

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – Briefing Paper

1.	Meeting:	Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Panel - Briefing Paper
2.	Date:	21st January 2011
3.	Title:	Education Maintenance Allowance
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People’s Services

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) was introduced in 2004 to support and encourage learners from low income households (£30,810 max in financial year 2009-10) to continue in post-16 learning. It is a weekly allowance of up to £30, payable to young people in the 16-19 age group who participate in a valid post-16 education or training programme based upon their weekly attendance. In 2009/10 EMA was paid to 3930 Rotherham learners and totalled £108,550.

2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
1,199	2,137	2,831	3,040	3,364	3,930

The decision to end EMA was announced as part of the Government's spending review on the 20 October 2010. The Department for Education stated that:

Around 90 per cent of pupils receiving the EMA would still go to college or sixth form even if it didn't exist, according to research from both the IFS and NFER.

It is being replaced by an enhanced **Learner Support Fund (LSF)** that will be administered directly by colleges and training providers; and for schools by the Local Authority.

The EMA scheme closed to new applicants on 1 January 2011 with a deadline for receipt of applications of 31st December 2010. Applications received on or after 1 January 2011 will not be processed.

Young people who already in receipt of EMA, or who are assessed as eligible and have received a Notice of Entitlement, will continue to receive it until the end of this academic year (2010/11), if they meet the terms of their EMA Agreement.

In order to ensure support for students with the greatest need, the **LSF** has been traditionally used as a hardship fund, has been increased from September 2011. LSF funds can be used to help with:

- financial hardship and emergencies
- childcare costs (for Ofsted-registered childcare)

- accommodation costs, for those who have to study further than the maximum distance from home
- essential course-related equipment, materials and field trips
- travel costs (for over 18s)

DLSF is not available to learners who are:

- receiving full public funding for higher education
- on a learndirect course
- on a New Deal programme (except New Deal for Lone Parents)
- on an apprenticeship training scheme
- on a Work Based Learning course
- on an Adult & Community Learning course (ACL)
- Asylum Seekers aged over 19
- **Or** for transport costs

Possible Impact of the removal of EMA

Student impact – Since the introduction of EMA, Rotherham has witnessed significant increases in 16-18 year old participation rates (c1.5% year-on-year increases to an all time high of 86% in 2009/10). Although there is little evidence yet of impact on students nationally, it might well be difficult to maintain this level of growth (a previous change from training Allowance to means tested EMA created a drop in participation). In addition, anecdotal evidence locally is that Foundation Learning learners will be significantly affected. There is, therefore, a real risk that removal of EMA will negatively affect the progress of reducing the numbers of young people Not in Education Employment and Training.

Amount of DLSF – Amounts available will be around 10% of the EMA budget and are meant to be targeted at those students with the greatest need. However, guidance is not yet available as to how this will need to be implemented or how it fits with other policy and institutional autonomy.

LA Boundaries – **The LA for** schools, colleges and training providers set their own criteria for LSF and manage their own procedures so that the amounts available, and the way funds are allocated, may differ between institutions and across LA boundaries.

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