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Evaluation of the 2008-09 EMA Policy Changes

A report to the Learning and Skills Council

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FOREWORD

This evaluation reviews the impact of the policy changes introduced to the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) scheme in the 2008/09 EMA Year. It focuses on a narrow range of the EMA learner cohort specifically affected by the changes introduced in 2008/09 and is therefore not directly comparable with other evaluations of EMA where previously the entire EMA cohort was looked at.

Executive Summary

Introduction

1. In June 2009, ekosgen, in partnership with Map Analysis and Research Resource, were commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to undertake an evaluation of the policy changes introduced to the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) scheme in June of the previous year. The evaluation was commissioned to support future EMA policy development and has therefore sought to answer the following questions:
 - How are the policy changes perceived?
 - What has been the impact of the policy changes?
 - How successfully have they been implemented across the provider network?
 - What challenges have been or are being experienced by providers and learners in relation to the changes?
 - What additional issues have been raised?

Methodology

2. The evaluation has been structured around four main strands of activity:
 - Stakeholder consultations (see Appendix A);
 - A telephone survey of 1,500 learners who received EMA in 2008/09;
 - A telephone survey of 595 providers that made EMA payments in 2008/09;
 - EMA cohort analysis, using the LSC's Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and associated datasets.
3. The samples for the learner and provider surveys were developed separately, so there is no presumed connection between the two sets of responses.

The 2008/09 Policy Changes

- **Entry to Employment Arrangements:** the introduction of a non-income assessed variant of EMA guaranteed that all Entry to Employment (E2E) learners starting on or after 30th June 2008 would receive the maximum £30 weekly EMA payment, regardless of their household income.
- **EMA Bonus Structures (FE Long Course learners):** since June 2008, learners on FE Long Courses have been eligible for a bonus payment of £100 in January and £100 in July. The bonuses are dependent on satisfactory progress against agreed learning goals and attendance at public examinations.
- **EMA Bonus Structures (E2E, Programme Led Apprenticeship (PLA) and FE Short Course learners):** since June 2008, bonus payments have been accumulated at the rate of £5 per week, with the learner and the provider agreeing the criteria for payment at the start of the learning programme.

- **Payment linked to behaviour and effort:** from June 2008, the LSC strengthened the link between EMA payments and learner behaviour and effort. Payments are withheld if a learner fails to keep to the terms of their EMA Agreement.

Understanding and Administering the Changes

4. Communication of the policy changes to providers has been effective. More than 80% of the providers in the sample stated that they fully understood each change applicable to their organisation.
5. Ninety four percent of providers feel they have been successful in implementing the 2008/09 policy changes and only in 10% did they report that they have introduced administrative challenges. Most commonly, providers reported there had been no discernable administrative impact, although a third of providers thought that the administration of EMA had actually become easier as a result of the changes.
6. The issues experienced in administering EMA during 2008/09, whereby some learners experienced a delay between submitting an application and receiving their first payment, were not seen to have major influence on learners leaving their courses early.
7. Ninety seven percent of learners said they fully understood all of the responsibilities they had to meet in order to receive their EMA payments.

The Influence of EMA on Learner Participation

8. In 2008/09, EMA was one of a range of motivations to learn, but was infrequently cited by learners as a driver of participation when compared with gaining qualifications, personal or career development and gaining skills.
9. However, deadweight¹ on EMA still exists – 67% of learners reported that they would at least probably have undertaken a course in the absence of the EMA, although it cannot be assumed that they would have undertaken the same course or have achieved the same outcomes.
10. Deadweight was found to be lowest amongst E2E and PLA learners and highest amongst FE Long Course learners. Across all programmes there is no strong correlation between learners having a part-time job and their views on the influence of EMA on their participation in learning.
11. One in three providers had seen participation levels rise in 2008/09. Sixty percent of these providers attributed the increase at least in part to the policy changes.
12. National statistics show that the number of learners receiving EMA has increased year on year from 2004/05 (297,259) to 2008/09 (576,144), including a 5% increase in 2008/09. However, this mirrors rising participation levels generally.

¹ Deadweight refers to the impact that would have occurred anyway in the absence of an intervention. In this case, deadweight refers to the proportion of learners that would have undertaken a course had EMA not been available.

EMA Bonuses and Withheld Payments

13. The majority of providers are clear about the level of discretion they have with flexible bonus payments for E2E, PLA and FE Short Course learners. Most commonly, they take either a uniform approach for all learners or make arrangements on a learner by learner basis.
14. Most learners reported that both the weekly payments and bonus payments each had the same number of conditions, although where that was not the case it was far more common for the bonuses (flexible and January/July) to have more conditions than the weekly payments.
15. Fifty nine percent of the learners in the sample had received all of their weekly payments during 2008/09 and only 8% had more than five payments withheld. Non-attendance was the overwhelming reason for non-receipt of weekly payments.
16. EMA bonuses were also widely paid in 2008/09 – 62% of E2E, PLA and FE Short Course learners received all of their bonuses, whilst 75% of FE Long Course learners received the January and July bonuses. Non-attendance was also the main reason for bonuses not being paid.

Behaviour and Effort

17. Both providers and learners are very clear on the detail of the policy change to link EMA payments with behaviour and effort, although it appears to have had little impact on the responsibilities agreed between providers and learners in receipt of EMA: 7% of learners that had previously received EMA said that their responsibilities had changed in 2008/09.
18. Behaviour and effort responsibilities did not differ significantly across providers in 2008/09. Only 6% of learners that changed providers during the year stated that their responsibilities were different in each.
19. Provider feedback does not suggest that the impact of the change on behaviour and effort has been especially widespread. Half of the providers in the sample said it had not led to an improvement on either behaviour or effort, whilst 37% had observed improvements in both areas.

Retention

20. The evaluation evidence does not enable firm conclusions to be drawn about the impact of the policy changes on retention rates. Whilst learners were more positive than providers, the ILR shows that retention rates amongst non-school based learners in receipt of EMA since 2004/05 have largely mirrored national trends.
21. Seventeen percent of providers observed an increase in retention rates in 2008/09. Amongst these, the weekly entitlement for E2E learners was seen to have had the biggest influence of all the policy changes.
22. Sixty four percent of E2E, PLA and FE Short Course learners reported that the flexible bonus payments had helped them to stay on their course, whilst 72% of learners on FE

Long Courses said the same about the January bonus. The same percentage of learners that had received the July bonus thought it had helped with course completion.

Achievement

23. As with retention rates, there is limited evidence to suggest that the introduction of the policy changes has caused achievement rates to rise. Learner feedback is once again reasonably positive but is not substantiated by ILR data.
24. Fourteen percent of providers had observed an increase in achievement rates in 2008/09. Of these, 57% said the behaviour and effort link was the most influential of the policy changes. The January and July bonuses and the flexible bonus arrangements were rarely cited by comparison.
25. A third of learners reported that the weekly payments had definitely helped them to achieve their learning goals and a similar proportion said they had probably helped. Views by programme type were reasonably similar, although E2E learners were slightly less positive about the weekly payments.

Progression

26. Progression rate improvements in 2008/09 were not common across the provider sample. Only 13% had seen an improvement and most said it was slight.
27. Where progression rates had improved, the behaviour and effort link was seen to be the most influential of the policy changes. The introduction of flexible bonus arrangements was cited least often.
28. The majority of learners that had completed their course had progressed to a positive destination, most commonly another programme of learning or training. However, a fifth had become unemployed. Learners that became unemployed after completing their course do not view EMA any less positively than those who progressed into employment or further learning.

Conclusions

Perception and Impact

- **The 2008/09 policy changes are universally well understood by learners, providers and stakeholders** and there is no requirement for further action to raise awareness or understanding of them in the sector.
- **Taken as a whole, the changes have been an appropriate way of repositioning or re-emphasising EMA as a reward for effort and achievement.** They have challenged the views held by some that EMA is akin to a benefit, although in relatively few cases have the responsibilities agreed between learners and providers changed significantly.
- **Learner views towards EMA are reasonably resilient, even when faced with challenges.** Only where delays between application and first payment have extended beyond 12 weeks do they become notably less positive, and only when more than 10 weekly payments have been withheld does the perceived contribution of EMA to the achievement of learning goals diminish significantly. Learners are no less likely to have a positive view towards EMA if they have become unemployed than if they have progressed to a positive destination.
- **In general terms, each of the policy changes is seen to have had either a positive impact or no discernable impact on the learners that received EMA in 2008/09.** Only in a small number of isolated cases are the changes seen to have had a negative impact.
- **However, this hides a more complex and, in places, contradictory picture.** Deadweight, in terms of learner participation, remains reasonably high, especially amongst FE Long Course learners, and should be a focus of future EMA policy development. It is also the case that relatively few providers have experienced participation increases that they can attribute to the changes. Where they can, the weekly entitlement is seen to have had the most significant influence.
- **EMA bonuses (across all programme types) are seen by learners to have had a positive impact on their retention.** Whilst this may be true at an individual level, it is not reflected either in provider feedback or national statistics, neither of which point to an evident correlation between retention rate improvements and the introduction of the policy changes.
- **The same is true of achievement rate change,** where less than 10% of the provider cohort linked the policy changes with improvements in 2008/09. National statistics are also inconclusive in this regard, so whilst it may be possible to highlight some positive effects on retention, achievement and progression, the impact to date has not been profound. Rather, the policy changes form part of a wider set of learning influences and do not yet appear to be amongst the most influential.

Issues and Challenges

- **The introduction of the 2008/09 policy changes has not introduced lasting administrative challenges.** No significant process or payment issues require resolution in order for the changes to operate more efficiently.
- **The most substantial issue across all of the changes is the relative lack of evidence on impact, especially from providers, which introduces questions on value for money and deadweight.** Should the changes be continued, providers may begin to experience greater and more regular benefits as they identify, through the experiences of 2008/09, the most appropriate ways of using the flexible bonus payments and the behaviour and effort link to drive up learner motivation and performance.
- **The limited effectiveness of withholding weekly payments on learner attitudes also gives rise to concern.** Although based on feedback from only a small proportion of the learner sample, the withholding of payments does not have acted as a stimulus for improved attendance or behaviour in the majority of cases.

Future Development

In developing future policy for EMA as we move towards the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) reforms stakeholders were invited to put forward recommendations or ideas for the future development of EMA. The points below summarise the main themes arising, although it should be noted that none of them was cited by a majority of stakeholders:

- Given a tightening public purse and spending cut plans announced by both of the main political parties, **the issue of deadweight must be addressed** if EMA is to remain a sustainable proposition.
- **Altering the weekly payment and reducing the income threshold** may help to maximise take-up amongst the most disadvantaged, potentially increasing the demonstrable impact on retention, achievement and progression. Consultation with key stakeholders would be required to test this proposition.
- **The concept of EMA, and of bonus payments as incentives in particular, does not fit neatly with the Raising of the Participation Age reforms**, which stipulate that from 2013 all young people in England will be obliged to continue in education or training to age 17, and from 2015 to age 18. Consideration should be given as to how EMA evolves to provide an effective support structure for learners.
- **Consideration should be given to developing a more comprehensive support package for learner travel costs could help to reduce the annual EMA budget.** Travel was cited by 45% of learners in 2008/09 as having been the most important personal cost they had incurred².
- **The future of the non-income assessed variant of the EMA weekly entitlement for E2E learners is unclear with the introduction of Foundation Learning.**

At an operational level, very few recommendations come to the fore to improve the administrative side of EMA. The LSC and DCSF may wish to give consideration to simplifying the learner application form as it is seen to be complicated and often poorly completed, although it was raised as an issue by only a minority of providers.

