

## HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT FINANCE

### REGIONAL EVENTS

- You will be aware from information sent to you previously that the responsibility for processing financial support applications for Higher Education students and related work is being transferred from Local Authority Student Support teams to the Student Loans Company (SLC), on a phased basis.
- The new centralised service ('Student Finance England') will operate from a base in Darlington and will handle applications for all students entering Higher Education in **September 2009** or later.
- The SLC also has responsibility for ensuring that these students have access to information, advice and guidance (IAG) about the support that will be available and the new application process. As part of the overall strategy for future delivery of IAG the SLC is appointing Regional Student Finance Consultants (including one for East Anglia) to engage with schools, colleges, Connexions advisers and other partner organisations. The Regional consultants will manage the local IAG delivery structure.
- Following the launch of the new service this Autumn, the SLC is organising regional half-day seminars for all those involved in the provision of Student Finance information. Delegates will be provided with information about the new service delivery arrangements including details of the application process for students entering Higher Education in September 2009. They will also receive a pack of materials to assist with the dissemination of information to the 2009 cohort of new entrants.
- A leaflet is attached giving details of these Regional events together with a Registration form. You will see that the SLC has asked for Registration forms to be returned by 11<sup>th</sup> September. However an assurance has been given that this is not a strict deadline and it will still be possible to register after that date.
- Copies of the 'Practitioner Pack' can also be ordered by e-mail (SFCconsultants@slc.co.uk). The packs will be issued shortly after the Regional events.
- Also attached is a document issued by the SLC giving its responses to some frequently asked questions about the future arrangements.

# Regional Student Finance Events

30 September – 16 October 2008



## The Student Loans Company are pleased to announce a series of free regional events to mark the launch of the new Student Finance England service.

These half-day regional events will supply school, college and Connexions staff, and other advisers with the knowledge and materials to provide Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) on Student Finance to students considering their Higher Education options.

Delegates will be able to hear about the new student finance service, receive detailed information on the latest developments for 2009 entrants and collect a Practitioners Pack of relevant and helpful materials to assist in IAG delivery.

### Key topics

- 2009/10 Changes
- New Student Loans Company role
- New application timetable and process
- Student Finance England online services

### Agenda

09:30	Registration and Breakfast
10:15	Welcome
10:30	New Service Launch Presentation
11:15	Coffee
11:45	Application Process 2009/10
12:05	Practitioner Resources
12:25	Plenary Q&A
13:00	Close

Date	Region	Venue
30 September	North West	Liverpool Crowne Plaza
1 October	North East	Thistle Hotel Newcastle
2 October	Yorkshire	Hilton Leeds
30 September	East Midlands	Hilton Leicester
1 October	West Midlands	Paragon Hotel, Birmingham
2 October	South Midlands	Randolph Hotel, Oxford
14 October	London	Barbican Conference Centre
15 October	East Anglia	Huntingdon Marriot Hotel, Cambridge
16 October	London	Barbican Conference Centre
14 October	South East	Brighton Metropole
15 October	Southern/IOW	Hilton Portsmouth
16 October	South West	Thistle Exeter

### To attend

Should you wish to attend one of the events, please send an email to [sfconsultants@slc.co.uk](mailto:sfconsultants@slc.co.uk) notifying us of the date and venue you wish to attend. Alternatively please fill out the attached form at the back of this document and fax to 0141 243 3003. Please provide your full name, job title, organisation, email address and telephone number in both instances.

Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact the event manager by telephone on 0141 306 2109.

Places will be confirmed from Monday 15 September with joining instructions.

We look forward to seeing you at the event.

## Registration Form

Should you wish more than one delegate to attend the conference, please photocopy this sheet and fill out the details as required below. Please send this form to Emma Love, Events Manager at the Student Loans Company by fax on 0141 243 3003 by Thursday 11 September 2008, details outlined below:

### Personal details

Title..... Name.....

Position.....

Department.....

Organisation .....

Address .....

Email .....

Telephone ..... Fax .....

Special needs.....

Dietary requirements.....

### Date and venue (please tick)

Date	Region	Venue
<input type="checkbox"/> 30 September	North West	Liverpool Crowne Plaza
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 October	North East	Thistle Hotel Newcastle
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 October	Yorkshire	Hilton Leeds
<input type="checkbox"/> 30 September	East Midlands	Hilton Leicester
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 October	West Midlands	Paragon Hotel, Birmingham
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 October	South Midlands	Randolph Hotel, Oxford
<input type="checkbox"/> 14 October	London	Barbican Conference Centre
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## Regional Student Finance Consultants

### Frequently-Asked Questions

Q Who is responsible for Student Finance IAG?

