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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

-Peterborough Students get 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 survey¹ 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.

Peterborough Regional College is a dedicated supporter of the Education Maintenance Allowance initiative and actively supports the scheme to all its students.

Currently the College has over 1,000 students receiving the allowance each week and the majority also qualify for the January and July bonuses.

Hannah Gorrie, Senior EMA Advisor at Peterborough Regional College said:

"The uptake in our students claiming EMA has been incredible and the

Government scheme is a great benefit to students, especially for those living in rural areas because it gives them help with their transport to College. It is also a huge help for those students who come from low income families, giving them the chance to stay in education because without the EMA scheme they may have had to find work."

She went on to add: "It is fantastic to see our students being assisted to realise their full potential and to make extremely good progress with their studies. As a college EMA brings us closer to the students, increasing our awareness of the issues that surround them and enabling us to offer them the extra learning and community based resources we have to offer. Without the promotion and commitment from the College a lot of these students probably wouldn't have stayed in education."

Three Peterborough students currently in receipt of the full £30 a week allowance are **Pamella Ferreira**, **Laura Ward** and **Stephanie Fountain**.

Pamella, 17, who's taking a course in health and social care with a view to going into nursing, says that EMA keeps her going to college every day and getting her assignments in on time.

Pamella admits that at school her attendance was poor. "If I was feeling tired or lazy I wouldn't get up to go to school. But the incentive of £30 a week – and bonuses too if I work hard and get my assignments finished – encourages me to attend every day. Everyone is motivated by money and I think EMA is a good thing."

Laura Ward also wants to be a nurse. She enjoys looking after people and from a little girl had her sights set on a career in the caring profession.

Now, with the help of EMA, she's also studying for a qualification in health and social care.

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

18-year-old Laura knows it's going to be hard work to complete the courses she needs to give her access to nursing training. But she's prepared for the hard slog and EMA helps her along the way. She spends the money on clothing and other essentials for her course.

Stephanie Fountain, 17, has her heart set on a career in the hair and beauty industry and is currently studying at PRC.

She first heard about the benefits of EMA when she was at school and again when she started her post 16 college course. With the support of college staff she applied and found she qualifies for the full allowance.

"It pays for my bus tickets for the week and for things I need for the course like pens, folders and books," said Stephanie.

Mum Anna-Marie says that the allowance is helping Stephanie learn how to manage her money and make it last the week - a valuable lesson for working life.

"It's also a bit of a reward at the end of the week as it keeps the students focused on working hard and completing their tasks on time.

"There's no work out there at the moment so EMA is ideal for encouraging young people to stay on in education and get further qualifications. It also takes some pressure off families as it can be used for things like travel expenses and items they need for their college courses."

Graham Brough, Area Director for the Learning and Skills Council

Cambridgeshire, 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 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 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

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

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