Final Remarks

Overall, EMA continues to be perceived as a positive policy instrument, helping or encouraging learners to enter, stay in and complete learning who may have struggled to find the same opportunities in its absence. This evaluation has found broad support for the 2008/09 policy changes and a general sense that where they have had an impact, that impact has been positive. There do not appear to have been any unintended consequences from the introduction of the changes, nor major challenges in their delivery. It may simply be too early to draw conclusions about their impact, although a significant change in provider views is needed to correlate the changes with tangible outcomes. If the changes are to be continued, a follow-up survey of providers towards the end of the 2009/10 academic year may be advisable.

² Food and drink was second (32%) of learners. No other cost (materials, clothing etc.) was cited as being the most important by more than 7% of learners.

1 Introduction

Background to the Report

1.1 In June 2009, ekosgen was commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to undertake an evaluation of the policy changes introduced to the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) scheme in June of the previous year. ekosgen led an evaluation consortium that also included Map Analysis and Research Resource.

1.2 This is the final report from the evaluation and builds upon a paper of interim findings submitted to the LSC at the end of September 2009. The report is based upon the findings from several strands of evaluation activity (explained below) and seeks to answer the following questions:

- How are the policy changes perceived?
- What has been the impact of the policy changes?
- How successfully have they been implemented across the provider network?
- What challenges have been or are being experienced by providers and learners in relation to the changes?
- What additional issues have been raised?

1.3 The evaluation findings are intended to support future EMA policy development and contribute to the debate regarding the Raising of the Participation Age reforms.

The Education Maintenance Allowance

1.4 EMA is a weekly payment of up to £30 available to 16-19 year olds from households with an income of less than £30,810 per year. Bonus payments are also available to learners to encourage progression against set learning goals³.

1.5 Designed to encourage participation in post-compulsory education, EMA was introduced nationally following a pilot with full-time learners between 1999 and 2003 and formed part of the government's strategy to ensure that 90% of 17 year olds were engaged in learning by 2015. It is a key tool in reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and supports the LSC's four key strategic objectives to:

- Increase participation at 16, 17 and 18, and support transition;
- Raise attainment at 19;
- Improve access to learning;
- Support progression towards continuing learning and employment.

1.6 EMA is offered as a reward rather than as a benefit, payable by a provider only when all of the conditions stipulated in a young person's EMA Agreement have been met.

³ For further information see www.ema.direct.gov.uk

1.7 Previous research⁴ has estimated that the full impact of EMA between 1999 to 2008 (i.e. from a baseline position before its introduction through to its full roll-out) would be an increase in participation of 3.8 percentage points for 16 year olds and 4.1 percentage points for 17 year olds.

2008/09 Policy Changes

1.8 Summarised below, a series of policy changes were introduced nationally to the EMA scheme in June 2008. It is these changes that form the focus of this evaluation.

Entry to Employment Arrangements

1.9 The introduction of a non-income assessed variant of EMA guaranteed that all Entry to Employment (E2E) learners starting on or after 30th June 2008 would receive the maximum £30 weekly EMA payment, regardless of their household income. This was designed to encourage young people in the NEET cohort to enter training and to progress to other provision by removing financial constraints as a barrier.

EMA Bonus Structures

1.10 EMA bonuses provide additional incentives to retain eligible young people in learning. All learners in receipt of EMA are eligible for bonus payments if they satisfy the relevant conditions specified in their EMA Agreement.

1.11 Since June 2008, learners on FE programmes have been eligible for a bonus payment of £100 in January and £100 in July. The January bonus is payable when learners have achieved satisfactory progress against agreed learning goals relating to coursework in the autumn term. The July bonus is also dependent on satisfactory performance against agreed learning goals but carries the extra condition that learners must have attended all public examinations for which they have been entered.

1.12 Bonuses for E2E and Programme Led Apprenticeship (PLA) learners are structured differently to reflect the needs of work-based learners. Since June 2008, bonus payments have been accumulated at the rate of £5 per week, with the learner and the provider agreeing the criteria for payment at the start of the learning programme. Providers have discretion over when to pay the accumulated bonuses to ensure they have the maximum effect on learner encouragement and motivation.

Payments Linked to Behaviour and Effort

1.13 An EMA Agreement, signed by the young person and the provider, stipulates the attendance requirements that will allow EMA weekly payments to be made. From June 2008 the LSC strengthened the link between EMA payments and learner behaviour and effort. Payments are withheld if a learner fails to keep to the terms of their EMA Agreement.

⁴ Centre for Research in Social Policy and the Institute for Fiscal Studies (2005) 'Evaluation of Education Maintenance Allowance Pilots: Young People Aged 16-19 Years, Final Report of the Quantitative Evaluation', DFES Research Report RR678

Evaluation Methodology

1.14 The evaluation has been structured around four main strands of activity:

- **Stakeholder Consultations:** 16 stakeholders from a range of organisations have been consulted on the policy changes, either face-to-face or by telephone. The list of stakeholders, agreed in advance with the LSC, is provided at Appendix A;
- **Learner Survey:** 1,500 learners who received EMA in 2008/09 have been surveyed by telephone using a standard questionnaire. The survey, undertaken by Research Resource during August and September 2009, sought to assess learners' understanding of the policy changes and the impacts they have had across a range of areas, including retention and course completion;
- **Provider Survey:** between July and September 2009, Research Resource undertook a telephone survey with 595 providers that had made EMA payments in 2008/09. Survey topics included the implementation, administration and impact of the 2008/09 policy changes;
- **EMA Cohort Analysis:** using an analysis framework developed in the early stages of the project, Map Analysis used the LSC's Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and associated datasets to profile the EMA learner cohort and compare findings and trends with non-EMA recipient learners nationally.

1.15 The samples for the learner and provider surveys were developed separately. As a result, there is no presumed connection between the two sets of responses.

Acknowledgements

1.16 Thanks are owed to all of the stakeholders, providers and learners that have participated in the evaluation. In addition, the study team has been greatly assisted by Karen McGee (LSC), Simon Butt (LSC), Gary Bewley (Capita) and Samantha Nelson (Capita).

2 Profiling the EMA Cohort

Summary of Key Points

- Take-up of EMA has increased year on year from 2004/05 to 2008/09. In 2008/09, 576,144 learners received EMA, an increase of 5% from 2007/08.
- ILR analysis shows the gender split across the 2008/09 EMA cohort to be reasonably even, although males were over-represented on E2E whilst females were over-represented on PLA. No such differences were evident on FE courses.
- There was a higher representation of learners from black and minority ethnic groups in the 2008/09 EMA cohort than in the non-EMA cohort (21% compared with 15%). Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were also over-represented, especially on PLA.
- The 2008/09 EMA cohort included an above average proportion of learners from the 10% most deprived areas in England. PLA learners were the most likely to reside in the 10% most deprived areas, although learners in receipt of EMA across all programmes were disproportionately represented.

Introduction

2.1 This section uses data from the ILR to provide an overview of the learners in receipt of EMA in 2008/09, exploring differences across programmes and drawing comparisons with the non-EMA cohort. To ease readability, it is presented in a summary format with comprehensive data tables provided at Appendix B.

2.2 In compiling this report two data sources have been used to build a profile of the cohort of learners in receipt of EMA:

- EMASYS - a scheme specific system on which a record of all learners who have been in receipt of EMA is kept.
- The ILR database – a wider data collection and storage system to which data returns are made by LSC funded providers on a periodic basis.

2.3 There are advantages and disadvantages to both systems, which is why they have been used in conjunction with each other for this evaluation.

2.4 EMASYS contains information on all learners who have been in receipt of EMA, but not to the appropriate depth to allow detailed analysis; for example, in areas such as learner achievement.

2.5 The ILR database offers greater depth of information, but not for every EMA recipient. School (sixth forms) are not directly funded by the LSC, so their learners, whether in receipt of EMA or otherwise, are not returned to the ILR database. Additionally, not all LSC funded providers record on the ILR every instance where one of their learners is in receipt of EMA.

2.6 To quantify, just over 50% of the total number of 08/09 EMA recipients were identifiable on the 08/09 ILR.

EMA Take-Up

2.7 The number of learners receiving EMA has increased year on year from 2004/05 to 2008/09, during which time there has been a 94% increase in take-up (Table 2.1). The largest increases occurred between 2004 and 2007. This larger part of the increase can be attributed to the national roll out of EMA in 2004/05.

2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
297,259	429,627	527,319	546,472	576,144

Source: EMASYS

Characteristics of the Learner Cohort in receipt of EMA

Gender

2.8 There was a slight although insignificant overrepresentation of males in the non-school based 2008/09 EMA cohort (52% compared with 48% female). However, differences were more pronounced at programme level. For example:

- 60% of learners on E2E were male;
- The opposite was true on PLAs, where females accounted for 62% of learners in receipt of EMA.

2.9 Learners in receipt of EMA on PLAs were also more likely to be female than learners not in receipt of EMA. The difference is reasonably large – 62% (EMA) compared with 41% (non-EMA).

2.10 No such differences were evident on FE courses, where males and females were equally represented in the EMA cohort, a position that is broadly in line with the national picture.

Ethnicity

2.11 There was a higher representation of black and minority ethnic groups in the non-school based 2008/09 EMA learner cohort than in the non-EMA cohort (21% compared with 15%). The difference is most notable on PLA activity, where 18% of EMA recipients were from black and minority ethnic groups in 2008/09 compared with only 5% of non-EMA recipients – Table 2.2.

	FE		PLA		E2E
	EMA	Non-EMA	EMA	Non-EMA	EMA
White	77%	81%	81%	94%	85%
Black and Minority Ethnic	21%	17%	18%	5%	14%
Not Known/Provided	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%

Source: ILR L04 September 2009, ILR E12 September 2009

Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

2.12 Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were over-represented amongst the non-school based EMA cohort in 2008/09, continuing a trend from previous years. As shown in Table 2.3, 21% of the EMA cohort was flagged on the ILR as having a learning difficulty or disability, compared with 14% of the non-EMA cohort.

	FE	PLA	E2E	All Programmes
In receipt of EMA	18%	23%	28%	21%
Not in receipt of EMA	14%	11%		14%

Source: ILR L04 September 2009, ILR E12 September 2009

2.13 By proportion, learners in receipt of EMA with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were most represented amongst the PLA cohort in 2008/09, where the figure is more than double that of learners who did not receive EMA. At 18%, representation is lower on FE courses, although still above the non-EMA figure.

Disadvantage

2.14 By matching home addresses to the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation, it is possible to place learners into relative deprivation categories. Whilst not always indicative of individual circumstance, it nonetheless provides an overview of learner deprivation levels nationally.

2.15 As shown in Table 2.4, the non-school based EMA cohort in 2008/09 included a high representation of learners from the 10% most deprived areas in England, together with a high representation in the second and third deciles⁵. Learners on PLA activity are the most likely to be in the first three deciles, followed by E2E and then FE learners.

⁵ Deciles are used to describe a numerical dataset that has been ordered from lowest to highest and divided into ten equal parts. The values separating the ten parts are called deciles. Hence there are nine deciles which separate the ten sections. The upper and lower deciles are the 90% and 10% levels, respectively.

