

Education Maintenance Allowance in the South West



Leading learning and skills

September 2008

Information Service

Purpose: This document forms the EMA section of the South West Strategic Analysis 2008. The Strategic Analysis is the annual 'stock-take' analysis and considers labour market intelligence, performance information and Government policy to develop a full strategic picture of current education and training marketplace. The analysis is supported by national skills research (including Skills in England Report 2007, National Employer Skills Survey and Working Futures). The stock-take provides the intelligence to confirm our strategies and priorities.

Theme: EMA

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Background

Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) were introduced to support learners from low income households (under £30,810 p.a) to continue in learning. They provide a weekly allowance of up to £30, payable to young people in the 16-19 age group who have left, or are about to leave, compulsory education and are enrolled on a valid programme of Further Education, LSC-funded Entry to Employment or a Programme Led Apprenticeship. The learning has to involve at least 12 hours guided learning per week and lead to a qualification up to Level 3.

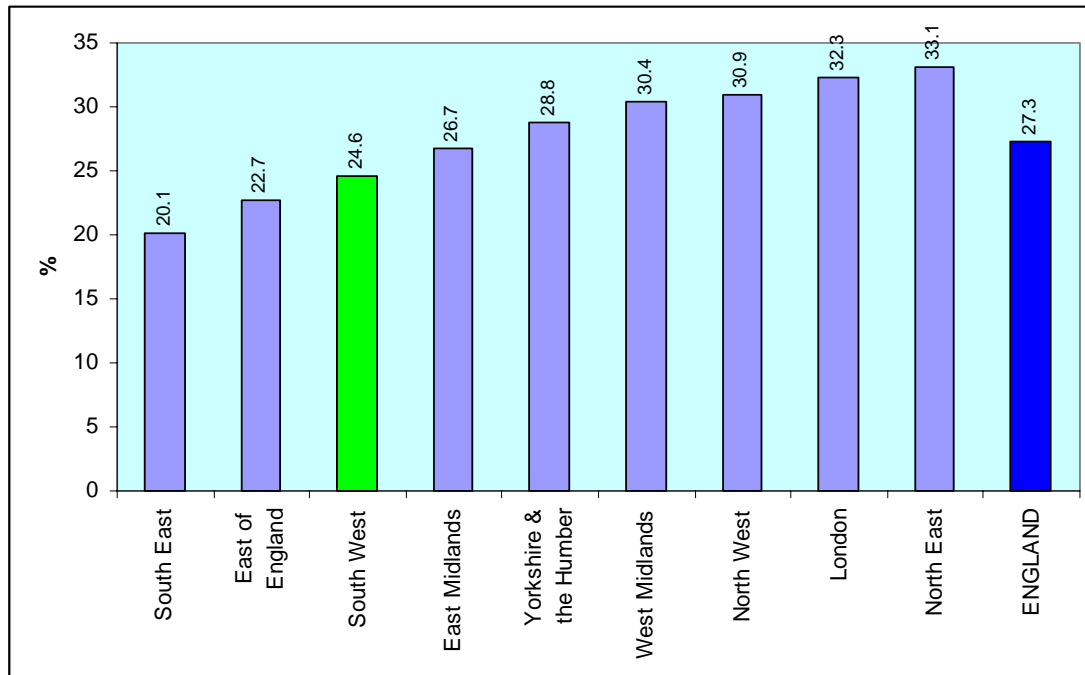
"EMA take up" is defined as the number of young people who have received one or more EMA payments during a year. The data is derived from the residence of the young person as provided on their EMA application form (as opposed to where the young person attends learning) and is directly sourced from the EMA Payment System (EMASYS).

In the first year of national roll out (2004/05) EMAs were available to all eligible 16 year olds across England and to eligible 17 and 18 year olds in former pilot areas. In 2005/06 EMA roll out continued and EMA became available to all eligible 16 and 17 year olds nationally. In 2006/07 access was broadened again and all young people aged 16 to 18 across England who fell within the low income household threshold became eligible for EMA payments.

Key statistics

- > **49,875** young people in the South West took up Educational Maintenance Allowances in 2007/08 (an incomplete year from August 28th 07 to 30th June 08). This represents a take-up rate of **24.6%**.
- > This take-up rate is somewhat below the national average of 27.3% and well below the rate in some of the other regions where take-up has reached 1 in 3 of the population.

