcare Scheme 2008/09
- Dance and Drama Awards (DaDA) – Information for non-DaDA learning providers 2008/09
- Discretionary Support Funds for Hardship, 20+ Childcare and Residential Bursaries
- Local Authority Transport Support Guidance 2008/09
- Residential Support Guidance for Colleges 2008/09

Further improvements will be made to these documents for 2009/10. We welcome yours and your provider’s feedback on them. Please send any comments to learnersupportupdate@lsc.gov.uk

Marketing and Support Materials

We provide a number of marketing and support materials to assist learning providers and other stakeholders in delivering learner support. We ask LSC Area Partnership Team colleagues please to bring these to the attention of their partners.

As well as leaflets and posters for EMA, ALG, and Care to Learn we also produce a range of other materials to help learning providers and other partners to deliver learner support.

Information on all of our products, including details of how to order them, can be found on the LSC website (click the links below to go straight to the dedicated section for each scheme):
Learner Support Toolkit

We have also developed the Learner Support Toolkit, to give comprehensive information about all the schemes to learning providers and other stakeholders involved in delivery of learner support.

The toolkit is accessible through the LSC website at http://learnersupport.lsc.gov.uk/.

Please could colleagues with responsibility for learner support bring this to the attention of their partners.

Policy Contact Information

For any unusual or complex queries on learner support which cannot be resolved by consulting the policy guidance, calling the Provider Helpline, involving your Field Force representative or regional contact, the policy team responsible may be contacted:

EMA
Senior Policy Manager: Adrian Clohessy
Policy Manager: Fiona McCulla
Policy Manager: Matthew Heselden

ALG
Senior Policy Manager: Jayne Lievesley
Policy Manager: Neville Sparrow
Policy Manager: Ian Shore (prior to Nov 08)
Policy Manager: Sharon Holmes (after Nov 08)

Care to Learn/ Sixth Form Childcare Scheme
Senior Policy Manager: Clare Muddiman
Policy Manager: Emma Stewart

Free Childcare for New Childcare Scheme
Senior Policy Manager: Phillip Brewins
Policy Manager: Karen Strafford

Dance and Drama Award
Senior Policy Manager: Clare Muddiman
Policy Manager: Emma Kershaw
Discretionary Support/ Residential Support Scheme/ LA Transport Partnerships
Senior Policy Manager: Gillian Candlish
Policy Manager: Christine Pennington
Policy Adviser: Leonie Plits

Career Development Loans
Senior Policy Manager: Ann Ridley
Policy Manager: Dave Kurley
Policy Manager: Ajir Uddin

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