

BT helps SAAS support lifelong learning in Scotland

Submitted by: Aspectus PR

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BT today announced it has designed and built a new IT system to support the Student Award Agency for Scotland (SAAS) in administering Scottish Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs). Through ILAs, part of the expanded remit of SAAS, government funds are made available to help adults continue learning on a variety of short and long-term courses. The system forms part of a wider contract between BT and SAAS, which was recently extended for the fourth time.

The system has been in operational use for the last six months and provides a secure, confidential and straightforward way for adult learners to set up and access their accounts. It enables SAAS to register and process applications from students for the new ILA service, and manage securely the automatic transfer of funds to providers. It also allows learning centres, such as further education colleges or online course providers, to register details and take course bookings online through SAAS's partner, Learndirect Scotland.

The system uses the electronic document management (EDM) and call centre facilities that BT has already developed for the agency. BT is currently working with SAAS and Learndirect Scotland to complete the final phase of the ILA system, which will provide the planned increase for those Scottish adult learners eligible for funding under the ILA scheme.

The agency was given responsibility for the administration of ILAs by the Scottish Executive as a direct result of the dramatic improvements in efficiency, productivity and customer service generated by its work with BT. The IT systems put in place by BT, including EDM, have enabled the agency to free up resources to take on new business. BT has been the IT partner of SAAS since 1994.

Jeremy Stafford, managing director, BT government, said: "ILAs will have a significant role in continuing education and training in Scotland; we are proud to be able to contribute to their success. Our relationship with SAAS has always been about working in close partnership, and together we have an opportunity to play a significant role in developing an exciting future for education in Scotland."

ILAs are a key part of the Scottish Executive's lifelong learning strategy for Scotland. Adults qualifying for the scheme are entitled to up to £200 a year towards the costs of study opportunities at a wide variety of learning centres and providers.

--ENDS--

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