



**PRESS RELEASE Ref: 608**

Leading learning and skills

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## **SUMMER'S NO HOLIDAY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY**

*- Education Maintenance Allowance offers relief for worried parents and students*

*-Luton Student gets helping hand-*

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 survey<sup>1</sup> findings from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) released today show that 83% of young people in the East of England are worrying about their career prospects instead, with around 5% currently battling sleepless nights as a result.

The survey commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to highlight the benefits of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), found that while 78% of young people in the region have plans to stay on in education, not having enough money (20%) and exam stress (33%) are causing worry for students.

A similar survey of parents revealed that, while one in three (35%) believe their child has a better future ahead of them than they did, over half (48%) are worried about whether their child will find the right job.

For **Isabella McCann** from **Luton**, the EMA has helped her in her journey though Barnfield College, and she is now set to achieve a cutting edge career in the hairdressing world.

Isabella, 18, is just one of many students from Barnfield 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.

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

Isabella is studying a Level Two National Diploma in hairdressing. She wants to be a cut above the rest and embark on a successful career when she has left college and hopes to progress onto Level Three once she has finished her current course.

Luckily Isabella has been able to claim the maximum £30 a week in EMA grants. Without the money she might have struggled to buy all the equipment she needs to progress on her course and learn to make people look their best.

Isabella said: “Ever since I was little, I have always wanted to be a hairdresser. I did some hairdressing at school and that showed me that it was something I wanted to study full-time. I like to make people feel good about appearance.

“The course has a good balance of practical and theory lessons and we have a few clients who we can work on, which is the best training you can have.

“The £30 a week comes in really handy because I do struggle financially. There is always new equipment to buy, or new folders and stationery and it can be really expensive. For example the right hairdressing scissors can cost £50 or more. Having the grant relieves the money pressures on me and my family as well.”

**Suzie Webb, Area Director for the Learning and Skills Council Bedfordshire and Luton, said:**

“These results portray a very different image of young people than we often hear about – they are ambitious and focused. Many want to further their education and broaden their career prospects.

“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 in the East of England surveyed for doing well in exams were getting a good job (63%) and to keep their options open (22%), 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](http://www.direct.gov.uk/ema) or call the EMA helpline on 0800 121 8989.

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors:**

- This press release applies to England only. Separate schemes are operated by the administrations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Survey results source:
  1. Dabit, 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+).

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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)

## 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](http://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](http://www.direct.gov.uk/14-19prospectus)

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