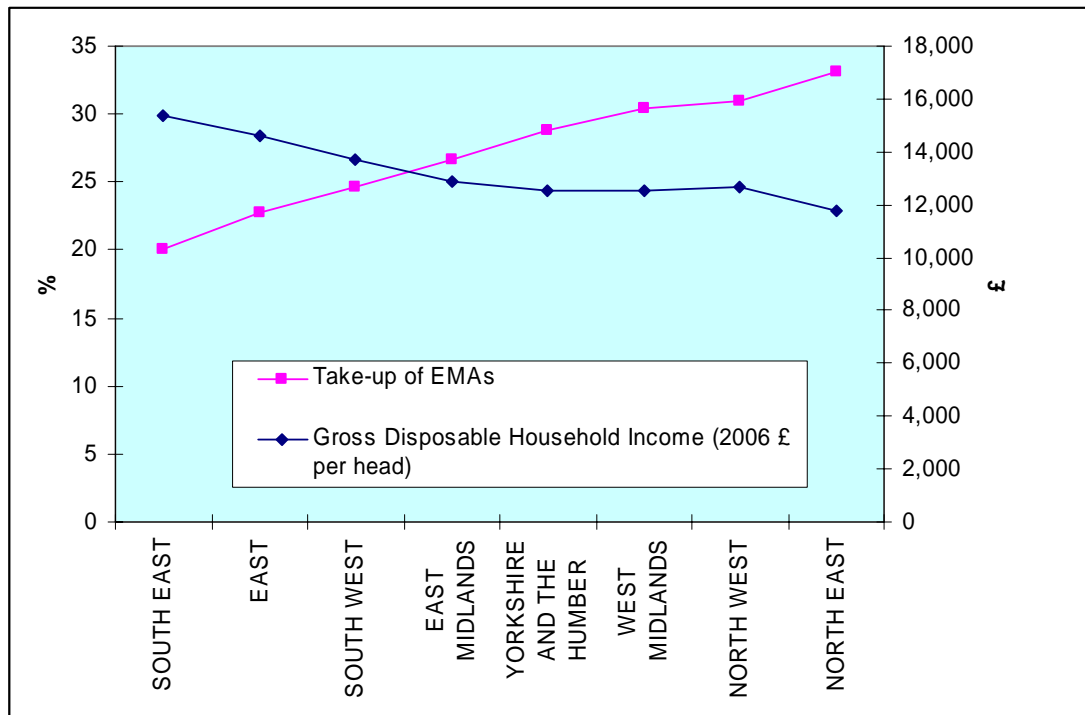
Figure 1: Take up of EMAs relative to the 16-18 population by region (2007/08)



Source: LSC EMASYS

- > Of course, regions vary in the size of the population which falls within the low household income threshold and a take-up rate expressed as per head of 16-18 year old population does not take eligibility into account. No data is available to show take-up relative to the eligible population but as a proxy, a crude comparison of take-up with Gross Disposable Household Income per head shows the relationship. As may be expected, take-up is greatest in those areas with lowest household incomes and least in those areas with higher incomes. The exception to the pattern (and not shown here) is London where average household income is skewed by high earnings in the City/small resident population:

Figure 2: Take up of EMAs by region compared with Gross Disposable Household Income



Source: LSC EMASYS and LSC Performance Review Information, June 2008

- > More detailed analysis by age shows that peak take-up is at the age of 16 and declines rapidly after the age of 17. In the South West take-up is below average in each single age group, no doubt again reflecting its smaller than average eligible population.