Table 2.4: Learner deprivation 2008/09 by deprivation decile

	FE	PLA	E2E	TOTAL
10% Most deprived	21%	32%	27%	19%
20%	16%	19%	19%	14%
30%	13%	13%	14%	11%
40%	11%	9%	10%	9%
50%	10%	7%	8%	8%
60%	8%	6%	6%	6%
70%	7%	4%	5%	5%
80%	6%	4%	5%	5%
90%	5%	3%	3%	4%
10% Least deprived	4%	2%	2%	3%
TOTAL	184,728	5,438	55,611	245,777

Source: ILR L04 September 2009, ILR E12 September 2009

2.16 The spread of learners not in receipt of EMA across the deciles is far more even by comparison, both at the aggregate and individual programme level. A relatively equal proportion of learners not in receipt of EMA are in each of the ten deciles.

Learner Profile by Provider Type

2.17 The majority of non-school based learners in receipt of EMA in 2008/09 were based at either FE colleges (62%, by far the highest proportion), private companies (18%), which in the majority of cases are likely to be training providers) or sixth form colleges (16%).

Table 2.5: Learner profile by provider type

	Number	%
General FE College (including Tertiary)	152,769	62.2%
Private Company	42,160	18.4%
Sixth Form College	38,146	15.5%
Specialist College - Agriculture and Horticulture	4,795	2.0%
Local Education Authority	4,456	1.8%
Other	3,451	1.2%
TOTAL	245,777	100%

Source: ILR L04 September 2009, ILR E12 September 2009. Percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding.

2.18 Further analysis shows that learners in receipt of EMA on PLAs were predominantly based in private companies (82% of learners), although colleges and charitable organisations also deliver such programmes, albeit to a far less extent. E2E learners were also concentrated in private companies (70% of E2E learners), with almost all of the remainder based in general FE colleges.

3 Evaluation Survey Samples

Summary of Key Points

Learners

- The learner survey sample for the evaluation (1,500 learners) includes reasonably even and representative proportions of males and females.
- Most learners (85%) were in the first year of their programme in 2008/09.
- 70% of the learners in the sample had not previously received EMA. The majority of the remainder had, although some learners were unable to recall for certain.

Providers

- Two thirds of the 595 providers in the survey had delivered FE long courses in 2008/09, significantly more than any other programme type. Three quarters had delivered a single programme to EMA recipients, whilst a quarter had delivered two or more different programmes.
- On average, 44% of 16-18 year olds in each provider had received EMA in 2008/09.

Policy Changes

- The policy changes are very well understood by providers and learners (where applicable). More than 80% of providers said that they fully understood each change relevant to their organisation, whilst 97% of learners said they fully understood all of the responsibilities they had to meet in order to receive their payments.
- More than 90% of providers feel they have been successful in implementing the 2008/09 policy changes. Rarely have the changes introduced major administrative challenges, and a notable minority of providers said that the administration of EMA had actually become easier following their implementation.

Introduction

3.1 Two telephone surveys, one with learners and one with providers, account for the majority of the primary research undertaken for the evaluation. This section provides details of the achieved samples on each survey. It also covers learners' and providers' understanding and awareness of the policy changes and outlines the administrative implications of the changes for the latter.

Learners

3.2 A total of 1,500 learners, all of whom had received EMA payments in 2008/09, were surveyed during August and September 2009. Tables 3.1 to 3.3 provide an overview of the learner sample by gender, year of study and programme type. In summary, there is a reasonably even split between males and females in the sample and most learners (85%) were in the first year of their programme in 2008/09. There is an over-representation of E2E learners as at the sampling stage a proportion of the PLA quota was moved to E2E to ensure that the overall target of 1,500 could be achieved. Each of the samples at programme level allows robust analysis.

Table 3.1: Learner survey sample by gender

	Number	%
Male	829	55%
Female	671	45%
TOTAL	1,500	100%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners

Table 3.2: Learner survey sample by year of study

	Number	%
Year One	1,281	85%
Year Two or above	219	15%
TOTAL	1,500	100%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners

Table 3.3: Learner survey sample by programme type

	Number	%
E2E	702	47%
PLA	299	20%
FE Long	278	18%
FE Short	221	15%
TOTAL	1,500	100%

3.3 The majority of learners (85%) had attended one provider in 2008/09, whilst almost all of the others (13%) had attended two providers. Eighteen learners had attended three providers whilst nine learners reported having attended four providers during the year.

3.4 Most learners (70%) had not previously received EMA. The majority of the remainder (396 out of 446) had, whilst the other 50 learners said they did not know. Only 15% had a part-time job while they were receiving EMA in 2008/09.

Comparisons with the National Cohort

3.5 Comparing the characteristics of the learner survey sample with those of the 2008/09 EMA recipient cohort nationally shows that:

- The slight overrepresentation of males in the survey sample (55%) is broadly in line with the national picture (52%);
- The dominance of male learners in receipt of EMA on E2E programmes nationally was mirrored in the sample (61% nationally and 62% in the sample), as was the female dominance on PLAs (62% both nationally and in the sample).

3.6 The most significant difference between the national cohort and the survey sample concerns programme type. Whereas 33% of learners in the sample were on an FE course in

2008/09, the ILR indicates this to have been the case for 86% of learners in receipt of EMA nationally⁶.

Providers

3.7 The provider survey covered 595 providers that had made EMA payments in 2008/09. Ninety one percent had also administered EMA in previous years, placing them in a good position to comment on the impact of the policy changes. A breakdown by provider type is shown in Table 3.4.

	Number	%
FE College	183	31%
School	180	30%
Private training company	180	30%
Local authority	19	3%
Higher education organisation	6	1%
Academy with sixth form	5	1%
Other public organisation	3	1%
Charitable organisation	2	<1%
Other/not known	17	3%
TOTAL	595	100%

Source: ekosgen survey of providers and ILR.

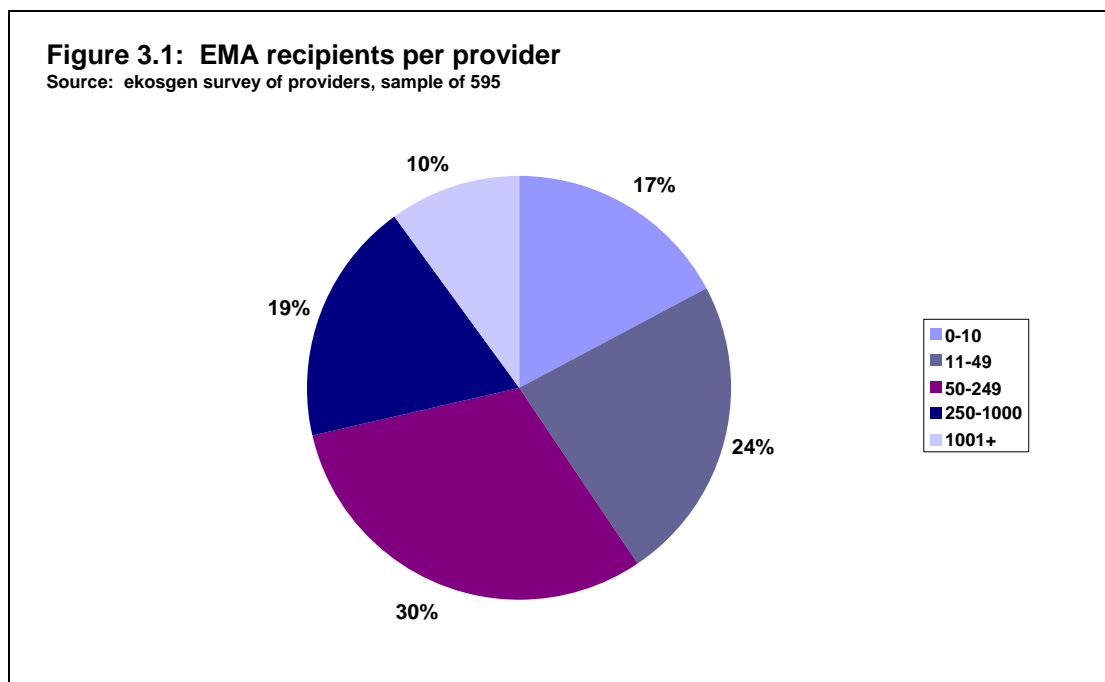
3.8 Sixty five percent of the providers had delivered FE long courses in 2008/09, significantly more than any other programme type (Table 3.5). Most providers (73%) had delivered a single programme to EMA recipients, whilst 27% had delivered multiple programmes.

	Number	%
FE Long	387	65%
E2E	208	35%
PLA	133	22%
FE Short	82	14%

Source: ekosgen survey of providers. Percentages sum to more than 100% as providers could select more than one option.

3.9 As would be expected with a sample of this size, the number of learners in receipt of EMA across providers varied significantly. Whilst the average per provider was 70, the responses ranged from a low of one to a high of 3,200. Figure 3.1 provides an overview.

⁶ The profile of the survey sample was agreed with the LSC in advance to ensure that the learner voice was captured across programme types and to enable sub-group analysis by programme.



3.10 The proportion of each provider's 16-18 year old cohort in receipt of EMA in 2008/09 was similarly varied. On average, 44% of 16-18 year olds in each provider had received EMA, although this hides a broad spectrum that ranged from less than 1% to 100%.

Understanding and Awareness of the Changes

3.11 Communication of the policy changes to providers has been effective. More than 80% of the providers in the sample stated that they fully understood each change applicable to their organisation (Table 3.6), compared with fewer than 3% who did not understand one or more of the changes.

	Number that Fully Understand	% that Fully Understand
£30 weekly entitlement for E2E learners	262	87%
Payments linked to behaviour and effort	509	84%
January and July bonuses (FE Long Course)	410	85%
Flexible bonus arrangements (E2E, PLA and FE Short Course)	262	84%

Source: ekosgen survey of providers, sample of 595

3.12 Learners were not asked specifically about their understanding of the policy changes, as the majority had received EMA for the first time in 2008/09. However, they were asked whether they fully understood all of the responsibilities they had to meet in order to receive their payments. Encouragingly, 97% confirmed that they did fully understand.

Administering the Policy Changes

3.13 Ninety four percent of providers feel they have been successful in implementing the 2008/09 policy changes. They are not seen to have introduced major administrative challenges, and whilst the most common response against each of the changes was 'no impact', a notable minority of providers thought that the administration of EMA had actually become easier – Table 3.7.

Table 3.7: Impact of the 2008/09 policy changes on the administration of EMA					
Policy Change	%				Number
	Positive impact	No impact	Negative impact	Don't Know	
£30 weekly entitlement for E2E learners	37%	50%	10%	4%	208
Payments linked to behaviour and effort	29%	45%	10%	16%	595
January and July bonuses (FE Long Course)	34%	50%	12%	3%	387
Flexible bonus arrangements (E2E, PLA and FE Short Course)	25%	43%	14%	18%	282
Source: ekosgen survey of providers					
Note: Samples vary by programme type as providers were only asked to comment upon those programmes they had delivered in 2008/09					

3.14 The issues experienced in administering EMA during 2008/09, whereby some learners experienced a delay between submitting an application and receiving their first payment, were not seen to have major influence on learners leaving their courses early.

