

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 19 OCTOBER 2011

UPDATE ON EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCES

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this report is to advise members of the current position with respect to Education Maintenance Allowances and their uptake in Angus.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Education Committee note the contents of this report.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) were introduced in all Local Authorities from 1 April 2004. (Committee Report 9/04 refers). EMAs form a part of the Scottish Government agenda of encouraging access to, and participation of, young people from low-income families in further and higher education.

2.2 The aim of EMAs was to provide a financial incentive to young people from low-income households to remain in full-time education beyond the statutory school leaving age. Young people from low-income families face financial barriers in continuing learning. EMAs are designed to remove these barriers. There is a well-established and researched casual link between low income and low attainment. As a result many leave with few or no qualifications. This in turn means that they face greater difficulties entering the labour market.

3 BASIS OF ALLOWANCES

3.1 Eligibility for an EMA is dependent on age and household income. To satisfy the age criteria to receive an EMA from August 2010, students had to be born between 1st March 1991 and 30 September 1994. Students born between 1st October 1994 and 28th February 1995 became eligible to join the programme in January 2011.

3.2 In 2009 changes were made to the EMA scheme in response to the Scottish Government's '16+ Learning Choices - First Step Activity and Financial Support' consultation. The £10 and £20 payments were removed and the income threshold for the £30 payment was aligned with that of the 'away from home' element of further education bursaries (£20,351). An additional, higher, income threshold (£22,403) was also introduced for families with more than one dependent child. These changes were introduced for new entrants to the EMA scheme at the beginning of the academic year 2009-10.

3.3 In June 2010 the Scottish Government announced that as of the 2010-11 academic year EMA bonus payments would be withdrawn from all recipients (both new and existing).

3.4 The latest available national statistics are for the academic year 2009-10. The number of students receiving EMA payments in Scotland in 2009-10 was 37,230, this is a decrease of 5% since the previous academic year. Almost two-thirds (63%) of students supported attended school, with the remainder in college. Those school pupils receiving EMA accounted for 28% of all school pupils aged 16 to 19 years old in Scotland in 2009-10.

4. ANALYSIS OF EMAs IN ANGUS COUNCIL

- 4.1 An analysis of the EMA payments to Angus pupils on a school by school basis is detailed in Appendix 1.

5. ACTIVITY AGREEMENTS

- 5.1 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' (Activity Agreement Guidance, Scottish Government 2010).
- 5.2 A pilot was launched in May 2009 with a fixed end date of 31 March 2011. The pilot operated in the following ten areas: Fife; Glasgow; Highland; Inverclyde; North Ayrshire; North Lanarkshire; Renfrewshire; South Lanarkshire; Stirling; and West Dunbartonshire.
- 5.3 The key elements of Activity Agreements were identified in a consultation exercise on '16+ Learning Choices: First Step Activity and Financial Support' (Scottish Government, 2008) as:
- the availability of intensive one-to-one advice and guidance from a Trusted Professional;
 - a strong process for assessing the needs and interests of young people, building on information already collated about them;
 - a wide range of activity available from a range of providers, so that a tailored package of support can be created to meet the needs of young people; and
 - the availability of financial support through the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).
- 5.4 The pilot was considered to be successful and the roll out across Scotland was approved from 1 April 2011. The eligibility for an EMA for a young person undertaking an Activity Agreement is the same as a school based pupil with regard to age and household income. However with regard to attendance, the nature of the agreement and the agreed hours to be undertaken is more flexible in order to meet the needs of each individual young person. Also the EMA can be paid to a young person undertaking an Activity Agreement over 52 weeks as opposed to the 40 weeks paid to pupils attending school.

6. RISK

This report does not require any specific risk issues to be addressed.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report

8. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no Human Rights implications arising from this Report.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An [equalities impact assessment](#) is not required.

10. ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN AND SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2011-2014:

- our children and young people are confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens
- adults in Angus maximise their potential through learning opportunities
- we have improved the health and wellbeing of our people and inequalities are reduced.

11. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Finance and Head of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report

**NEIL LOGUE
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

ED/NL/SRD

UPDATE ON EDUCATIONAL MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCES

Information regarding EMA uptake for 2010/2011 in Angus is detailed in the following tables.

It should be noted that the latest national statistics on EMA payments is for academic year 2009/10 published in April 2011. This analysis can be accessed from the following link:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Lifelong-learning/DataEMA>

The following tables provide an analysis of Angus school pupils by school who have received an EMA.

Table 1: Total number of students entitled by date of birth.

School	2010/2011
Arbroath Academy	122
Arbroath High School	238
Brechin High School	135
Carnoustie High School	226
Forfar Academy	259
Monifieth High School	287
Montrose Academy	180
Webster's High School	212
Total	1659

Table 2: Angus Secondary Schools - by school and level of payment (at least 1 payment in 2010/2011)

School	£10	£20	£30	Total	% of Pupils Eligible by Age
Arbroath Academy	0	0	31	31	25%
Arbroath High School	0	0	34	34	14%
Brechin High School	0	0	31	31	22%
Carnoustie High School	1	0	43	44	19%
Forfar Academy	1	0	58	59	23%
Monifieth High School	0	1	32	33	11%
Montrose Academy	0	0	27	27	15%
Webster's High School	0	1	37	38	18%
Angus EMA Activity Agreement Base	0	0	2	2	N/A
Rossie Secure Accommodation Services	0	0	3	3	N/A
Total	2	2	298	302	

In Angus, 18.2% of pupils eligible by age received at least one EMA payment in 2010/11. Comparable data for all authorities is not yet available for 2010/11.

The EMA uptake in Angus is consistent with comparator authorities in 2009/10.

It should be note that the Department is proactive in encouraging uptake in the EMA scheme by:-

- raising awareness of the scheme to all pupils eligible by age
- information provided to pupils in S4 to encourage continuation in secondary education
- briefing of pupil care & support staff to encourage applications, particularly for pupils in low income families.