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DERBY STUDENT ON COURSE FOR SUCCESS

With help from the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Derby College student Sarah Price is set to become the first person in her family to go to university.

Sarah, 18, from Oakwood, Derby, is just one of many students from Derby College who have accessed EMA since it was introduced in 2004. EMA provides up to £30 a week to help people between 16 and 19 to continue in learning.

Sarah, 18, attended Derby College but did not do very well in the first year.

She said:

“I had to retake the first college year as I was having family problems at home and I couldn’t concentrate on my studies.

“When I left school my parents split up, money was tight so my mother signed me up for EMA. I have been working at Topshop to help out at home, but having EMA has really given me piece of mind. I know that by receiving EMA money won’t get in the way of my studies.”

Sarah started her college studies in 2007. She was originally studying maths, psychology, biology but didn't do well and had to retake the first year. Sarah realised that if she stayed on this path she would not achieve her goal of being the first person in her family to go to university.

Sarah said:

"I didn't really enjoy the first year of college, but when I had to retake the year I used this as an opportunity to pick some better subjects, subjects that I felt would be more interesting. I am now studying law, sociology, business, and accounting. I really enjoy Law and Sociology lessons as it allows me to be creative and we sometimes have group debates, unlike when I was studying maths and biology where we had to sit and copy notes from a text book.

"My family is really proud of me for staying in college, and they are all very excited about me being the first person in our family to go to university. My father is going to be taking me to university open days so I can choose where I will study. I hope to study criminology or something related to law.

"Retraining is important. I made a mistake in the first year but learned the hard way and I now realises that studying and getting qualifications are essential to getting where you want to be in life. I would recommend that anyone in financial hardship should look into EMA or other forms of financial support."

Maureen Finch, Vice Principal in charge of Student Services at Derby College said:

“EMA is a great opportunity for students to receive extra support whilst they study. The support allows students to focus on their courses, and not be side tracked by financial hardships. The students have all found that having the extra money is both useful and will undoubtedly aid them in beginning their careers.”

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 or call the EMA helpline on 0800 121 8989.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

All media enquires please contact:

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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

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