4 The Influence of EMA on Learner Participation

Summary of Key Points

Learners

- EMA is one of a range of motivations to learn, but was infrequently cited by learners as a driver of participation when compared with gaining qualifications, personal or career development and gaining skills.
- Sixty seven percent of learners reported that they would at least probably have undertaken a course in the absence of the EMA, indicating that deadweight remains an issue.
- However, differences exist by programme. Below average proportions of E2E and PLA learners said they would definitely have undertaken a course without EMA, suggesting lower levels of deadweight. EMA had the least influence on participation (i.e. deadweight was highest) amongst FE Long Course learners.
- No strong correlation exists between learners having a part-time job to supplement their EMA payments and their views on the impact of EMA on their participation.

Providers

- Linking the policy changes to increases in learner participation is difficult at the provider level, given that only one in three providers had seen participation levels rise in 2008/09. However, 60% of these attributed the increase at least in part to the policy changes.
- The £30 per week entitlement is seen to have had the greatest impact, although FE Long Course providers were more likely to cite the behaviour and effort payment links. The January and July bonuses have had limited impact by comparison.

National Statistics

- EMA take-up has increased year on year since 2004/05, including a 5% increase in 2008/09. However, the ILR suggests that overall participation levels amongst learners not in receipt of EMA have also been rising, both historically and in 2008/09. Participation amongst learners in receipt of EMA therefore seems largely to have mirrored national trends.

Introduction

4.1 Both the learner and provider surveys explored the impact of EMA and the 2008/09 policy changes on learner participation. This section presents the main findings from the analysis of the survey responses and assesses the extent to which deadweight – a criticism levelled at EMA in the past – continues to apply.

Reasons for Participating in Learning

4.2 Learners had clear motivations for taking part in learning in 2008/09. Only 14 learners (less than 1% of the survey sample) were unable to provide at least one reason why they had

participated. The most common reasons were as follows (the figures sum to more than 100% as learners were able to select more than one reason):

- To gain a qualification (74% of learners);
- For personal or career development (61%);
- To gain skills (55%).

4.3 The opportunity to receive EMA payments was a far less important driver of participation, cited by 27% of learners as being one of the reasons why they had participated.

4.4 However, 67% of learners reported that they would at least probably have undertaken a course in the absence of the EMA in 2008/09, pointing to a reasonably high degree of deadweight. That said, it cannot be assumed that they would have undertaken the same course, stayed on the course for the full duration or achieved the same outcomes had EMA not been available (see Sections Seven and Eight for findings on retention and achievement). So while deadweight exists, it is not necessarily in the form of pure deadweight. It also appears to be at lower level than the 78% estimated through previous research⁷.

	Number	%
Definitely	503	34%
Probably	493	33%
Possibly	202	13%
Probably Not	170	11%
Definitely Not	92	6%
Don't Know/Not Sure	40	3%
TOTAL	1,500	100%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners

4.5 The learners that said they would definitely not or probably not have undertaken a course in the absence of EMA reported that they would either have found employment instead (62%), claimed benefits (27%) or did not know (11%).

Differences by Programme Type

4.6 Whilst EMA when taken as a whole may not have been a significant driver of participation compared with other factors, the findings on deadweight differ by programme.

Entry to Employment

4.7 The £30 per week entitlement has been a considerable influence on learners' decisions to undertake E2E. As shown in Table 4.2, 82% of E2E learners cited the £30 per week entitlement as having been either a very or quite important consideration when making their choice of learning programme. This far outweighs the proportions that were either more ambivalent or for whom the weekly entitlement was not important.

⁷ LSC (2009), 'Evaluation of the New Criteria for Provision Associated with EMA'

Table 4.2: Importance of the £30 per week entitlement to E2E learners		
	Number	%
Very Important	252	36%
Quite Important	326	46%
Not Very Important	79	11%
Not Important At All	30	4%
Don't Know/Not Sure	15	2%
TOTAL	702	100%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners.

4.8 The above is reinforced by the finding that a smaller proportion of E2E learners than non-E2E learners in the sample said that they would definitely have undertaken a course in the absence of EMA (26% compared with 39%). This would seem to point to a lower level of deadweight across the E2E cohort than across the learner sample as a whole, although it also calls into question whether the £30 entitlement may have skewed learner choices towards E2E and away from other, potentially more suitable programmes.

4.9 Having a part-time job in 2008/09 is not reflected in any significant differences in learner responses.

Programme Led Apprenticeships

4.10 The availability of EMA as a driver of participation seems to have been slightly less important for PLA learners than for E2E learners. Thirty five percent of the PLA learners in the sample reported that they would definitely have undertaken a course in the absence of EMA (Table 4.3), compared with 26% of E2E learners. The combined 'definitely' and 'probably' totals are also higher for PLA.

4.11 As with E2E, there is no correlation between the prevalence of part-time employment in 2008/09 and survey responses in relation to participation.

Table 4.3: Would you still have undertaken a course in 2008/09 if EMA had not been available? (PLA learners only)		
	Number	%
Definitely	105	35%
Probably	98	33%
Possibly	31	10%
Probably Not	38	13%
Definitely Not	22	7%
Not Sure/Don't Know	5	2%
TOTAL	299	100%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners.

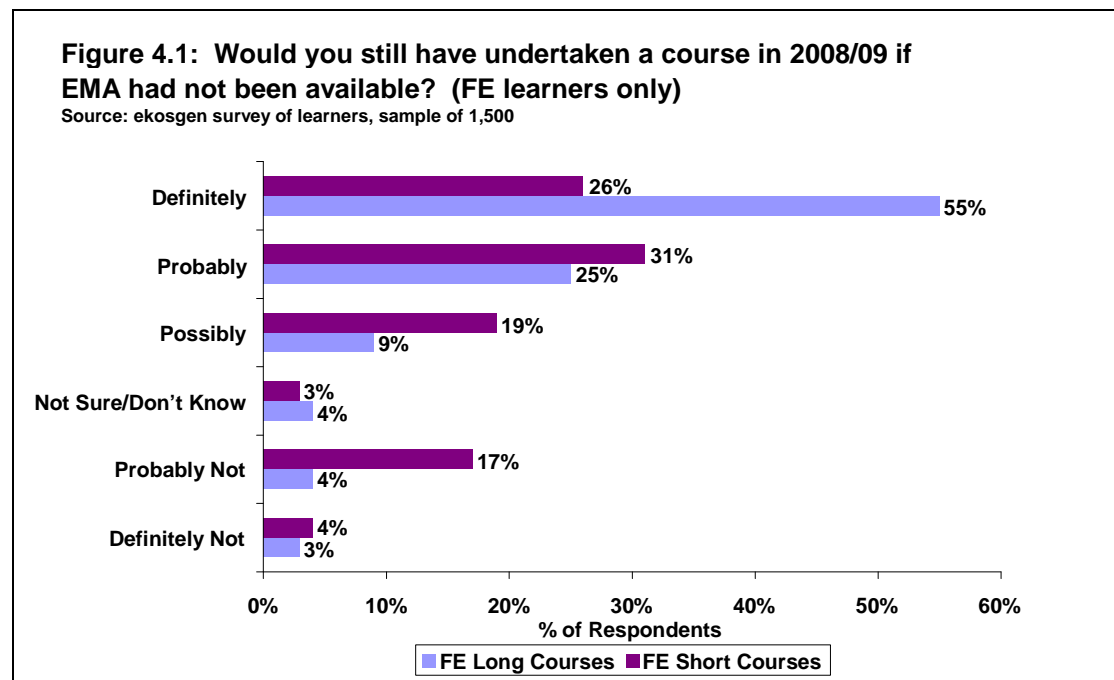
4.12 Thirty seven percent of the 133 providers in the sample that delivered PLAs in 2008/09 had observed an increase in PLA participation during the year when compared with

previous years. Sixty one percent of these providers reported that the policy changes had directly influenced the increases, with views equally split on whether the influence had been either substantial or slight.

FE Short and FE Long Course Learners

4.13 The influence and incentive of EMA on participation decisions is lowest – and deadweight therefore highest – amongst learners that undertook an FE Long Course in 2008/09, 55% of whom would definitely have undertaken a course in its absence (Figure 4.1).

4.14 By contrast, FE Short Course learners were similar to E2E learners, in that only a quarter (26%) would definitely have undertaken a course had EMA not been available. This view is supported by providers, who were more likely to report that increases in FE Short Course participation had been influenced by the policy changes than had increases in FE Long Course participation.



4.15 It is only on FE Long Courses that part-time employment can be correlated with the likelihood of learners having undertaken a course in the absence of EMA, and even then the link is not strong. Sixty two percent of the FE Long Course learners who had a part-time job in 2008/09 reported that they would definitely have done a course had EMA not been available, compared with 53% of those without a part-time job. Given the small difference and the size of the samples (only 79 FE Long Course learners had a part-time job in 2008/09), it should not be considered a statistically significant result.

Differences by Policy Change

4.16 With the exception of the £30 entitlement, exploring the link between the different policy changes and participation levels was more relevant to the provider survey than the learner survey given that the vast majority of learners (85%) had not received EMA in the previous year.

4.17 Overall, providers were reasonably if not overwhelmingly positive about the influence of the changes on participation, although only one in three had seen participation levels rise in 2008/09. Sixty one percent reported that the influence of the changes had been either substantial or slight, although 57% of this sub-group selected 'slight'.

4.18 Table 4.4 summarises the responses from providers when asked which change has had the greatest impact on participation levels. Key points are that:

- In proportionate terms (accounting for the dominance of providers in the sample that had delivered FE Long Courses), the £30 per week entitlement is seen to have had the greatest impact on participation levels;
- FE Long Course providers are the most likely to cite the link between payment and behaviour and effort as having had the greatest impact;
- By comparison, the January and July bonuses, most relevant on FE Long Courses, are seen to have had limited impact.

	%				No. resps
	E2E	PLA	FE Short	FE Long	
£30 weekly entitlement for E2E learners	77%	60%	45%	19%	42
Payments linked to behaviour and effort	15%	10%	20%	58%	43
January and July bonuses (FE Long Course)	6%	10%	15%	19%	14
Flexible bonus arrangements (E2E, PLA and FE Short Course)	2%	20%	20%	3%	8
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	107

Source: ekosgen survey of providers

National Statistics

4.19 As reported in Section Two, the number of learners receiving EMA has increased year on year from 2004/05 (297,259) to 2008/09 (576,144), including a 5% increase in 2008/09, although changes in the coverage of EMA recipients mean that an overall comparison is only viable between 2007/08 and 2008/09.

4.20 However, comparison to information published in SFR12/2009 'Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England'⁸, covering data up until 2007/08 shows that the 16-18 cohort increased up until 2006/07 with corresponding small increases in overall 16-18 participation, and was relatively unchanged for 2007/08 but with a 2 percentage point increase in 16-18 participation (SFR12/2009 Table 5). Information for 2008/09 is not yet available and it is therefore difficult to attribute the increase in 2008/09 to

⁸ <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000849/index.shtml>

the introduction of the policy changes. By volume it would appear that the growth in EMA is above the general level of growth observed in 16-18 participation.

5 EMA Bonuses and Withheld Payments

Summary of Key Points

EMA Bonuses

- The majority of providers are clear about the level of discretion they have around flexible bonus payments for E2E, PLA and FE Short Course learners. Most commonly, they take either a uniform approach for all learners or make arrangements on a learner by learner basis.
- Differences exist between the bonus payment schedules reported by learners and those reported by providers, with a higher proportion of providers than learners stating that bonuses had been paid weekly. The same is true of four-weekly schedules, although in neither case did the analysis identify specific reasons to explain the difference, beyond it being an unintended feature of the samples (the learner and provider samples were developed independently and as such there is no direct association between the two).
- Most learners reported that both the weekly payments and bonus payments each had the same number of conditions, although where that was not the case it was far more common for the bonuses (flexible and January/July) to have more conditions than the weekly payments.

