

## **BLACKPOOL'S YOUNG PEOPLE URGED TO APPLY ONLINE FOR EMA**

*Schools across Blackpool encouraged to get behind the latest campaign to urge Yr11s to apply online for EMA*

**Date of issue** 10<sup>th</sup> April 2007  
**Publication number** NWR - 046  
**Embargo until** 10<sup>th</sup> April 2007

Schools and parents across Blackpool are being urged to encourage Year11s to pre-order Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) 2007/08 application packs online – to ensure they are ready to apply later this year.

Young people in Blackpool planning to go to college, school sixth form and those who start Entry to Employment and programme-led Apprenticeships will be eligible for weekly payments of up to £30, depending on household income.

Currently around 2010 young people receive weekly EMA payments in Blackpool, with the LSC predicting a further 1100 young people will take up EMA locally from September.

EMA is available for a range of vocational and academic courses, including Level 2 diplomas in subjects like Fashion Retail, Aerobic Instruction and Business, GCSE retakes and A levels, so today the Learning and Skills (LSC) is urging young people in Year11 to apply online for an application pack at [www.direct.gov.uk/ema](http://www.direct.gov.uk/ema) and reminding young people who have not returned to learning after leaving college or school that it is never too late to return.

Last year EMA enabled more young people to stay on in learning after their GCSEs, with the last academic year (05/06) seeing the highest number of 16 year olds in learning since 1994 – with 89.1 per cent in some form of learning.

One of them was Alecia Kerry who attends Blackpool and the Fylde College, studying for a National Diploma in Performing Arts, with Alecia's greatest ambition being to one day become a Hollywood superstar, her weekly £20 EMA means she can afford to follow her dreams as she undertakes a bus journey every day to travel from home in St. Annes.

Alecia comments, "I really wanted to study Performing Arts, making my hobby my career, and the course at Blackpool and The Fylde College looked perfect for me. I knew I would struggle to afford to buy a bus pass to get me to and from college, as well as all the extra things I would need for my course. My EMA has given me peace of mind, knowing that I can afford to travel to college and buy the things I need to successfully complete my course."

Janet Jackson, Partnership Manager, Learning and Skills Council Lancashire concluded, "It's great that so many local schools are getting behind the campaign, recognising the difference that EMA can make when a young person is deciding whether to continue in learning – and today we're urging even more schools and parents to encourage those young people in Year 11. It is really easy to apply for EMA online and what takes just a few minutes could make a huge difference for young people not only over the next few years, but for the rest of their life."

Young people can apply for EMA online at [www.direct.gov.uk/ema](http://www.direct.gov.uk/ema) and those without internet access can call the EMA helpline on 0808 10 16219.

**Ends**

**Notes for editors**

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

**What are the key features of EMA?**

- Weekly payment bands of £30, £20 and £10 per week, depending on household income.
- Intermittent Bonus payments depending on the programme of learning.
- Available for both academic and vocational study, up to level 3, which can include courses such as basic skills GCSE retakes, GNVQs, NVQs, as well as AS and A2s.
- No other household benefits are affected.

- Young people can still have a part-time job.

### **Who is eligible?**

- Young people are eligible to receive or to continue receiving EMA in the EMA year 2006/07 providing:
  - They will already be 16, 17 or 18 on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2006;
  - Are from a household with a combined income of up to £30,810;
  - They are participating in full-time further education (as defined in EMA guidance) up to and including Level 3, or LSC funded e2e or a Programme led Apprenticeship
- They must be:
  - a person who is 'settled' in the UK, and been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least the three years prior to the start of his learning programme; or
  - a national of any European Union (EU) country or the spouse or civil partner or child of an EU national, and been ordinarily resident in the European Economic Area (EEA) for at least the three years prior to the start of his learning programme; or
  - an EEA migrant worker or the spouse or civil partner or child of an EEA migrant worker, who is ordinarily resident in the UK at the start of the learning programme and has been ordinarily resident in the EEA throughout the three year period prior to that; or
  - recognised as a refugee by the UK Government, or the spouse or civil partner or child of a refugee, have been granted Humanitarian Protection, or have EU Temporary Protection.
- If a young person lives overseas as part of a family serving with HM Forces or the Ministry of Defence in Germany or Cyprus, they should call Service Children's Education on (0049) 2161 908 2525 for further advice.

### **Application**

Evidence of an applicant's household income for the previous tax year 2005/2006 and proof of the individual's operational bank account are required.

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

### **EMA Contract**

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

### **LSC**

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world-class standards. Our vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

**All public enquiries regarding EMA please contact:** 0808 10 16219 (some mobile operators may charge for calls made to this number) or visit [www.direct.gov.uk/ema](http://www.direct.gov.uk/ema).

**All public enquiries please contact:** LSC Helpdesk: 0870 900 6800

**All media enquires please contact:**

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