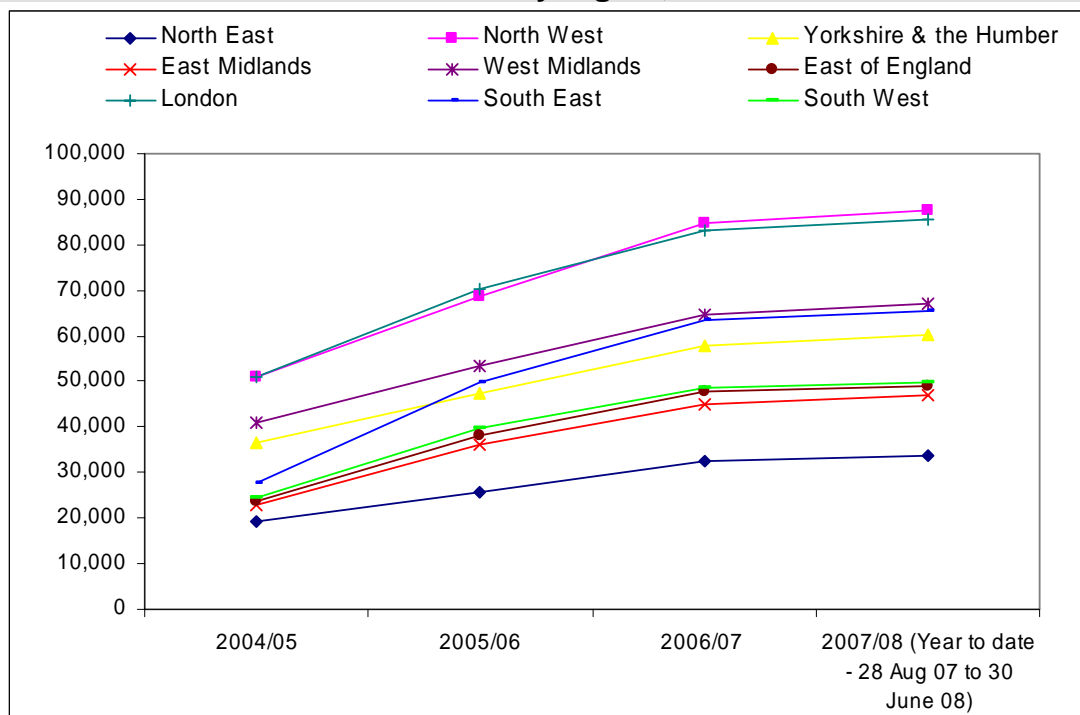
Figure 3: Take up of EMAs by age (2007/08), England and the South West compared

	Age 16	Age 17	Age 18
South West	37	28	9
England	39	31	11

Source: LSC EMASYS

- > Because an expanding cohort has been eligible for the EMA award, for example, 16 year olds from low income households only in 2004/05 to 16 to 18 year olds from low income households currently, comparisons through time do not measure take-up amongst the same base population. With this caveat, it can be seen that all regions have followed a similar pattern and the South West has remained in sixth position relative to other regions since EMAs were introduced in 2004.
- > Only two regions – the North East and South East - have improved their relative positions with the expansion of the eligible population.

Figure 4: Numbers of EMAs awarded by region; 2004/05 to 2007/08



Source: ONS EMASYS

- > Since 2006/07 EMAs have been available to all 16-18 year olds (who fit the eligibility criteria) and a comparison with figures for this more recent period shows a steady rise in the number of awards across the country, a rise which will undoubtedly be higher when figures for the full 2007/08 year are available.
- > However, as Figure 3 shows, the increase recorded in the South West is below average and represents the lowest percentage rise of all regions:

Figure 5: Change in numbers of EMAs awarded by region; 2004/05 to 2007/08

	2006/07	2007/08 (Year to date - 28 Aug 07 to 30 June 08)	Absolute increase	% change
North East	32,528	33,723	1,195	3.7
North West	84,784	87,381	2,597	3.1
Yorkshire & the Humber	57,676	60,080	2,404	4.2
East Midlands	44,891	46,845	1,954	4.4
West Midlands	64,611	67,052	2,441	3.8
East of England	47,598	49,122	1,524	3.2
London	83,262	85,621	2,359	2.8
South East	63,403	65,532	2,129	3.4
South West	48,566	49,875	1,309	2.7
England	527,319	545,231	17,912	3.4

Source: LSC EMASYS

The local picture

- > As may be expected, take-up per head of population within the South West varies significantly. Torbay has the highest take-up of any County/Unitary Authority with an estimated 35.1% young people accessing EMAs. This is well above the national average and almost twice the take-up in South Gloucestershire and Wiltshire where 19.2% and 19.6% of 16-18 year olds were awarded EMAs respectively.

Figure 6: Take up of EMAs relative to the 16-18 population by UA/County (2007/08)

	% Take up relative to population	Ranking within South West	% of regional total
Bath & NE Somerset	20.3	12	2.8
Bournemouth	26.3	6	2.9
Bristol	27.1	5	7.9
Cornwall & IOS	34.1	2	13.9
Devon	27.1	4	15.3
Dorset	21.1	11	7.2
Gloucestershire	21.6	10	10.4
North Somerset	22.5	8	3.4
Plymouth	29.6	3	6.1
Poole	20.2	13	2.3
Somerset	22.2	9	10.0
South Gloucestershire	19.2	15	3.8
Swindon	23.1	7	3.3
Torbay	35.2	1	3.6
Wiltshire	19.6	14	7.1
South West	24.6	-	100
England	27.3	-	