Withheld Payments

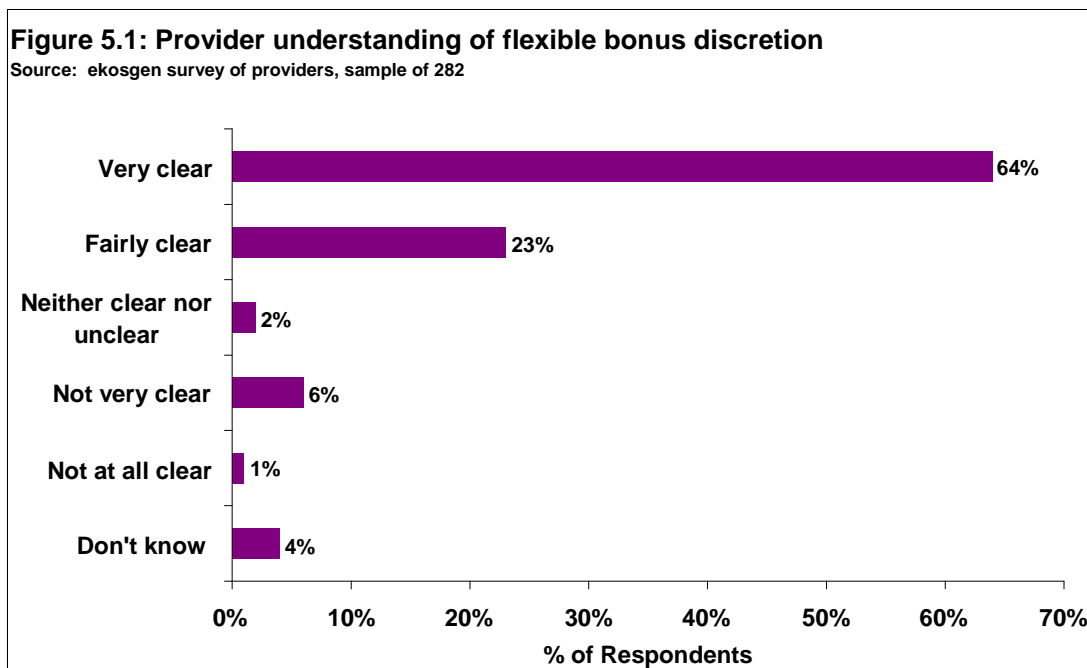
- Fifty nine percent of the learners in the sample had received all of their weekly payments during 2008/09 and only 8% had more than five payments withheld. Non-attendance was the overwhelming reason for non-receipt of weekly payments.
- Learners' views on EMA become progressively less positive as more weekly payments are withheld, although the change only becomes evident once more than five payments have been withheld.
- EMA bonuses have been widely paid in 2008/09 – 62% of E2E, PLA and FE Short Course learners received all of their bonuses, whilst 75% of FE Long Course learners received the January and July bonuses. Non-attendance was the main reason for bonuses not being paid.

Introduction

5.1 This section explores the arrangements through which EMA bonuses have been administered in 2008/09. Learner and provider feedback is included, although further commentary on the specific impacts of the bonuses is provided in Section Seven (retention), Eight (achievement) and Nine (progression).

Discretion

5.2 Reinforcing an earlier point on the clarity of the policy changes, the majority of providers are clear on the level of discretion they have in paying bonuses for E2E, PLA and FE Short Course learners – see Figure 5.1.



5.3 In the main, providers took one of two approaches to administering flexible bonus payments in 2008/09:

- 43% of providers in the sample for whom flexible bonus payments are applicable took a uniform approach for all learners;
- 42% made payment arrangements on a learner by learner basis;
- 12% separated learners into different groups and made the same bonus payment arrangements for each member of that particular group.

5.4 The remainder (seven providers) either selected 'don't know' (four providers) or 'none of the above' (three providers).

5.5 Although the differences are not large, the tailoring of payments on a learner-by-learner basis is most common amongst providers delivering E2E and/or PLA. Forty five percent of E2E providers and 42% of PLA providers gave this answer compared with 38% of FE Short Course providers and 31% of FE Long Course providers.

Payment Frequency

5.6 Differences are apparent between the bonus payment schedules reported by learners and those reported by providers. As shown in Table 5.1, the proportion of providers that reported paying weekly bonuses is higher than the proportion of learners that reported having received them weekly, and there is a marked difference in the figures regarding four weekly payments.

Table 5.1: Bonus payment schedules – learner and provider feedback comparisons		
	Learners	Providers
Every week	25%	41%
Every 2 weeks	2%	5%
Every 4 weeks	10%	28%
Every 6 weeks	1%	0%
Every 10 weeks	2%	0%
Every 13 weeks	13%	7%
Bi-annually	7%	0%
Achievement based or on course completion	14%	9%
Not received/was not told about bonus payment	8%	0%
Other ⁹	9%	8%
Don't know	9%	2%
Source: ekosgen. Base: 1,223 learners and 282 providers.		

5.7 The analysis does not highlight any reasons why this should be the case, beyond the fact that the learner and provider samples were selected independently of one another. Examining the figures by programme type shows that the differences are most pronounced amongst the E2E and FE Short Course cohorts:

- 8% reported having received their bonuses on a four weekly basis, compared with a quarter of E2E providers that had reportedly paid them on that basis;
- Almost twice the proportion of FE Short Course providers than learners reported that bonuses had been paid weekly (39% compared with 20%).

5.8 Bonus payment frequencies reported by providers were reasonably consistent across programmes, whereas learner feedback was more varied.

Payment Conditions by Programme Type

5.9 Learners were asked to compare the requirements of their weekly payments with those of their bonus payments, specifying which, if either, had the greater number of conditions attached. Whilst the main message is that most learners reported that both the weekly payments and bonus payments each had the same number of conditions, the responses highlighted some differences by programme type, with a particular contrast (explained below) between E2E and both PLA and FE Short Courses.

Entry to Employment

5.10 A slight majority (52%) of E2E learners stated that the payment conditions agreed with their provider for weekly payments were different to those agreed for bonuses (although the most selected single answer option was that they had been the same) – Table 5.2. Where a

⁹ Other responses from learners included: every two months; three times during the course; after two weeks then after an exam; one off payment; and on progression to another course or job.. Other responses from providers included: every 10 weeks; every six months; linked to achievements; and at the end of a course.

difference was reported, it was more common for bonuses to have the greater number of conditions.

	Number	%
Conditions were the same for both weekly and bonus payments	300	43%
Conditions to receive the bonus had more requirements than to receive weekly payments	244	35%
Conditions to receive bonus had fewer requirements than to receive weekly payments	121	17%
Don't know	37	5%
TOTAL	702	100%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners

Programme Level Apprenticeships

5.11 The situation was markedly different for PLA learners, 65% of whom reported that the conditions had been the same for bonuses and weekly payments. Thirty one percent reported a difference, although where they did the situation mirrored that on EMA in that bonus payments generally had more requirements.

	Number	%
Conditions were the same for both weekly and bonus payments	195	65%
Conditions to receive the bonus had more requirements than to receive weekly payments	66	22%
Conditions to receive bonus had fewer requirements than to receive weekly payments	27	9%
Don't know	11	4%
TOTAL	299	100%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners

FE Short Courses

5.12 Findings for FE Short Courses are broadly similar to those for PLAs – see Table 5.4.

	Number	%
Conditions were the same for both weekly and bonus payments	150	68%
Conditions to receive the bonus had more requirements than to receive weekly payments	51	23%
Conditions to receive bonus had fewer requirements than to receive weekly payments	7	3%
Don't know	13	6%
TOTAL	221	100%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners

FE Long Course

5.13 FE Long Course findings follow the general pattern observed on PLA and FE Short Course, although they include a slightly above average proportion of learners reporting that the bonus payments had involved fewer requirements than the weekly payments.

	Number	%
Conditions were the same for both weekly and bonus payments	159	57%
Conditions to receive the bonus had more requirements than to receive weekly payments	79	28%
Conditions to receive bonus had fewer requirements than to receive weekly payments	40	14%
Don't know	-	-
TOTAL	278	100%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners

Withheld Weekly Payments

5.14 Fifty nine percent of the learners in the sample had received all of their weekly payments during 2008/09 and only 8% had more than five payments withheld over the course of the year.

5.15 Non-attendance was the overwhelming reason for weekly payments being withheld, although 16% of learners that had not received at least one payment stated that they either had not been given a reason or that it had been due to an administrative or system error.

5.16 No obvious pattern emerges in terms of the programmes on which learners were most likely to have weekly payments withheld. Learners on FE Short Courses were slightly less likely than those on other programmes to report withheld payments (50% compared with an average of 59% across the full learner sample), but the difference is largely accounted for by an above average number of 'don't know' responses amongst learners on FE Short Courses.

5.17 However, a trend is more evident when comparing the number of payments withheld and learners' attitudes towards the impact of EMA, although the sub-groups are very small. Whilst learners with one to five withheld payments have similar opinions to those with no withheld payments, once the number of payments rises above five, views on the impact of EMA become progressively less positive:

- 27% (20) of the learners with 6-10 withheld payments report that the EMA payments definitely helped them achieve their learning goals, compared with 37% of learners with one to five payments withheld;
- 20% (4) of learners with 11-15 withheld payments reported that the EMA payments definitely helped;

- 7% (2) of those with over 15 withheld payments reported that the EMA payments definitely helped.

5.18 A corresponding finding is that the proportion of learners reporting that EMA payments definitely did not help them achieve their learning goals increases in line with the number of withheld payments.

5.19 Learners from whom weekly payments had been withheld and who subsequently went on to appeal (87 learners in total) were asked about the impact of not receiving the payments. The findings are somewhat contradictory, in that whilst 71% of the learners said that they had experienced a financial impact, 56% said they did not feel the need to do anything particularly different. The other 44% said that they made sure they did everything they could to receive the next payment.

Withheld Bonus Payments (E2E, PLA, FE Short Course)

5.20 EMA bonuses have been widely paid in 2008/09 – 62% of all E2E, PLA and FE Short Course learners in the sample had received all of their bonus payments (19% had not and 19% could not recall).

5.21 As with withheld weekly payments, no significant differences by programme type were apparent for bonuses (on each of the three programmes, the proportion of learners that had received all of their bonuses was within four percentage points of the average). The sub-groups are of an insufficient size to explore links between withheld bonus payments and attitudes towards EMA. Only 11 learners from a sample of 1,223 had seen between six and ten bonuses withheld, and only seven learners were in the situation where between 11 and 15 bonuses had been withheld.

Withheld Bonus Payments (FE Long Course)

5.22 Both the January and July bonuses were paid to 75% of the learners on FE Long Courses in the sample. In cases where one or other of the bonuses was not paid, there was no discernable difference between January and July and in both cases non-attendance was the most common reason for them having been withheld.