A The SLC is ultimately responsible. It directly provides the web service and the telephone service that are the primary IAG channels.

SLC is also responsible for ensuring other organisations and groups, engaged in general student advice, are provided with the information and materials to include SF information in their advice services. We are developing delivery partnership arrangements with these organisations.

Q Who are these organisations?

A A wide range of organisations have roles within Aim Higher/Widening Participation networks. Specifically, the connexions service has a lead advisor role in careers/HE participation for 14-19 year olds; members of HELOA are, like connexions staff, engaged in liaison with schools and 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges; the Adult Learner services provide advice to adults / 20+ groups; NASMA play a specialist finance advisor role for all students.

Q What specific help will be available to these delivery partners?

A

- We will provide standard presentations, and look-up guides, which will explain student eligibility and entitlement, and can be used to present information to students and sponsors.
- We will maintain a practitioners' web-site for SF information and for downloading publicity material.
- Our contact centre will include a help-line for business partners.
- Where feasible, we will attend partners' forums events and cascade IAG delivery to their group members.
- We will produce student literature which the partners can distribute to students on our behalf.
- All of these activities, as well as a general help service, will be supported by regional Student Finance Consultants who will establish partnerships with local members of these organisations.

- Q How will you ensure the delivery partners provide consistent and complete information to students?
- A We will provide all the materials from a central source and we will provide a single, definitive web-site to which all students will be referred. All material produced by us will be consistently used by all partners and SLC teams.
- Q Will the business partners be obliged to do what you require?
- A There is no legal or contractual obligation. Clearly students and their sponsors will benefit from a consistency across all partners and sources. So we will have an informal agreement (which we call a Memorandum of Understanding) with each partner, which define how the SLC and these organisations will work together. Work to date has confirmed partners are keen to have clarity of roles and expectations. The MoUs will enable this.
- Q Are these business partners just taking on the workload of the LAs?
- A The major step forward in the use of the web service, which includes IAG, means that the bulk of IAG work transfers from the LAs to the student finance web-service, and the central contact centre service.
- Our IAG delivery partners already include a degree of student finance in their advice services - they will have better support to do this.
- Q What experience does SLC have in managing a regional IAG services?
- A SLC has recruited consultants from regional HEI, LA and connexions groups to ensure it has local knowledge and experience. Individually and collectively, they have a wide range of experience in regional IAG-delivery.
- Both the senior responsible manager, Paul Smith, and then overall SF business owner, Alan McLellan, have experience in this area. Paul recently implemented and now manages a team of HEI account managers for regional HEIs.
- SLC has piloted a centralised service for 12 LAs in England, and has gained lots of experience as a result.
- Of course, we need to recognise changes are happening within our delivery partner management structures. The connexions service, has been brought back into the LA Youth Services umbrella, and the adult information and advice services are being reviewed alongside the *next steps* programme.

Q What about general guidance and careers advice staff in schools and colleges?

A SLC wants to ensure they have the SF information they need when advising learners. We will invite these specialist staff to attend regional seminars to be fully briefed on latest developments in SF.

Q. There are far too many schools and colleges to visit. How will 6<sup>th</sup> Form Heads/Guidance staff get SF information?

A We will be holding regional seminars, inviting school and college staff to attend and receive all the information they need. We will hold these annually between mid-September and mid-November.

Q So will there be anybody who can visit schools and colleges?

A Current practice varies across the UK, but it is common for members of connexions advisors and careers advice staff and HELOA to visit schools and colleges. We will ensure that these partner organisations include student finance in their visits.

Q What are the initial objectives?

A We would like 6<sup>th</sup> Form heads to publicise and encourage students to register on our on-line system and then go on to apply. Students will be able to pass their information from the UCAS system.

We wish to make sure that the students apply for all the support elements they are entitled to, and our IAG service will incorporate information on eligibility for all student finance grants and loans. We want to see sufficient volumes of early applications to show that there is widespread evidence of the earlier applications cycle.

We also want to see evidence that student awareness of their support is understood early enough to enable them to determine their budgeting requirements. We don't want to find potential students are deterred from applying for HE just because of ignorance of the support they will get.