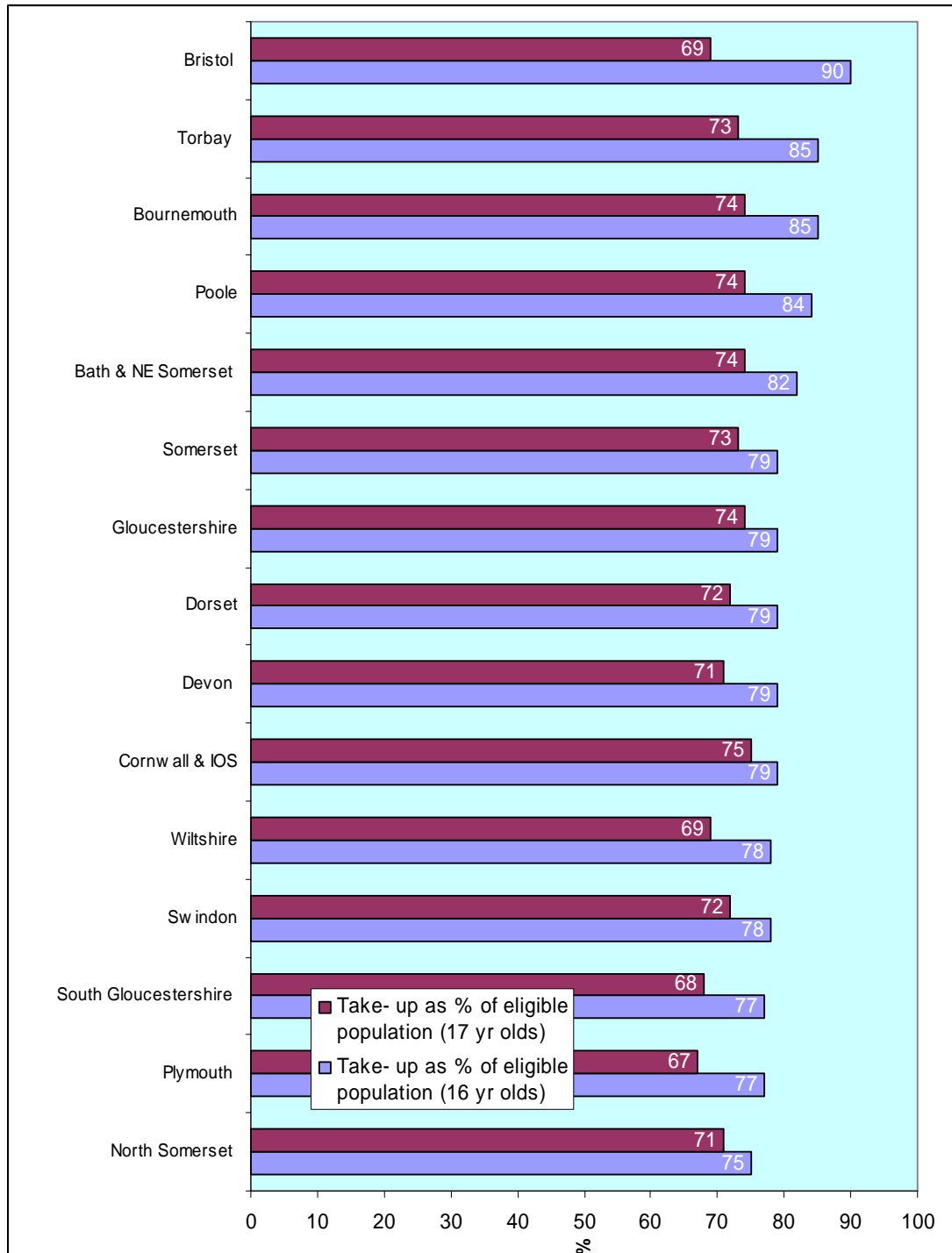
Source: ONS EMASYS

 Take up above the national average

- > Figures for Gross Disposable Household Income per head are not available at UA/County level but broad data at European sub-regional level (NUTS2) puts these take-up rates in context. Low take-up in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire is likely to reflect the smaller eligible population in those counties, since Gross Disposable Household Income per head is highest in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and North Somerset (£14,212) and lowest in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (£12,161) and Devon (£12,894).
- > Another perspective, although somewhat dated (2005/06 take-up to April 2006) shows take up against estimated eligibility from the Family Resources Survey. This shows more clearly that counties/unitary authority areas with apparently low take-up per head of population such as Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Poole are far closer to the average when the eligible population

is taken into account. On this measure, Bristol, Torbay and Bournemouth have the greatest take-up amongst 16 year olds and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly the highest take up amongst 17 year olds:

Figure 7: Take up of EMAs relative to the estimated 16-18 eligible population by UA/County (Note: data relates to 2005/06)



Source: Parliamentary written answer June 2006

- > This analysis is not available for more recent data and the maps below indicate the take-up by County/Unitary Authority for each age group per head of the 16-18 year old population. Key points to note are that :
 - For 16 year olds, the take-up rate is equal to almost half the population in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (49%), Torbay (49%) and Plymouth (47%). This is well above the national average of 39% and contrasts strongly with take-up in the east of the region, especially South Gloucestershire (28%) and Wiltshire (29%) (where it has been noted that there are fewer eligible residents).
 - Amongst 17 year olds, the pattern of take-up is again dominated by Torbay and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly.
 - There is less difference between take-up amongst 18 year olds and Bristol (11%) joins Torbay and Cornwall as having above average take up.

Figure 8: EMA take up amongst 16 year old population

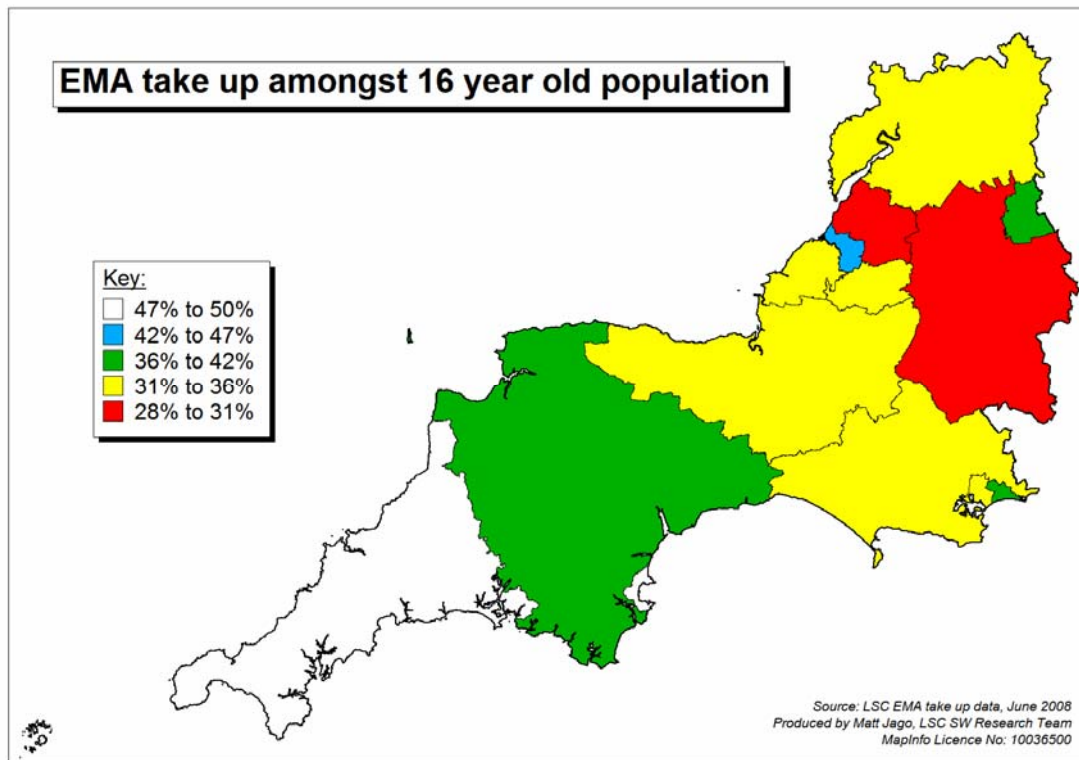


Figure 9: EMA take up amongst 17 year old population

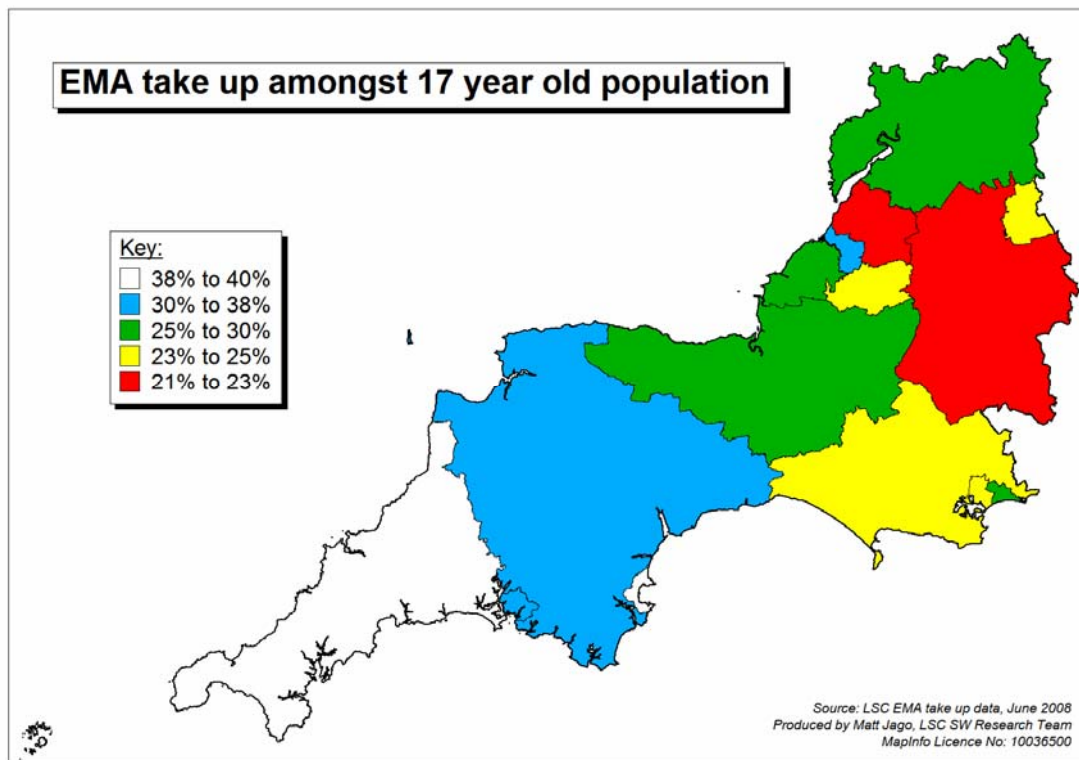
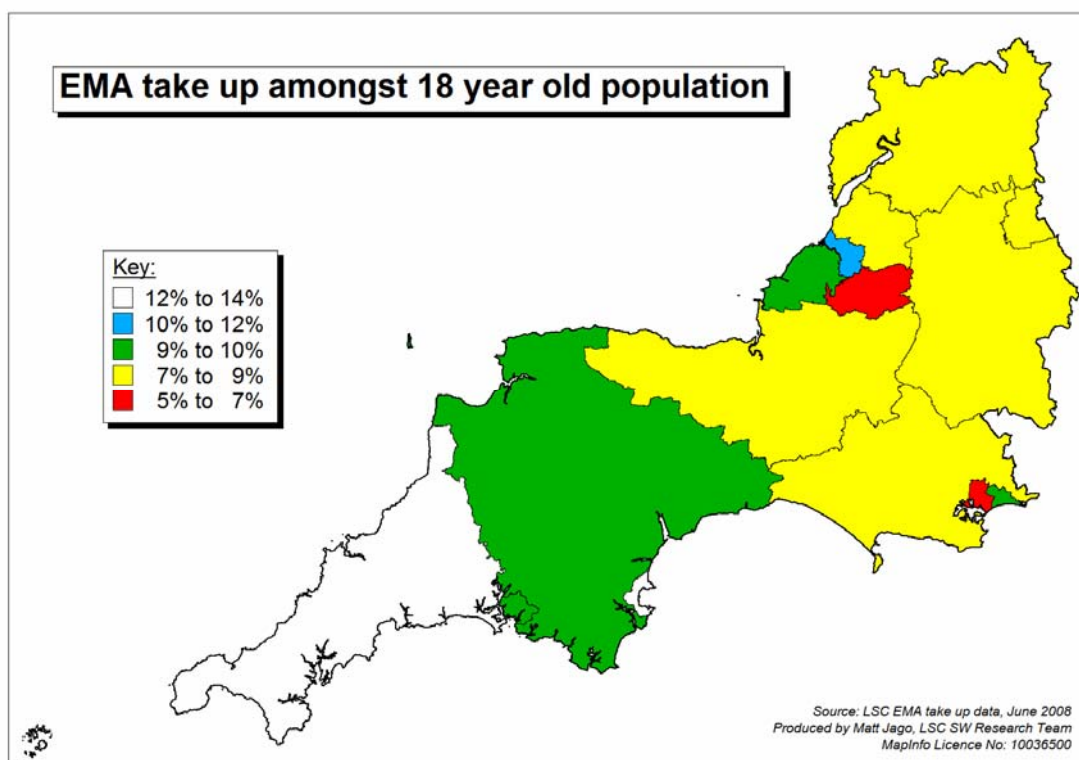