The Disincentive of EMA Bonuses

5.23 Although not amongst the main findings from the research, anecdotal evidence suggests that the payment of bonuses as a reward for attendance and behaviour has, in some providers, caused tension between those learners not in receipt of EMA and those learners that are. On occasion, learners not in receipt of EMA have reportedly been demotivated as a result of not being rewarded for their own behaviour and effort, leading some providers to pay equivalent bonuses to learners not in receipt of EMA from their own funds. No other incentives were reported as being used to motivate learners not in receipt of EMA.

6 Behaviour and Effort

Summary of Key Points

- Providers and learners are very clear on the detail of the policy change to link EMA payments with behaviour and effort.
- The change has had little impact on the responsibilities agreed between providers and learners in receipt of EMA: 7% of learners that had previously received EMA said that their responsibilities had changed in 2008/09.
- Behaviour and effort responsibilities did not differ significantly across providers in 2008/09. Only 6% of learners that changed providers during the year stated that their responsibilities were different in each.
- Provider feedback does not suggest that the impact of the change on behaviour and effort has been especially widespread. Half of the providers in the sample reported it had not led to an improvement on either behaviour or effort, whilst 37% had observed improvements in both areas.

Introduction

6.1 This section focuses on the policy change that introduced a stronger link between EMA payments and learners' behaviour and effort. The perceived impacts of the change on behaviour and effort are covered here, whilst impacts specifically in relation to retention, achievement and progression are explored in Sections Seven to Nine.

Understanding Performance Linked Payments

6.2 In addition to being very clear themselves on the detail of this policy change (see Section Three), providers have conveyed it to learners without ambiguity. Across the sample of 1,500 learners, 97% reported that they fully understood the responsibilities they had to meet in order to receive payments.

Comparisons with Previous Years

6.3 The strengthening of the behaviour and effort link appears to have had little impact on the responsibilities agreed between providers and learners in receipt of EMA. A total of 396 learners (26% of the sample) had previously received EMA, but only 26 learners (7%) reported that their responsibilities changed in 2008/09. Where this was the case:

- 13 learners said they had to improve their attendance;
- 12 learners said they had to be more punctual;
- 11 learners said they had to work harder.

6.4 Although the sub-group sample is too small to draw conclusions, the majority of the above learners identified positive personal outcomes as a result of the change in responsibilities. These included becoming more confident (22 learners), feeling more motivated to do well (21 learners) and making more progress in their studies than they had in the past (17 learners).

Learners that Changed Provider in 2008/09

6.5 The evidence suggests that behaviour and effort responsibilities did not differ significantly across providers in 2008/09. Amongst the 228 learners that had changed provider during the year (15% of the learner sample), only 14 learners said that the responsibilities were either quite different (nine learners) or very different (five learners). It was far more common for the responsibilities to have been exactly the same (54%), very similar (15%) or for learners not to be able to say for certain (19%).

Behaviour and Effort Improvements

6.6 Provider views are split on the impact of the change on behaviour and effort, although it is clear that its effect has not been especially widespread. Half of the providers in the sample reported it had not led to an improvement on either behaviour or effort, whilst 37% had observed improvements in both areas.

6.7 Relatively few providers (no more than 6% of the sample) reported that there had been an improvement in either behaviour or effort but not in the other. Views across programme type were very consistent and deviated only very slightly from the cohort level averages.

7 Retention

Summary of Key Points

- The evaluation evidence does not enable firm conclusions to be drawn about the impact of the policy changes on retention rates. Whilst learners were more positive than providers, the ILR shows that retention rates amongst non-school based learners in receipt of EMA over the past few years (including 2008/09) have largely mirrored national trends.
- Seventeen percent of providers observed an increase in retention rates in 2008/09. Amongst these, the weekly entitlement for E2E learners was seen to have had the biggest influence of all the policy changes, although differences were evident by programme type.
- Nineteen percent of providers reported that the issues experienced in administering EMA during 2008/09 had resulted in learners leaving their courses early, although in very few cases was the number of learners thought to be significant.
- Sixty four percent of E2E, PLA and FE Short Course learners reported that the flexible bonus payments had helped them to stay on their course, whilst 72% of learners on FE Long Courses said the same about the January bonus. The same percentage of learners that had received the July bonus thought it had helped with course completion.

Overview

7.1 This section explores the impact of the EMA policy changes on learner retention from three perspectives: learners, providers and the analysis of ILR data. The results from across the three are not wholly consistent, but none points to a significant impact on retention rates caused by the policy changes. That said, learners often reported they could make a link between receiving EMA and staying on/completing their learning programmes.

The Provider Perspective

7.2 Relatively few providers in the sample were able to correlate the introduction of the policy changes with retention rate improvements as only 17% had observed an increase in retention rates in 2008/09.

7.3 Although providers were not asked to rate the relative importance of the changes against other, external influences on retention rates, they were asked to compare the influence of the different policy changes against one another. The results show that:

- 38% selected the weekly entitlement as being the most important of the policy changes for improving retention rates;
- 26% selected the behaviour and effort link;
- 21% selected the January and July bonuses;
- 5% selected the flexible bonuses.

7.4 To an extent, the above is influenced by the profile of the provider sample and it is not surprising that further analysis reveals a range of programme level trends. For example,

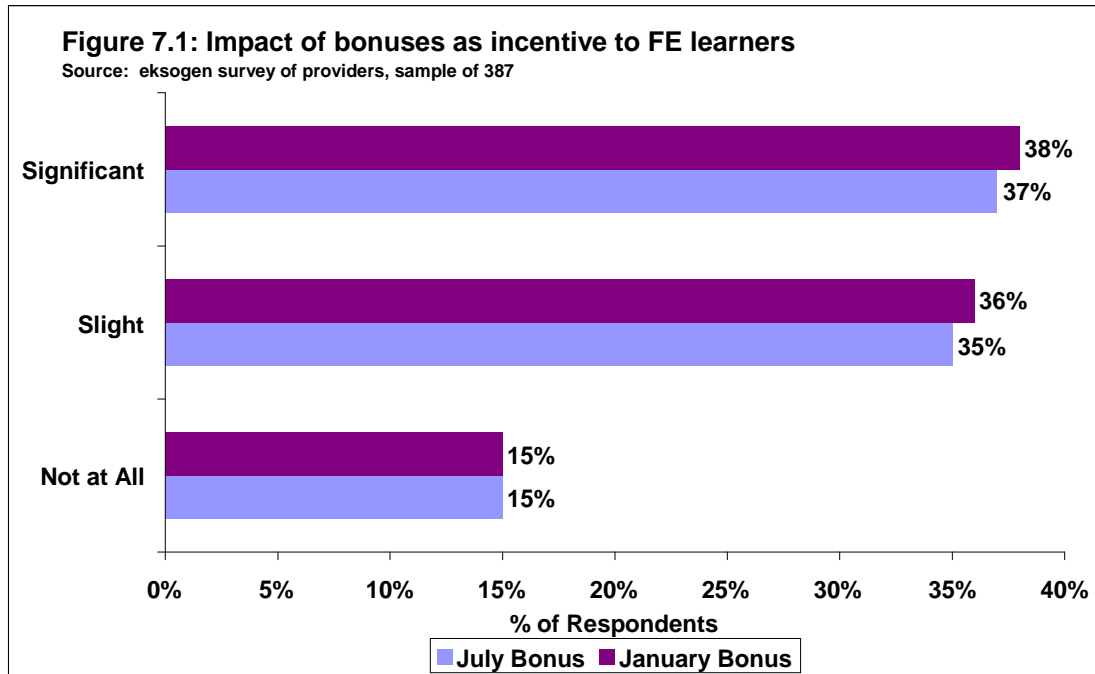
- Providers that had delivered E2E in 2008/09 were by far the most likely to identify the £30 weekly entitlement as having been the most important driver of retention rate increases, but by contrast were considerably less likely than providers delivering other programmes to select the behaviour and effort links;
- Providers that had delivered FE Long Courses were the more likely to identify the January and July bonuses than any of the other changes.

7.5 Nineteen percent of providers reported that the issues experienced in administering EMA during 2008/09 had resulted in learners leaving their courses early, although in very few cases was the number of learners thought to be significant.

The Incentive of the January and July Bonus

7.6 Both the January and July bonuses are seen by providers that have paid them as reasonably effective tools for incentivising learners over the course of their learning.

7.7 There is no significant difference between the two. In each case, just under three quarters of the providers that delivered FE Long Courses in 2008/09 reported that the bonus had acted as at least a slight incentive, and in each case more than a half of those providers said the impact had been significant – Figure 7.1.



The Learner Perspective

7.8 Learners are more positive than providers about the retention rate impacts of the policy changes (the learner survey asked specifically about the flexible bonuses for E2E, PLA and FE Short Courses, and the January and July bonuses for FE Long Courses).

Flexible Bonuses

7.9 Sixty four percent of the E2E, PLA and FE Short Course learners in the sample reported that the bonus payments had impacted positively on their retention (the remainder reported there had been no impact). However, most of the learners who reported a positive impact said it had been slight rather than substantial.

	Number	%
Significantly	304	25%
Slightly	482	39%
Not at all	437	36%
TOTAL	1,223	100%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners

7.10 FE Short Course learners were the most positive about the impact of the flexible bonuses on retention, with 34% reporting a significant impact compared with 30% of PLA learners and 20% of E2E learners. The converse was also true in that E2E learners were the most likely to say that the flexible bonus had not had a positive impact on retention – Table 7.2.

	E2E		PLA		FE Short Course	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Significantly	138	20%	89	30%	76	34%
Slightly	287	41%	117	39%	78	35%
Not at all	277	39%	93	31%	67	30%
TOTAL	702	100%	299	100%	221	100%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

January and July Bonuses

7.11 As shown in Table 7.3, the January bonus is seen to have been reasonably influential on learners' decisions to continue on FE Long Courses. The gender split highlights a difference in the views of males and females in terms of the significance of the influence, although given the size of the samples this cannot be considered conclusive.

	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Significantly	42	29%	54	40%	96	35%
Slightly	57	40%	45	34%	102	37%
Not at all	45	31%	35	26%	80	29%
TOTAL	144	100%	134	100%	278	100%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

7.12 The July bonus was seen to be equally influential, in this case in terms of helping learners to complete their courses. Once again there is a gender difference and it is more pronounced than with the January bonus.

	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Significantly	41	29%	59	44%	100	36%
Slightly	55	38%	45	34%	100	36%
Not at all	48	33%	30	22%	78	28%
TOTAL	144	100%	134	100%	278	100%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners

ILR Results¹⁰

7.13 The national retention rate on learning aims pursued by non-school based learners in receipt of EMA in FE (excluding E2E) increased between 2005/06 and 2008/09, and between 2007/08 and 2008/09 – the years before and during which the policy changes were implemented. See Table 7.5.

16 to 18 year olds	In receipt of EMA	2005/06 ^a	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Retention Rate	Yes	88%	88%	89%	91%
	No	84%	84%	85%	87%
Retained Learning Aims	Yes	644,720	814,096	857,574	829,357
	No	1,558,258	1,819,750	1,792,086	1,922,119

Source: ILR L04 2008/09 September 2009, F05 2005/06 to 2006/07
 Note a: 16 to 17 year olds in 2005/06

¹⁰ The analysis of retention and achievement is based on learning aims studied by learners, and includes key skills provision, but excludes provision of less than one week duration. The analysis is based on in-year methods that includes any provision completed within the academic year, regardless of when the provision was expected to finish.

