

GETTING THAT DREAM CAREER IS EASY ACCORDING TO ONE IN FOUR BRITISH TEENAGERS

Date of issue 04.07.08
Press release number 0820

New research commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) to highlight its Education Maintenance Allowance shows many teenagers in need of a reality check when it comes to pursuing their dream career. A survey reveals that 24 percent of London teenagers believe that education is not important in achieving their goals; and only 42 per cent believe that getting the right training to improve their skills will help them achieve what they want in life.

The research found that of the capital's 16-18 year olds questioned in the survey, 22 per cent and 25 per cent believe that it is easy or very easy to secure a career in, respectively, entertainment and sport; a perception, no doubt, influenced by the seemingly easy path to fame followed by the likes of David Beckham, Lily Allen or Leona Lewis.

Today's survey results also showed that many teenagers see perceived "instant careers", such as being a footballer, a TV celebrity or a pop-star, as being far cooler than becoming a teacher, a politician or a chef, which appear to require more hard work.

The most popular careers include those in Media, Entertainment, Sport, and Healthcare, while the least popular careers included those in the Military, Construction, Manufacturing, Sales and Government.

However, the reality is that most jobs, whether they are looked upon as being cool or not, require good levels of qualifications. In fact, for those interested in pursuing a career in the music or media industries, achieving Level 2 is a prerequisite even for an entry point

position. For example, to be a runner in music production or broadcasting, a Level 2 Audio-Visual Industries Induction is desirable. Highly competitive industries such as advertising will not even consider applicants unless they have a Higher National Diploma or a degree.

Jonny South of Air Management, which counts Jamie Cullum and Jason Mraz amongst its artists, agrees that hard work and the right qualifications are vital to success. He says: "It has not been easy to get where I am today. To succeed in this industry you must have determination and hunger to go after the job you desire.

"At Air we've worked hard to establish long-standing relationships with artists and clients and it shows in our roster, with the likes of Jamie Cullum choosing our services; but we need people with the right skills and qualifications behind us to make it a success. My advice would be to think about your chosen career and research the right qualifications to lead you into that career. Getting hands-on experience working in the industry will help a great deal. Don't wait for things to happen, create you own opportunities and make the most of them"

With fewer than half of the London teenagers questioned in the survey stating that a high level of education or skills was a key to securing their dream job, 38 per cent would trust their natural ability, and 43 per cent would rely on being in the right place at the right time rather than work to secure the correct qualifications or skills required to reach their goals.

When asked what, if anything, would help them stay on in education, respondents stated that more support from their friends and family (17 per cent) and more time (13 per cent) would be a good start; while nearly half (48 per cent) replied that financial support would be the biggest help overall, showing that funding such as Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) can help.

EMA exists to encourage young people aged 16-18 who have left, or are about to leave, compulsory education, to carry on in learning. Eligible young people can receive up to £30 a week to spend on their studies.

David Hughes, Regional Director for the LSC in London, said: “Staying on in learning can make an overwhelming difference to your future. Those who leave learning at 16 or earlier and without the minimum set of qualifications (at least five A*-C GCSEs or the vocational equivalent) may face unemployment, social exclusion and certainly won’t walk into that dream job; but by continuing to learn and taking advantage of funding such as EMA, you will give yourself the best possible chance.”

Whatever your chosen career, staying in learning and achieving a Level 2 qualification will equip you to make the best start possible. There are more choices now than ever before in terms of courses and ways of getting qualified so there is bound to be something to suit everyone. To find out more visit – www.direct.gov.uk/ema

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Notes to Editors:

This press release applies to England only. The survey was conducted by 72 Point, on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council. Total sample size was 2563 16-19 year olds. The survey was carried out online.

Learning and Skills Council:

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.

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Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

Notes for editors – EMA Applications for 2008/9 Year

This press release applies to England only. Separate schemes are operated by the administrations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

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?

Young people are eligible to receive or to continue receiving EMA in the EMA year 2008/09 providing:

- They will already be 16, 17 or 18 on the 1st September 2008;
- Household income criteria for 2007/8 applicants will be confirmed shortly;
- 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
- They must be:
 - a person who is 'settled' in the UK, and been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least the three years prior to the start of his learning programme; or
 - a national of any European Union (EU) country or the spouse or civil partner or child of an EU national, and been ordinarily resident in the European Economic Area (EEA) for at least the three years prior to the start of his learning programme; or

- an EEA migrant worker or the spouse or civil partner or child of an EEA migrant worker, who is ordinarily resident in the UK at the start of the learning programme and has been ordinarily resident in the EEA throughout the three year period prior to that; or
- recognised as a refugee by the UK Government, or the spouse or civil partner or child of a refugee, have been granted Humanitarian Protection, or have EU Temporary Protection.

If a young person lives overseas as part of a family serving with HM Forces or the Ministry of Defence in Germany or Cyprus, they should call Service Children's Education on (0049) 2161 908 2525 for further advice.

Application

Evidence of an applicant's household income for the previous tax year 2007/2008 and proof of the individual's operational bank account are required.

Eligible applicants will receive a Notice of Entitlement explaining how much they will receive once they have enrolled and started attending their learning programme.

EMA Contract

Once enrolled, the student must attend all course sessions and sign an EMA Contract with their school or college. The contract sets out what is expected in terms of attendance, coursework and progress.

14-19 area prospectuses

- 14-19 area prospectuses are an online resource which provide information for young people on all learning courses and programmes available in an area
- The 14-19 area prospectus will be learners' first choice of information for accessing all 14-19 learning opportunities
- All areas have a prospectus to enable learners to look at prospectuses from other areas of the country there is a national portal at: <http://dcsf.gov.uk/prospectus>
- From 2008, learners will be able to access information on the Diplomas being delivered in their area, through the local 14-19 area prospectus
- The area prospectuses will empower learners by giving them access to information about all courses from all providers in an area, this is likely to increase participation and engagement

Diplomas

The Diploma is part of a national programme to widen 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.

Five Diploma subjects will be available from 2008 in the following subjects:

- IT
- Construction and the Built Environment
- Engineering

- Society, Health and Development
- Creative and Media

There are three levels of the Diploma – Foundation, Higher and Advanced – that students can choose to study at different stages in their education.

Alongside compulsory modules, students will have the opportunity to choose from a range of other subject options, whilst continuing to develop core skills in English, maths and IT. This learning will be advanced by work experience, which will provide a chance for young people to learn from and be mentored by professionals working in their chosen field. For more information, go to:

www.direct.gov.uk/diplomas

Issued by COI News & PR on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council

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