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SUMMER'S NO HOLIDAY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY

- Education Maintenance Allowance offers relief for worried parents and students

School's out for the summer and so is the sun. With the holiday season now in full swing for thousands of young people around the country, you might expect them to be making the most of the holidays. However new survey¹ findings from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) released today show that 83% of young people across the East Midlands are worrying about their career prospects instead.

The survey commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to highlight the benefits of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), found that while 87% of young people have plans to stay on in education, not having enough money (11%) and exam stress (13%) are causing worry for students.

A similar survey of parents revealed that, while almost half (49%) believe their child has a better future ahead of them than they did, 45% are worried about whether their child will find the right job.

Nigel Leigh, Principal at Stephenson College, which has bases in Coalville, Nottingham and Leicester, said:

¹ Survey carried out by Dubit, June 2009, sample size 534 16-18 year olds.

“We’re well aware that many young people coming to the college may face financial challenges and the EMA can be a great help.

“The support from EMA allows students to concentrate on their course, and in our experience at Stephenson College will assist their success at College and therefore promote their entry into employment.”

David Jackson, Head of Student Services at Leicester College, said:

“With help from EMA students are able to focus on their courses and not be side tracked by the financial hardships. Most students find that having the extra money is useful and it can certainly help take some of the worry off the young people’s minds.”

Ian Pursglove, Young People's Support Programmes Policy Director at the Learning and Skills Council, said:

“These results portray a very different image of young people than we often hear about – they are ambitious and focused. A large majority want to further their education and career prospects are at the forefront of their minds and their parents.

“We know these are worrying times but, for parents who want to support their children during the downtime after exams, applying for EMA can relieve some of their concerns. Even for those young people who don’t enjoy the traditional classroom environment, EMA can provide financial support for other options such as Work Based Learning or Diplomas. Young people that are eligible and apply now can rest assured that they will receive their allowance when they start their new course, offering one less thing to worry about over the summer.”

The main motivations of young people surveyed for doing well in exams were getting a good job (56%) and to keep their options open (16%), ahead of impressing parents and teachers, and getting better results than their friends, the survey also revealed.

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:

Case studies of students who have received EMA are available. Please contact COI News and PR using the below details.

- This press release applies to England only. Separate schemes are operated by the administrations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Survey results source:
 1. Dubit, June 2009, sample size 534 16-18 year olds
 2. YouGov Plc 16th - 24th June 2009. Total sample size was 10051 adults and figures have been weighted to be representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

All media enquires please contact:

Helen Clarke, COI News & PR: 0115 9712787

LSC Press Office: 024 7682 5793

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

Diplomas

The Diploma is part of a national programme to improve the choice of courses for young people to motivate them and encourage them to continue learning for longer. It will help them to gain the qualifications they need for success – at work, at college or at university. For more information visit: www.direct.gov.uk/diplomas

14-19 prospectuses

14-19 prospectuses are an online resource which provides information for young people on all learning courses and programmes available in each local area. They can be viewed via the national portal at www.direct.gov.uk/14-19prospectus

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

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