7.14 EMA retention rates in FE (excluding E2E) in 2008/09 are high when compared with the retention rates across the 16-18 non-EMA cohort, but in both cases the rate of increase in recent years has been similar and it is therefore difficult to make a link between the improvements and the introduction of the policy changes.

7.15 Outcomes for E2E are difficult to measure, as they can often be soft and extend beyond the achievement of formal learning aims. Retention rates on learning aims for E2E learners in receipt of EMA are low when compared with FE (65% in 2008/09), although this is a four percentage point improvement on the previous year. However, this too marks a continuation of the upward trend observed since 2005/06, when the retention rate on E2E courses was 55%¹¹.

7.16 Overall, whilst the ILR data paints an encouraging picture of retention rates amongst learners in receipt of EMA in 2008/09, the policy changes could be one of a number of factors, which may also include curriculum development and the current economic circumstances.

¹¹ Source: ILR L04 2008/09 September 2009, F05 2005/06 to 2006/07

8 Achievement

Summary of Key Points

- As with retention rates, there is limited evidence to suggest that the introduction of the policy changes has caused achievement rates to rise. Learner feedback is once again reasonably positive but is not substantiated by ILR data.
- Fourteen percent of providers had observed an increase in achievement rates in 2008/09
- Of those that had, 57% said the behaviour and effort link was the most influential of the policy changes
- A third of learners reported that the weekly payments had definitely helped them to achieve their learning goals and a similar proportion reported they had probably helped. Views by programme type were reasonably similar, although E2E learners were slightly less positive about the weekly payments.
- The national achievement rate for learning aims pursued by non-school based learners in receipt of EMA in FE (excluding E2E) rose between 2005/06 and 2008/09. A notable rise was evident in 2008/09, the year in which the policy changes were introduced. Nonetheless, the changes mirror national trends, once again making attribution difficult.

Introduction

8.1 This section explores the impact of the EMA policy changes on learner achievement levels. As in the previous section, the findings are separated by perspectives of learners, providers and ILR analysis of overall achievement in FE which excludes school 6th form data.

Provider Perspective

8.2 Fourteen percent of providers had observed an increase in achievement rates in 2008/09, limiting the extent to which the survey could probe a link between achievement rate change and the introduction of the EMA policy changes. In summary:

- The behaviour and effort link is seen by providers to have been the most important of change in terms of improving achievement – 57% of the providers with achievement rate improvements in 2008/09 cited this as having had the greatest impact (the survey questions asked about the impact of the changes relative to one another rather than relative to external factors);
- With the exception of E2E, where it was marginally second to the £30 weekly entitlement, the behaviour and effort link was cited as the most important change by providers across all of the programme types.

8.3 The January and July bonuses and the flexible bonus arrangements were rarely cited as drivers of achievement rate change, even accounting for the uneven numbers of providers across programme types.

Learner Perspective

8.4 Learner views on achievement were sought in relation to the weekly EMA payments, and specifically with regard to whether the payments had helped them to achieve their learning goals.

8.5 The feedback was reasonably positive (see Table 8.1). Thirty three percent of the learners reported that the weekly payments had definitely helped them to achieve their learning goals and a similar proportion reported they had probably helped.

	Number	%
Definitely	502	33%
Probably	429	29%
Possibly	186	12%
Probably Not	275	18%
Definitely Not	108	7%
TOTAL	1,500	100%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

8.6 Views by programme type were reasonably similar, although E2E learners were slightly less likely than those on other programmes to say that the weekly payments had helped them to achieve their learning goals.

	E2E		PLA		FE Long Course		FE Short Course	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Significantly	197	28%	99	33%	121	44%	85	38%
Slightly	192	27%	96	32%	65	23%	76	34%
Possibly	90	13%	37	12%	32	12%	27	12%
Probably not	147	21%	57	19%	45	16%	26	12%
Definitely not	76	11%	10	3%	15	5%	7	3%
TOTAL	702	100%	299	100%	278	100%	221	100%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners
 Note: Some percentage columns do not total 100% due to rounding

ILR Results¹²

8.7 Mirroring the trend on retention rates, the national achievement rate for learning aims pursued by non-school based learners in receipt of EMA in FE (excluding E2E) rose between 2005/06 and 2008/09. A notable rise was evident in 2008/09, the year in which the policy changes were introduced. However, it must be remembered that this data is based on achievement records that are not consistently completed, and does not include either 6th form or E2E data. As such it does not represent scientific analysis and is indicative of trend only.

Table 8.3: Learner achievement rates 2005/06-2008/09 (excluding E2E) from the ILR					
16 to 18 year olds	In receipt of EMA	2005/06 ^a	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Achievement Rate	Yes	77%	80%	83%	88% ¹³
	No	79%	81%	85%	89%
Achieved Learning Aims	Yes	362,504	740,848	514,004	392,915
	No	875,475	1,034,225	1,055,458	869,371
Source: ILR L04 2008/09 September 2009, F05 2005/06 to 2006/07					
Note: 16 to 17 year olds in 2005/06					

8.8 Further, the changes mirror national trends, making attribution difficult (the change in 2008/09 amongst non-E2E FE learning aims pursued by learners not in receipt of EMA was slightly smaller but not significantly so and the baseline position in 2005/06 is similar).

8.9 Achievement rates on E2E programmes in 2008/09 were high, at 88%. However, they had not improved from the previous year.

¹² The analysis of achievement is based on learning aims studied by learners, and includes key skills provision, but excludes provision of less than one week duration. The analysis is based on in-year methods that includes any provision completed within the academic year, regardless of when the provision was expected to finish.

¹³ The figure for 2008/09 is based on provisional data and may be subject to revision

9 Progression

Summary of Key Points

- Progression rate improvements in 2008/09 were not common across the provider sample. Only 13% had seen an improvement and most said it was slight.
- Where progression rates had improved, the behaviour and effort link was seen to be the most influential of the policy changes. The introduction of flexible bonus arrangements was cited least often.
- The majority of learners that had completed their course had progressed to a positive destination, most commonly another programme of learning or training. However, a fifth had become unemployed.
- Learners that became unemployed after completing their course do not view EMA any less positively than those who progressed into employment or further learning.

Introduction

9.1 This section presents provider views on the impact of the EMA policy changes on learner progression rates and explores the correlation between learner destinations and their views and experiences of EMA in 2008/09.

Provider Perspective

9.2 At 13%, the proportion of providers reporting that learner progression rates had improved in 2008/09 was similar to the proportions that reported increased retention and achievement rates. In the main, the increase has not been large – 89% of the providers whose progression rates had improved stated that the increase had been slight, compared with only a very small number that said it had been substantial.

9.3 The sub-group analysis must therefore once again be seen within the context of small samples. However, it shows that:

- All of the policy changes are seen to have had some degree of influence on progression rates;
- The behaviour and effort link was the most regularly cited. At least half of the providers in each programme type sub-group identified it as a positive influence;
- Providers that had delivered E2E in 2008/09 were more likely to identify the £30 weekly entitlement as an influence.

9.4 Across the sample, the introduction of flexible bonuses was cited least often.

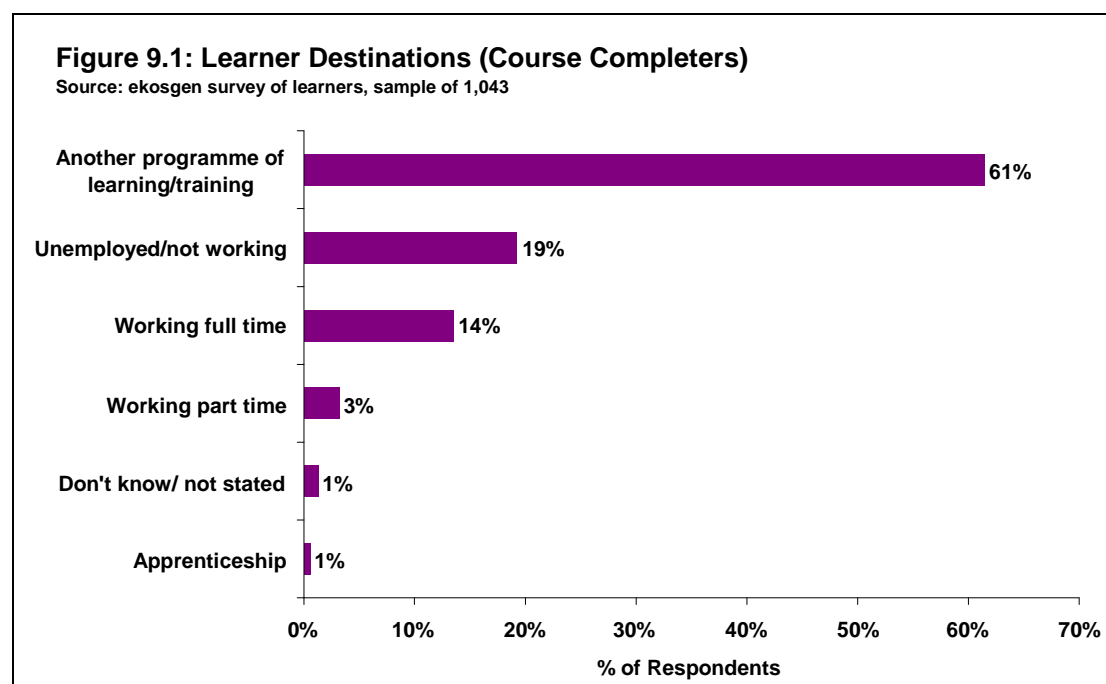
Learner Perspective

9.5 At the time of the survey, 70% of the learners in the sample had completed the course for which they received EMA. Reflecting their typical course duration, PLA learners were the least likely to have completed – Table 9.1.

	Number	%
E2E	516	74%
PLA	160	53%
FE Long	216	78%
FE Short	151	68%
TOTAL	1,043	70%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners

9.6 The majority of learners that had completed their course had progressed to a positive destination. As shown in Figure 9.1, 61% of the learners had embarked on another programme of learning or training – by far the most common destination – although 19% had become unemployed.



9.7 Analysis of destinations by programme type reveals a similar picture across E2E and PLA learners, a picture that broadly represents that of the entire sample. FE Long Course learners were the most likely to have progressed onto another programme of learning or training and the least likely to have become unemployed, whilst the opposite is true of FE Short Course learners – see Table 9.2 (which concentrates on the four most common destinations, together accounting for 96% of all learners).

Table 9.2: Learner destinations by programme type

	Working full-time		Working part-time		Training/ learning programme		Unemployed	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
E2E	79	14%	18	3%	300	57%	110	21%
PLA	26	16%	9	6%	90	56%	27	18%
FE Long	14	6%	4	2%	175	81%	13	6%
FE Short	22	14%	3	2%	74	49%	50	33%

Source: ekosgen survey of learners

9.8 Learners that became unemployed after completing their course do not view EMA any less positively than those who progressed into employment or further training or learning. Perhaps surprisingly, it tends to be learners that have entered full-time employment that view EMA least favourably. For example, 48% of learners working full-time reported that EMA payments definitely or probably helped them achieve learning goals, compared with 70% of those working part-time, 66% of those unemployed, and 63% of those that have entered another programme of training or learning.

9.9 In addition, there was no significant correlation between the number of EMA payments withheld from a learner and the learner becoming unemployed after completing their course.

ILR Results

9.10 The ILR fields on learner destinations are poorly completed and inconclusive. For example, in 2008/09, the destinations of 40% of the non-school based learners in receipt of EMA were blank whilst 11% were set to 'unknown'.

