

EXECUTIVE NOTE

The Individual Learning Account (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2007 SSI/2007/164

1. These Regulations amend the Individual Learning Account (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (S.S.I. 2004/83) (“the principal regulations”). The regulations are made by Scottish Ministers under powers conferred by sections 1 and 2 of the Education and Training (Scotland) Act 2000. They are subject to negative resolution procedure and extend to Scotland.

2 The effect of these regulations is to increase the income assessment threshold at or below which a person holding an individual learning account (“ILA”) may qualify for funding support under the ‘ILA Scotland Targeted Arrangements’.

Background

3. Under these arrangements individual learning account holders may access a fee support grant up to a maximum amount as may from time to time be determined by Scottish Ministers, if they satisfy the eligibility criteria laid out in the principal regulations (of which the income assessment threshold is one criterion)

4. The income assessment threshold for ‘ILA Scotland Targeted Arrangements’ was set in 2004 at £15,000 (gross income from earnings).

5. The ILA Scotland scheme was established in 2004 to provide financial support towards the fee costs of a wide range of educational courses. ILA Scotland aims to increase participation in lifelong learning and to assist in upskilling within the workforce in Scotland, especially among people on lower incomes.

Policy Objectives

6. Following external evaluation of the ILA Scotland scheme set up in the principal regulations the income assessment threshold has been reviewed. The threshold level has been increased to reflect increased pay levels since the threshold was set. The revised threshold of £18,000 is based on the median gross pay level (with reference to labour force survey data) for employees whose highest qualification is at Level 5 within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), SVQ Level 2. This is used as a proxy to help target ILA Scotland support on people who are in work on lower incomes and for whom finance may be a barrier to participation in learning (which is the primary target group for ILA Scotland).

Consultation

7. There has not been a formal consultation on the increased threshold level. The level of the income assessment threshold has been reviewed following recommendations arising from an external evaluation of the ILA Scotland scheme.

Financial Effects of the Amendment Regulations

8. The effect of the increase in the income assessment threshold will be to widen eligibility for support under the ILA Scotland scheme and support increased participation in learning by individual learning account holders on low incomes. Additional expenditure projected to be incurred through increased learner participation will be within the available budget allocated to the ILA Scotland scheme.

9. These regulations have a negligible effect on the Scottish Executive, Local Government or on business. It has not been necessary to prepare a Regulatory Impact Assessment.

Lifelong Learning Group

Enterprise, Transport & Lifelong Learning Department

Scottish Executive

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