Figure 10: EMA take up amongst 18 year old population



- > Reflecting changes to the eligibility criteria, the numbers of awards made increased significantly to 2006/07 since when progress has levelled off across the region.

- > More detailed analysis of the trend since 2006/07 (when eligibility has remained the same) shows very patchy progress across the region. While some Unitary Authorities/Counties have increased the number of EMAs awarded at more than the national average rate of increase, others have actually awarded fewer EMAs in 2007/08 than in 2006/07 (although, of course, figures for 2007/08 are as yet incomplete).
- > In percentage terms, the greatest increases have been recorded by Torbay, and the City of Bristol. In contrast, latest figures for 2007/08 show that Cornwall, Poole and Bournemouth have awarded fewer EMAs than in 2006/07.

Figure 11: Change in numbers of EMAs awarded by UA/County; 2005/06 to 2007/08

	2006/07	2007/08 (Year to date - 28 Aug 07 to 30 June 08)	Absolute change	% increase
Bath and North East Somerset	1,362	1,409	47	3.5
City of Bristol	3,687	3,955	268	7.3
North Somerset	1,614	1,677	63	3.9
South Gloucestershire	1,817	1,898	81	4.5
Devon	7,581	7,616	35	0.5
Plymouth	2,956	3,030	74	2.5
Torbay	1,649	1,803	154	9.3
Cornwall	6,994	6,915	-79	-1.1
Dorset	3,466	3,572	106	3.1
Poole	1,155	1,142	-13	-1.1
Bournemouth	1,476	1,465	-11	-0.7
Gloucestershire	4,974	5,181	207	4.2
Somerset	4,775	4,992	217	4.5
Wiltshire	3,464	3,552	88	2.5
Swindon	1,596	1,668	72	4.5
South West	48,566	49,875	1,309	2.7
England	527,319	545,231	17,912	3.4

