

EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE WORKS

Report highlights the success of pay to learn scheme

Date of issue 2 May, 2008

Press release number 513

Recent evidence shows Education Maintenance Allowances (EMA), which were taken up by more than 48,500 young people in the South West in 2006/2007, have succeeded in increasing the number staying on in learning at 16 and learners achieving qualifications at 19.

In fact, figures from 2005/06 saw the highest proportion of 16-year-olds in learning since 1994, with 89.1 per centⁱ participating in some form of learning. This equates to 1.5 million young people in further education which is the highest figure ever recordedⁱⁱ.

Whilst it is not possible to say that all this increase is attributable to EMA, this has been one of the most important initiatives aimed at increasing participation during this time.

EMA was piloted in 1999 and launched across England in 2004. Two independent reports commissioned by the LSC, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) and RCU, suggest that EMA has had important impacts on both participation post-16 and attainment at 19.

The research by RCU found that in its first year of national rollout, EMA encouraged an additional 18,500 young people to participate in further education who would not have done so without the financial support and incentive.

The analysis by IFS suggests that young people are going on to achieve the qualifications required to succeed in life. The reports show that for those learners who received EMA the percentage achieving Level 2 qualifications increased by around 6 percentage points, with specific improvement highlighted among ethnic minority groupsⁱⁱⁱ.

Additionally, young people in disadvantaged areas are more likely to stay on and achieve more as a result of EMA^{iv}. EMA was introduced to combat the financial barriers to learning – proving that resources are being targeted where they are most needed.

Jim Knight, Minister of State for Schools and Learners, said: “EMA is enabling young people across England to continue learning after their GCSEs. It is hugely encouraging to see the positive impact EMA has already had, providing more young people with the chance to stay on in education and training so that they have more opportunity of getting the job they want in future.”

Malcolm Gillespie, LSC Regional Director for the South West, said: “This research proves that EMA is working – young people who would otherwise have been unable to remain in learning are staying on, and as a result, attainment is rising across the board. EMA is making a real difference to the lives of some of the most disadvantaged young people and is helping to create a level playing field for the skilled employees of tomorrow.

“Staying on in learning at 16 makes an overwhelming difference to the futures of young people. Those who leave learning at 16 or earlier and without the minimum set of qualifications (at least five A*-C GCSEs or the vocational equivalent) will be

more likely to face a life of unemployment and social exclusion. EMA is making a significant contribution towards combating this.”

ENDS

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) and RCU. IFS research is based on EMA pilots run between 1999 and 2004 and the analysis is based on cohorts who first received EMA in 2002/03 and 2003/04. RCU research is focussed on the perceptions of a sample of 2,000 Learners receiving EMA, the perceptions of 375 Providers administering EMA, and the results of Data Analysis of existing MI datasets.

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 2007/08 providing:
 - They will already be 16, 17, 18 or 19 on the 1st September 2007;
 - From households where the combined family income is less than £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, Channel Islands or Isle of Mann for at least the three years prior to the start of his learning programme; or
 - a national of any European Union (EU) country (including Gibraltar), 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, Swiss National or Turkish Migrant Worker, or the spouse, civil partner or child of any of the above, who has Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK, and 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 2006/2007 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 on-line resource which provide information for young people on all learning courses and programmes available in each local area. They can be viewed via the national portal at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/prospectus. From 2008, learners will be able to access information on the new Diplomas being delivered in their area, through the on-line prospectuses.

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: 0800 121 8989 (some mobile operators may charge for calls made to this number) or visit www.direct.gov.uk/ema.

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

All media enquires please contact:

Kelly Davis or Richard Cook at Bray Leino PR, T: 0117 973 1173 kdavis@brayleino.co.uk

Beth Robins at Hill & Knowlton, T: 020 7413 3000 E: beth.robins@hillandknowlton.com
LSC Press Office, T: 024 7682 3515

ⁱ 'SFR 21/06: Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18-year-olds in England: 2004 and 2005', June 2006.

ⁱⁱ SFR 21/06. The number of 16-18 year olds in learning increased by 75.2 per cent in 2004 to 76.2 per cent in 2005 – which equates to 1.5 million young people in further education at the end of 2005 which is the highest figure ever recorded.

ⁱⁱⁱ Education Maintenance Allowance: Evaluation with Administrative Data, Institute of Fiscal Studies, November 2007. Ethnic minority groups; the base level for L3 attainment for all learners of Black ethnic minority included in the cohorts increased by 6.2 percentage points for females and 2.6 percentage points for males at age 19; the base level for L3 attainment for all learners of Asian ethnic minority included in the cohorts increased by 4.3 percentage points for females and 3.1 percentage points for males at age 19. The report states to estimate the impact for EMA learners these figures be multiplied by a factor of 3. The report suggests that EMA increased attainment at Level 2 and 3 by around 2 percentage points for male learners and 2.5 percentage points for female learners. When looking at the impact on actual recipients, the report estimates this equates to an impact on attainment (at Levels 2 and 3) of 7percentage points for female and 5 percentage points for male EMA recipients.

^{iv} Education Maintenance Allowance: Evaluation with Administrative Data, Institute of Fiscal Studies, November 2007. Disadvantaged groups; The base level for level 3 attainment for all females in the top quintile of deprivation included in the cohorts increased by 2.4 percentage points; The base level for level 3 attainment for all males in the top quintile of deprivation included in the cohorts increased by 0.9 percentage points.

RCU: Evaluation of the EMA National Roll out, November 2007. Disadvantaged groups: the analysis of learner data seems to provide evidence that EMA has had a positive impact on the retention, achievement and success of certain groups of learners. Those benefiting most appear to be from groups that are traditionally associated with lower levels of achievement such as: male learners; learners from minority ethnic groups; those with backgrounds of high deprivation and learners on lower level and vocational courses.