
Report To:	Education & Lifelong Learning Committee	Date	06 September 2011
Report By:	Corporate Director Education and Communities	Report No:	EDUC/29/11/AE
Contact Officer:	Angela Edwards	Contact No:	01475 712850
Subject:	Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Academic Year 2011/12		

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 means-tested financial support for 16 to 19 year-olds to encourage young people from low income households to remain in non-advanced post-compulsory education.
- 2.2 Following a consultation exercise undertaken by the Scottish Government on the success of the Activity Agreement pilot, of which Inverclyde Council was part, the decision has been taken that Activity Agreements will be rolled out nationally from 2011/12 with eligible participants able to apply for EMA.
- 2.3 With EMA in England closed to new applicants from 01 January 2011, the reciprocal arrangement which has been in place for Scottish students studying in England and claiming EMA there, will cease.
- 2.4 Committee will be informed of any future revisions to the process.

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.
- 4.2 EMA's aim to provide a financial incentive to young people from low income households and vulnerable young people to remain in full-time education beyond the statutory school leaving age. They provide financial support for 16 to 19 year-olds who meet the criteria for eligibility who are attending non-advanced full-time education at school, college or are home educated.
- 4.3 Young people from low income families face financial barriers in continuing learning. EMA is designed to remove those barriers. Students are normally entitled to EMA for a maximum period of 3 years, however, vulnerable students who are entitled to more flexible arrangements can receive 4 years' EMA support.
- 4.4 Eligibility is based on the students' age and household income.
- 4.5 The EMA is means tested. 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 During the year, re-assessment can take place as a result of detrimental changes in financial circumstances i.e. where income has fallen from above the £20,351 or £22,403 to within the EMA thresholds.
- 4.7 In school session 2010/11, 454 students were awarded EMA in Inverclyde.
- 4.8 In 2009 the Scottish Government introduced Activity Agreements to provide more training opportunities for young people who have disengaged from school and other public services. Activity Agreements are to focus on the provision of the most appropriate, high quality community-based learning.
- 4.9 Inverclyde Council was one of 10 pilot areas chosen to introduce Activity Agreements, with the pilot running from September 2009 to March 2011. The system has now been rolled out nationally.
- 4.10 A local decision was made that all Activity Agreement referrals would come via Skills Development Scotland (SDS). Staff provide a valuable link to the young people as they engage in their Activity Agreement. A package of practical support measures was put in place to help break down some of the barriers which were preventing young people continuing with or progressing from Activity Agreements. This model has been developed to make it more sustainable and is being introduced this year.
- 4.11 With EMA in England closed to new applicants from 01 January 2011, the reciprocal arrangement which has been in place for Scottish students studying in England will cease. However, Scottish students who have already been in receipt of English EMA are still eligible for one final transitional year.
- 4.12 Under the revised Scottish regulations, students studying in England, Wales and Northern Ireland but domiciled in Scotland can now apply for EMA in Scotland.

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.

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

6.2 Legal

None.

6.3 Personnel

None.

6.4 Equalities

None.

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 EMA Guidance Document 2011 – 2012 is available
EMA Business Model 2011 – 2012 is available