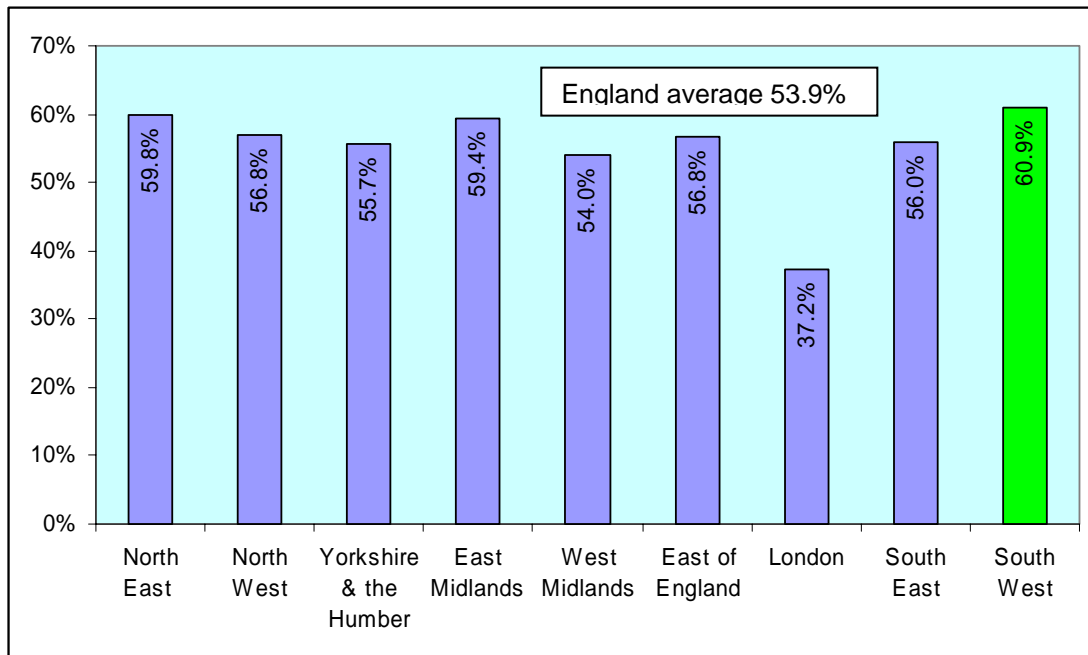
Source: LSC EMASYS

 Increase above the national average

Early take-up

- > Since placing learners on EMA early in the academic year encourages them to demonstrate the positive behaviours associated with receipt of EMA, one of the ways of improving take-up of EMAs is to promote their early take-up. Data showing the percentage of current take-up by the end of September can therefore be used to help inform future local activity.
- > In this respect, the South West shows the best performance relative to other regions and well above the English average of 53.9%:

Figure 12: Percentage of EMAs taken up by end September 2007 by region



Source: ONS EMASYS

- > Within the region, performance is broadly similar to the regional average with almost all UAs/Countries within +/- three percentage points of the average, the exceptions being:

More than 3% above regional average:

Plymouth	64.2
Gloucestershire	64.0

More than 3% below regional average:

Bristol	49.8
Swindon	53.4
Torbay	56.8
Bournemouth	57.5
Poole	57.8

Implications

- > SW occupies a below average position relative to other regions but this is likely to reflect smaller eligible population. But it has the lowest rates of increase in awards meaning that it will fall further behind unless more/ better action is taken to increase take up – implications for marketing/ improved links with Connexions/college links.
- > Essential to have better info on eligible population
- > Could do with better info to understand who is/isn't taking them up to improve targeting
- > Early take up figures encouraging and a way of encouraging improved performance over long-term.

Annex

Annex A1: Change in numbers of EMAs awarded by LLSC/Local Authority; 2004/05 to 2007/08

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08 (Year to date - 28 Aug 07 to 30 June 08)	% of total awarded in 2007/08
West of England	3,628	6,577	8,480	8,939	17.9
Bath and North East Somerset	561	1,060	1,362	1,409	2.8
City of Bristol	1,484	2,748	3,687	3,955	7.9
North Somerset	753	1,319	1,614	1,677	3.4
South Gloucestershire	830	1,450	1,817	1,898	3.8
Devon & Cornwall	11,555	16,226	19,180	19,364	38.8
Devon	3,437	6,081	7,581	7,616	15.3
Plymouth	1,425	2,352	2,956	3,030	6.1
Torbay	765	1,377	1,649	1,803	3.6
Cornwall	5,928	6,416	6,994	6,915	13.9
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole	2,642	4,848	6,097	6,179	12.4
Dorset	1,531	2,754	3,466	3,572	7.2
Poole	521	967	1,155	1,142	2.3
Bournemouth	590	1,127	1,476	1,465	2.9
Gloucestershire	2,125	3,868	4,974	5,181	10.4
Gloucestershire	2,125	3,868	4,974	5,181	10.4
Somerset	2,222	3,972	4,775	4,992	10.0
Somerset	2,222	3,972	4,775	4,992	10.0
Wiltshire and Swindon	2,330	4,096	5,060	5,220	10.5
Wiltshire	1,577	2,760	3,464	3,552	7.1
Swindon	753	1,336	1,596	1,668	3.3
South West	24,502	39,587	48,566	49,875	100.0

Source: LSC EMASYS

A2: Percentage of EMAs taken up by end September 2007 by UA/county

Region	South West	
LSC	West of England	56.8%
LA	Bath and North East Somerset	61.3%
LA	City of Bristol	49.8%
LA	North Somerset	63.2%
LA	South Gloucestershire	61.6%
LSC	Devon and Cornwall	62.4%
LA	Devon	62.2%
LA	Plymouth	64.2%
LA	Torbay	56.8%
LA	Cornwall	63.2%
LSC	Bournemouth Dorest and Poole	60.7%
LA	Dorset	62.9%
LA	Poole	57.8%
LA	Bournemouth	57.5%
LSC	Gloucestershire	64.0%
LA	Gloucestershire	64.0%
LSC	Somerset	61.0%
LA	Somerset	61.0%
LSC	Wiltshire and Swindon	59.9%
LA	Wiltshire	63.0%
LA	Swindon	53.4%

Source: LSC EMASYS

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