

POLICY NOTE

THE INDIVIDUAL LEARNING ACCOUNT (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2017

SSI 2017/288

The above instrument was made in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 1, 2 and 3(2) of the Education and Training (Scotland) Act 2000. The instrument is subject to negative procedure.

Policy Objectives

Scotland's Labour Market Strategy, published in August 2016, committed the Scottish Government to undertake a joint review of the current Individual Learning Accounts scheme with Skills Development Scotland (SDS). The review formed part of the Scottish Government's aim to enhance the employment prospects of those in work or looking for work; to equip people with the right skills to participate and be successful within our labour market; and to support employers by providing workers with opportunities to improve their work-related skills and qualifications. The Review revealed that the number of people applying for Individual Learning Accounts has declined significantly in recent years, suggesting that the time is right to refocus the offer to suit the current jobs market.

The purpose of this instrument is to amend the Individual Learning Account (Scotland) Regulations 2011 so that grants are directed to training which is for the purpose of equipping a person for employment. Accordingly, to be eligible for an award a person must be in employment or actively seeking employment. In line with a focus on training for employment, the name of the grant will change to "Individual Training Account" and, recognising the changing labour market conditions for graduates, persons holding first degrees or postgraduate qualifications will no longer be excluded from the scheme.

Individual Training Accounts will continue to provide £200 but, in an effort to enhance quality and target funds to higher value courses, the regulations provide that this would be limited to one instance of funding each learner year. Also, to maintain the quality of training provision the regulations require Skills Development Scotland to monitor and assess Training Providers' compliance with the Quality Standards of the scheme.

Consultation

The Scottish Government has consulted with Skills Development Scotland and Students Award Agency Scotland to review the ILA. The review process started in Spring 2016. A range of factors were considered including the impact the scheme has had on employability, the popularity of the scheme since inception, learner feedback, and the performance and efficiency of the current system for both learners and course providers. The consultation also sought learner and course provider feedback from telephone surveys and seminar events, targeting the most regular users in order to gain insights into what worked well and what could be improved.

Impact Assessments

An equality impact assessment has been completed and the results attached. There are no equality impact issues.

Financial Effects

The focus of Individual Training Accounts is on the learner who is able to use a grant of up to £200 to acquire suitable and appropriate training. The amount of the award remains unchanged. No BRIA is necessary as the instrument has no financial effects on the Scottish Government, local government or on business.

Scottish Government
Fair Work, Employability and Skills Directorate

6 September 2017