9.11 Amongst those learners for whom a known destination had been entered, 82% were reportedly in either education or training (including those that were continuing on an existing programme from the previous year), whilst 4% were unemployed. However, concerns over data quality mean that this cannot be considered a valid comparison with the findings from this evaluation.

10 Conclusions and Future Development

Conclusions

10.1 The conclusions from the evaluation of the 2008/09 EMA policy changes are structured under the following headings:

- Perception and impact;
- Issues and challenges.

10.2 They are followed by a series of considerations for the future development of EMA, taking into account the raising of the participation age reforms and other policy developments.

Perceptions and Impact

10.3 **The 2008/09 policy changes are universally well understood by learners, providers and stakeholders** and there is no requirement for further action to raise awareness or understanding of them in the sector.

10.4 **Taken as a whole, the changes have been an appropriate way of repositioning or re-emphasising EMA as a reward for effort and achievement.** They have challenged the views held by some that EMA is akin to a benefit, although in relatively few cases do the responsibilities agreed between learners and providers appear to have changed significantly.

10.5 **Learner views towards EMA are reasonably resilient, even when faced with challenges.** Only where delays between application and first payment have extended beyond 12 weeks do they become notably less positive, and only when more than 10 weekly payments have been withheld does the perceived contribution of EMA to the achievement of learning goals diminish significantly. Learners are no less likely to have a positive view towards EMA if they have become unemployed than if they have progressed to a positive destination.

10.6 **In general terms, each of the policy changes is seen to have had either a positive impact or no discernable impact on the learners that received EMA in 2008/09.** Only in a small number of isolated cases are the changes seen to have had a negative impact.

10.7 **However, this hides a more complex and, in places, contradictory picture.** Deadweight, in terms of learner participation, remains reasonably high, especially amongst FE Long Course learners, and should be a focus of future EMA policy development. It is also the case that relatively few providers have experienced participation increases that they can attribute to the changes. Where they can, the weekly entitlement is seen to have had the most significant influence.

10.8 **EMA bonuses (across all programme types) are seen by learners to have had a positive impact on their retention.** Whilst this may be true at an individual level, it is not reflected either in provider feedback or national statistics, neither of which point to an evident correlation between retention rate improvements and the introduction of the policy changes.

10.9 **The same is true of achievement rate change**, where less than 10% of the provider cohort linked the policy changes with improvements in 2008/09. National statistics are also inconclusive in this regard, so whilst it may be possible to highlight some positive effects on retention, achievement and progression, the impact to date has not been profound. Rather, the policy changes form part of a wider set of learning influences and do not yet appear to be amongst the most influential.

Issues and Challenges

10.10 **The introduction of the 2008/09 policy changes has not introduced any lasting administrative challenges**. No significant process or payment issues require resolution in order for the changes to operate more efficiently.

10.11 **The most substantial issue across all of the changes is the relative lack of evidence on impact, especially from the provider base, which introduces questions on value for money and deadweight**. Should the changes be continued, providers may begin to experience greater and more regular tangible benefits as they identify, through the experiences of 2008/09, the most appropriate ways of using the flexible bonus payments and the behaviour and effort link to drive up learner motivation and performance.

10.12 **The limited effectiveness of withholding weekly payments on learner attitudes also gives rise to concern**. Although based on feedback from only a small proportion of the learner sample, the withholding of payments has not acted as a stimulus for improved attendance or behaviour in the majority of cases.

Future Development

10.13 Stakeholders consulted for the evaluation were invited to put forward recommendations or ideas for the future development of EMA. The points below summarise the main themes arising, although it should be noted that none of them was cited by a majority of stakeholders:

- Given a tightening public purse and spending cut plans announced by both of the main political parties, **the issue of deadweight must be addressed** if EMA is to remain a sustainable proposition;
- **This may be achieved by altering the weekly payment and or reducing the income threshold** to better focus support on the most vulnerable groups and potentially increasing the demonstrable impact on retention, achievement and progression. Consultation with key stakeholders would be required;
- **In advance of the Raising of the Participation Age reforms**, which stipulate that from 2013 all young people in England will be obliged to continue in education or training to age 17, and from 2015 to age 18, consideration needs to be given as to how EMA evolves to provide an effective support structure for learners.

- **Developing a more comprehensive support package for learner travel costs could help to reduce the annual EMA budget.** Travel was cited by 45% of learners in 2008/09 as having been the most important personal cost they had incurred¹⁴;
- **The future of the non-income assessed variant of the EMA weekly entitlement for E2E learners is unclear with the introduction of Foundation Learning.**

10.14 At an operational level, very few recommendations come to the fore to improve the administrative side of EMA. The LSC and DCSF may wish to give consideration to simplifying the learner application form as it is seen to be complicated and often poorly completed, although it was raised as an issue by only a minority of providers.

Final Remarks

10.15 Overall, EMA continues to be perceived as a positive policy instrument, helping or encouraging learners to enter, stay in and complete learning who may have struggled to find the same opportunities in its absence. This evaluation has found broad support for the 2008/09 policy changes and a general sense that where they have had an impact, that impact has been positive. There do not appear to have been any unintended consequences from the introduction of the changes, nor major challenges in their delivery. It may simply be too early to draw conclusions about their impact, although a significant change in provider views is needed to correlate the changes with tangible outcomes. If the changes are to be continued, a follow-up survey of providers towards the end of the 2009/10 academic year may be advisable.

¹⁴ Food and drink was second (32%) of learners. No other cost (materials, clothing etc.) was cited as being the most important by more than 7% of learners.

APPENDIX A

Table AA.1: Stakeholder organisations consulted for the evaluation	
Organisation	
	Middlesbrough College
	NACRO
	DCSF
	National Association of Managers of Student Support
	Association of Colleges
	Learning and Skills Council (three individual stakeholders)
	Connexions Derbyshire
	National Union of Students
	Wirral Council
	Knowsley College
	Rathbone
	Oasis Academy Immingham
	Morthyng Vocational College
	Association of Learning Providers

APPENDIX B

Introduction

A.1 This Appendix provides further detail on the ILR data contained in Chapter Two. As previously highlighted, it should be remembered that it does not include school census data, and it relies on the completion of the relevant Learner Support fields by providers to arrive at aggregate figures.¹⁵

	FE		PLA		E2E		TOTAL	
EMA Learner Support – First Year	184,728	86%	5,438	77%	55,611	81%	245,777	84%
EMA Learner Support – Second Year or later	30,764	14%	1,611	23%	13,092	19%	45,467	16%
TOTAL	215,492	100%	7,049	100%	68,703	100%	291,244	100%

Source: ILR L04 September 2009, ILR E12 September 2009

	FE		PLA		E2E		TOTAL	
Female	92,852	50%	3,348	62%	21,969	40%	118,169	48%
Male	91,876	50%	2,090	38%	33,642	60%	127,608	52%
TOTAL	184,728	100%	5,438	100%	55,611	100%	245,777	100%

Source: ILR L04 September 2009, ILR E12 September 2009

	FE		PLA		E2E		TOTAL	
White	141,608	77%	4,414	81%	47,321	85%	193,343	79%
Black and Minority Ethnic	39,635	21%	995	18%	7,701	14%	48,331	20%
Not Known/Provided	3,485	2%	29	1%	589	1%	4,103	2%
TOTAL	184,728	100%	5,438	100%	55,611	100%	245,777	100%

Source: ILR L04 September 2009, ILR E12 September 2009

¹⁵ Notes: 1) Learners were identified by completion of the Learner Support Field where any of ILR Fields L34A to L34D were marked as being in receipt of EMA or A15 (Programme Field) was recorded as Entry to Employment.

2) Learners were identified as being in their first year where the start date of the programme was in 2008/09.

3) Learners were aged 16 to 18 at 31st August 2008.

4) Where percentages do not sum to 100% this is due to rounding.

	Learner Responsive		Employer Responsive		TOTAL	
White	507,278	81%	166,205	94%	673,483	84%
Black and Minority Ethnic	107,176	17%	9,616	5%	116,792	15%
Not Known/Provided	13,450	2%	1,679	1%	15,129	2%
TOTAL	627,904	100%	177,500	100%	805,404	100%

Source: ILR L04 September 2009, ILR E12 September 2009

	FE		PLA		E2E		TOTAL	
In receipt of EMA	33,868	18%	1,249	23%	15,614	28%	50,731	21%
Not in receipt of EMA	91,043	14%	19,774	11%	N/A	N/A	110,817	14%

Source: ILR L04 September 2009, ILR E12 September 2009

	FE		PLA		E2E		TOTAL	
10% Most deprived	38,614	21%	1,719	32%	15,107	27%	55,440	19%
20%	29,059	16%	1,055	19%	10,182	19%	40,296	14%
30%	23,710	13%	696	13%	7,667	14%	32,073	11%
40%	20,459	11%	501	9%	5,668	10%	26,628	9%
50%	17,757	10%	372	7%	4,539	8%	22,668	8%
60%	14,302	8%	316	6%	3,322	6%	17,940	6%
70%	12,074	7%	229	4%	2,583	5%	14,886	5%
80%	11,063	6%	208	4%	2,352	5%	13,623	5%
90%	9,225	5%	171	3%	1,803	3%	11,199	4%
10% Least deprived	7,092	4%	90	2%	1,137	2%	8,319	3%
TOTAL	184,728	100%	5,438	100%	55,611	100%	245,777	100%

Source: ILR L04 September 2009, ILR E12 September 2009

Notes: 2,110 learners did not have a valid postcode, or were resident outside of England, and it was not possible to match them to the England IMD 2007
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Table AB.7: Learner deprivation by programme type and deprivation decile for learners not in receipt of EMA 2008/09

	FE		PLA		TOTAL	
10% Most deprived	69,778	11%	19,454	11%	89,232	11%
20%	67,708	11%	18,209	10%	85,917	11%
30%	61,602	10%	17,727	10%	79,329	10%
40%	59,510	9%	17,720	10%	77,230	10%
50%	59,718	10%	18,487	10%	78,205	10%
60%	59,091	9%	16,416	9%	75,507	9%
70%	58,536	9%	17,451	10%	75,987	9%
80%	59,529	9%	17,470	10%	76,999	10%
90%	63,072	10%	16,329	9%	79,401	10%
10% Least deprived	60,174	10%	15,454	9%	75,628	9%
TOTAL	627,904	100%	177,500	100%	805,404	100%

Source: ILR L04 September 2009, ILR E12 September 2009

 Notes: 11,969 learners did not have a valid postcode, or were resident outside of England and it was not possible to match them to the England IMD 2007
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Table AB.8: Proportion of learners in receipt of EMA by programme type and provider type 2008/09

	FE		PLA		E2E		TOTAL	
General FE College (including Tertiary)	140,100	76%	642	12%	12,027	22%	152,769	62%
Private Company	594	1%	3,926	82%	37,640	70%	42,160	18%
Sixth Form College	37,908	21%	23	0%	215	0.4%	38,146	16%
Specialist College – Agriculture and Horticulture	4,559	3%	24	0%	212	0.4%	4,795	2%
Local Education Authority	75	0%	270	5%	4,111	7%	4,456	2%
Other	1,492	1%	553	8%	1,406	2%	3,451	1%
TOTAL	184,728	100%	5,438	100%	55,611	100%	245,777	100%

Source: ILR L04 September 2009, ILR E12 September 2009