EXECUTIVE NOTE

THE INDIVIDUAL LEARNING ACCOUNT (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2009

SSI/2009/176

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 was set in 2007 at £18,000 (gross income from earnings). In 2008 the income threshold was changed to include pension income.

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 feedback and in light of the economic conditions the income assessment threshold has been reviewed. The threshold level has been increased to reflect increased pay levels since the threshold was changed from £15,000 to £18,000 in 2007. In setting the revised threshold at £22,000 we have sought to take account of the median gross pay level for the overall working population and also of the proportion of the working population with qualifications at particular levels within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). The revised threshold expands eligibility to ILA funding to a wider target group within the workforce who may be "low skill" (as defined in terms of qualifications) and/or who we would want to support to upskill and to improve their qualifications.

Consultation

7. There has not been a formal consultation on the increased income assessment threshold level. The threshold level has been reviewed in the light of external feedback and economic conditions.

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 Individual Learning Accounts.

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

Lifelong Learning Directorate

Scottish Government
6 May 2009