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## **EMA PROVIDES MEAL TICKET FOR BEN**

Catering trainee Ben Ringrose has the meal ticket he always dreamt of and is urging Nottingham's school leavers to queue up and find out what they are entitled to.

The 18-year-old says it is thanks to receiving his Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) that next on the menu for him will be a Nottingham Trent University accredited course, something he never thought he would achieve.

At 16, with five unhappy school years behind him, Ben was diagnosed as being dyslexic. He was nervous and unsure about what the future offered.

Struggling at his Nottingham Secondary School, he needed lots of help with his work, and left with just a couple of GCSEs.

In two minds as to whether to continue studying, he learnt about the EMA.

Ben soon discovered he was eligible for the maximum allowance of £30 a week, meaning all the difference to the family income for him and mum Sandra.

Once signed up to an NVQ 2 Food Preparation & Cooking and Food & Drink Service at New College Nottingham (**ncn**), one of his tutors noticed Ben was struggling and suspected he might be dyslexic.

Following extensive tests it was soon clear that the small writing which once jumped around the page and was impossible to read - was easily remedied with different coloured paper.

Ben learnt that black ink on a white background was impossible to decipher but the black ink on a lilac piece of paper was fine.

The youngster from Dunkirk, Nottingham is now studying an NVQ level 3 in Hospitality Supervision at **ncn**.

And Ben has been accepted on an events management foundation degree at **ncn** which he will start in September.

Ben said: "At school I needed loads of help and was given a shorter dyslexic test and they said I was OK. But at college I had to go about three times to be tested and now I understand what the problem was.

"I struggled through my GCSEs without any special help for the exams.

"None of this would have happened if I hadn't gone to college and the EMA made that step easy for me.

"The money came in really handy for bus fares and lunches and meant that I could spend more time studying.

“EMA helped because that money helps with the buses and food and because my mums not wealthy so it really helped.

“I wouldn’t have been able to go if the money wasn’t available. I would have had to get a job at 16 on a low wage, and not get the wider experience that I could get at college.

“I first heard about EMA at school and I was really pleased that I qualified for the highest margin and if I’m on time I get a £100 bonus if the tutor agrees.

“But I started working in a banqueting kitchen as a trainee chef and found that I was not learning everything I wanted to.

“I enjoyed working in front of house so I thought a course in restaurant supervision would allow me one day to be a manager.

“Events management just appealed. I just have loads of fun talking with organisers and generally having a good time and what more can I ask for in life.”

Mum Sandra Ringrose said:

“I have really seen the difference in Ben now that he has found his way in life. He is a lot more confident than he used to be and it’s just so lovely to see.

“I know in my heart that I would have found the money for Ben to go to college from somewhere but I must admit that it has been a great help.

David White, **ncn** Vice Principal of Corporate Services said:

"At ncn, we are dedicated to ensuring our students receive all the help and support they need to be successful in and enjoy their education and training.

"Ben is a great example of how the EMA can support eligible students to achieve their goals and make a real difference to their futures."

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is committed to providing practical help for young people. Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) offers up to £30 a week towards their continuing education for those eligible aged 16 to 18, dependent on the household income. EMA is paid directly into the student's bank account and additional bonuses are also available for students who do well and meet targets set by their teacher, tutor or provider.

To find out more about EMA please visit [www.direct.gov.uk/ema](http://www.direct.gov.uk/ema) or call the EMA helpline on 0800 121 8989.

**ENDS**

***Notes to editors:***

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**Learning and Skills Council (LSC)**

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

## Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

### What are the key features of EMA?

- Weekly payment bands of £30, £20 and £10 per week, depending on household income.
- Intermittent bonus payments depending on the programme of learning.
- Available for both academic and vocational study, up to level 3, which can include courses such as basic skills GCSE retakes, GNVQs, NVQs, as well as AS and A2s.
- No other household benefits are affected.
- Young people can still have a part-time job.

### Who is eligible for EMA?

- Young people are eligible to receive or to continue receiving EMA in the EMA year 2009/10 providing:
  - They will already be 16, 17 or 18 on the 1st September 2009
  - They are participating in full-time further education (as defined in EMA guidance) up to and including Level 3, or LSC funded e2e or a Programme led Apprenticeship
- The amount of EMA that a young person is eligible to receive in 2009/10 is dependent on their household income which must be £30,810 or less in the previous tax year, 2008-2009. The young person will then receive £10, £20 or £30 – a breakdown is as follows:

Up to £20,817	£30
More than £20,817 but less than or equal to £25,521	£20
More than £25,521 but less than or equal to £30,810	£10

For all public enquiries regarding EMA, please contact 0800 121 8989 (some mobile operators may charge for calls made to this number) or visit [www.direct.gov.uk/ema](http://www.direct.gov.uk/ema)

**Issued on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council by COI News & PR. T:  
0115 9712787**



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