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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Education &amp; Lifelong Learning Committee</b>	<b>Date</b> 07 September 2010
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director Education and Communities</b>	<b>Report No:</b> EDUC/51/10/EH
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Elsa Hamilton</b>	<b>Contact No:</b> 01475 712850
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Academic Year 2010/11</b>	

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## 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 underwent revisions for academic year 2009-10 with the result that EMA is targeted at those young people from the lowest-income families and extended to young people on Activity Agreements.
- 2.3 Due to the higher than usual numbers of young people nationally staying on at school and going to college, the EMA budget for Scotland was significantly overspent in 2009/10.
- 2.4 The Scottish Government have limited scope to meet this overspend from other resources and have reviewed the programme.
- 2.5 Two changes have been made to the EMA scheme for academic year 2010/11. The changes are that bonus payments will no longer be part of the programme, and, that any awards are only guaranteed until December 2010 when a further review will be carried out by the Scottish Government.
- 2.6 These changes do not affect the Activity Agreement pilot which Inverclyde Council is part of.

## 3.0 RECOMMENDATION

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

**Albert Henderson**  
**Corporate Director : Education and Communities**

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The history of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) scheme is that its introduction replaced Higher School Bursaries in schools and Category A Bursaries in colleges. Higher School Bursaries were paid by Local Authorities and were not centrally funded. Likewise college bursaries were funded from college budgets.
- 4.2 EMA's 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
- 4.3 Following a review and consultation on the EMA in 2009, Scottish Ministers decided to refocus EMA to target support at those young people who it determined needed it most.
- 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, however, this changed in 2009 – 10 to a weekly allowance rate of £30.
- 4.5 The income threshold last year will continue to be the criterion this year. 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 dependant child and where the household income is £22,403 or less will also be eligible for a weekly payment of £30 per week.
- 4.6 Additionally, as part of the 2009 review, Inverclyde was selected to be 1 of 10 pilot areas to introduce Activity Agreements. This is an agreement which if the young person complies with, enables an allowance to be paid in the form of an EMA. The initial target group for Activity Agreements are young people entering a negative destination when they leave school.
- 4.7 The Activity Agreement project is not affected by the changes to the scheme.
- 4.8 In school session 2008/09, a total of 590 EMA's were awarded in Inverclyde:  
  
74 pupils received £10 per week  
57 pupils received £20 per week  
459 pupils received £30 per week
- 4.9 In school session 2009/10 a total of 542 EMA's were awarded at the rate of £30 per week.
- 4.10 Working in a time of wider budget pressures, the Scottish Government announced at the end of June 2010 that they require to reduce expenditure by removing bonuses and by only guaranteeing awards to December 2010 to allow them to 'take stock' to avoid an overspend on their budget.
- 4.11 The Scottish Government advise that there is not an obligation on them to offer allowances beyond December 2010.

## **5.0 PROPOSAL**

- 5.1 That committee note the contents of this report.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Financial**

Since all payments awarded are funded by the Scottish Government there is no financial implication to Inverclyde Council. However, the Scottish Government advise that the legislation which allowed local authorities to pay Higher School Bursaries remains in force.

### **6.2 Legal**

None.

### **6.3 Personnel**

None.

### **6.4 Equalities**

The removal of the bonus from the programme and the mid year review will cause uncertainty for young people, parents and staff.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 The Scottish Government are keen to ensure two-way communication and will be asking for comments on the scheme once 2010 – 11 numbers are known.

## **8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 EMA Guidance Document 2010 – 2011 is available  
EMA Business Model 2010 – 2011 is available