

THE JOBS YOU LOVE TO LOVE

North West teens want to “date a winner”

Survey finds ambition is attractive to teenagers and laziness is the biggest turn off

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Ambition and drive are the attributes that today’s North West teenagers are most attracted to in prospective partners, according to research released by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in conjunction with the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

The research shows that nurses, doctors and surgeons top the poll of professions that our nation’s teenagers would like to date. In the North West, music producers and sports people are the career choices of potential girlfriends and boyfriends that are most likely to get teenagers’ pluses racing.

Among the 14 to 19 year olds surveyed in the North West, 42 per cent found sportspeople and music producers the most attractive as a partner, followed by members of the armed forces (16 per cent), and skilled workers (13 per cent). Only one teenager surveyed in the region said they would consider an unemployed person an attractive partner.

Having a Level 2 qualification, meaning five GCSEs A* – C or the vocational equivalent, was also seen as a very positive thing. Of the North West teens surveyed, most believed that someone with a Level 2 qualification would go on to achieve more in their career, have greater ambitions and life goals and would be paid more.

The survey also revealed that 71 per cent of North West teenagers find drive and ambition to gain qualifications and skills an attractive trait in a potential boyfriend or girlfriend. In fact, when choosing a prospective partner, sense of humour (66 per cent), confidence (61 per cent) and ambition to gain qualifications and skills (71 per cent) are the top three characteristics that teenagers said they look for. By contrast, laziness is considered by far

the biggest turn off among teenagers (79 per cent), followed by lack of ambition (66 per cent), and lacking interests and goals (61 per cent).

Ruth Bullen, Director of Young People's Learning at the Learning and Skills Council, said: "It is really encouraging to see that young people value ambition and that achieving at Level 2 is considered to have such a positive impact on people lives. As well as improving your job prospects, qualifications and skills build confidence and self-esteem and show other people that you have life goals. Apparently, in turn, this can also make you more attractive as a partner."

Psychologist, Dr Linda Papadopoulos said:

"It is no surprise that ambition and drive comes in high on the list of characteristics that teenagers value in a potential partner. Traditionally, ambition has always been seen as very appealing and people who display those traits are often exciting, inspiring people to be around. As someone learns and improves their skills in life, it enhances their self confidence immeasurably and as the survey indicates, confidence is one of the top characteristics that teens look for in a potential partner. There is a certain energy that exudes from people who have a desire to achieve and better themselves by learning new skills and it is hard to resist."

Whether young people are interested in pursuing a career in the medical profession, the sport industry, the music business, or indeed in any other industry, achieving Level 2 equips them to make the best start and can deliver all manner of personal benefits. There are more choices now than ever before in terms of courses and ways of getting qualified so there is bound to be something to suit everyone. There is also the possibility of financial support of up to £30 a week thanks to the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) exists to encourage young people aged 16-18 who have left, or are about to leave, compulsory education, to carry on with their studies by giving those eligible up to £30 a week to spend on their studies. To find out more visit www.ema.direct.gov.uk

To find out more about the courses available, visit <http://dcsf.gov.uk/prospectus>

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For media enquiries or to request the survey findings please contact:

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Notes to editors:

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This press release applies to England only.

Learning and Skills Council

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

Visit www.lsc.gov.uk/inourhands or call 0800 011 30 30 for more information.

Apprenticeships

- There are currently 250,000 apprentices working in over 130,000 organisations in England alone. They can choose from over 200 career paths in 80 different sectors of industry and commerce.
- Anyone aged 16 and above is eligible to complete an Apprenticeship.
- Apprenticeships provide individuals with a mixture of on and off-the-job training whilst being paid. For employers, Apprenticeships offer the opportunity to improve their businesses bottom line through the tailored, relevant training of highly motivated individuals.
- There are two levels of Apprenticeships:
 - 'Apprenticeships', equivalent to GCSE level, incorporate a National Vocational Qualification to Level 2; key skills and in some cases a technical certificate
 - 'Advanced Apprenticeships', equivalent to A-levels, incorporate a National Vocational Qualification to Level 3, key skills and a technical certificate

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

Notes for editors – EMA Applications for 2008/9 Year

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

What are the key features of EMA?

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

Who is eligible?

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

- They will already be 16, 17, 18 or 19 on the 1st September 2008;
- Household income criteria for 2007/8 applicants will be confirmed shortly;
- They are participating in full-time further education (as defined in EMA guidance) up to and including Level 3, or LSC funded e2e or a Programme led Apprenticeship

- They must be:
 - a person who is 'settled' in the UK, and been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least the three years prior to the start of his learning programme; or
 - a national of any European Union (EU) country or the spouse or civil partner or child of an EU national, and been ordinarily resident in the European Economic Area (EEA) for at least the three years prior to the start of his learning programme; or
 - an EEA migrant worker or the spouse or civil partner or child of an EEA migrant worker, who is ordinarily resident in the UK at the start of the learning programme and has been ordinarily resident in the EEA throughout the three year period prior to that; or
 - recognised as a refugee by the UK Government, or the spouse or civil partner or child of a refugee, have been granted Humanitarian Protection, or have EU Temporary Protection.

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

Application

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

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

EMA Contract

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

14-19 area prospectuses

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

Diplomas

The Diploma is part of a national programme to widen the choice of courses for young people to motivate them and encourage them to continue learning for longer. It will help them to gain the qualifications they need for success – at work, at college or at university.

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

- IT
- Construction and the Built Environment
- Engineering
- Society, Health and Development
- Creative and Media

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

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

**ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE LSC BY COI NEWS & PR NORTH WEST.
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