
Report To:	Education & Lifelong Learning Committee	Date 8 September 2009
Report By:	Acting Director of Education	Report No: EDUC/82/09/CS
Contact Officer:	Colin Struthers	Contact No: 712850/714853
Subject:	Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)	

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise committee of the changes made by the Scottish Government to the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) scheme.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) provide financial support for 16 to 19 year-olds from low-income households who are attending non-advanced full-time education at school, college or are home educated. The awards are targeted at young people from low-income households, and aim to increase participation and retention in post-compulsory education for this group.
- 2.2 Following a major consultation exercise undertaken by the Scottish Government, the programme has undergone revisions for academic year 2009 – 2010 meaning that EMA will be targeted at those young people from the lowest-income families and extended to young people on Activity Agreements.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

Albert Henderson
Acting Director of Education

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) provide financial support for 16 to 19 year-olds from low-income households who are attending non-advanced full-time education at school, college or are home educated. The awards are targeted at young people from low-income households, and aim to increase participation and retention in post-compulsory education for this group
- 4.2 Following a review and consultation on the EMA, Scottish Ministers decided to refocus EMA to target support at those young people who it determined needed it most. This refocus extends eligibility to those young people on Activity Agreements.
- 4.3 An Activity Agreement is an agreement between a young person and an advisor that the young person will take part in a programme of learning and activity which helps them to become ready for formal learning or employment. The young person may receive an allowance in return for complying with this agreement which will be EMA if eligible. Inverclyde is 1 of 10 pilot areas involved in Activity Agreements. The initial target group for Activity Agreements are young people entering a negative destination when they leave school.
- 4.4 Previously there were three household income bandings which determined receipt of EMA and allowed payment of 3 levels of EMA of £30, £20 and £10 per week. This will continue to be applied this academic session to young people who received EMA last session. The household income of the young person will determine their eligibility for an EMA. Where the income is £33,156 per annum or less the young person will be eligible, and will be awarded a weekly allowance of £10, £20 or £30 depending on their situation.
- 4.5 For all new applicants where the household income is £20,351 or less the young person will be eligible to receive EMA and will be awarded a weekly allowance of £30. Young people from households with more than one dependent child in and where the household income is £22,403 or less will also be eligible for a weekly payment of £30 per week.
- 4.6 During school session 2008/09 there were a total of 590 EMAs awarded in Inverclyde:

74 pupils received £10 per week
57 pupils received £20 per week
459 pupils received £30 per week.
- 4.7 The allowance paid to young people participating in Activity Agreements will be based on the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) programme as it operates in schools and colleges. Existing guidance on EMA will dictate young people's eligibility for allowances in terms of date of birth, residency, and impact on receipt of DWP benefits.
- 4.6 Weekly payments will be made to a young person if their advisor (or learning provider, as appropriate) is satisfied that the young person's attendance, participation and progression accord with the Agreement. The existing flexibility in EMA for vulnerable students will be applied to Activity Agreement participants, particularly in terms of the range of provision that they might access and the need for flexible timetabling.

5.0 PROPOSAL

- 5.1 That committee note the contents of this report

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

None

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Personnel

None

6.4 Equalities

None

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Scottish Government undertook the consultation regarding this change.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 Activity Agreements – Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Payments – guidance from the Scottish Government

EMA Guidance Document 2009 – 2010

EMA Business Model 2009 - 2010