Learner Support Programme

Education Maintenance Allowance
Marketing and Communications Guidance

2009/10

June 2009

Of interest to stakeholders involved in delivering Education Maintenance Allowance
Further information
Further information on Education Maintenance Allowance is available from the following sources:

Learning Providers can contact the Learner Support Service for advice on administering the scheme on 0845 600 7979.

Learners should be directed to the learner support helpline on 0800 121 8989.

Alternatively the Learner Support Service can be contacted via email at ema@lsclearnersupport.co.uk.

Learner Support Directorate
Learning and Skills Council
(National Office)

The Straddle
Victoria Quays
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Sheffield S2 5SY
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lsc.gov.uk
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**Introduction**

This document contains guidance for Providers who are involved in delivering Learning and Skills Council-funded Entry to Employment (E2E), Programme-led Apprenticeships (PLAs) and further education (FE) provision to 16- to 19-year-old learners and who will therefore be involved in administering the **Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)** scheme. The guidance sets out what marketing support is available to Providers and identifies ways in which Providers should raise awareness of EMA. It should be read in conjunction with EMA training and accompanying support materials and the Education Maintenance Allowance Provider Guidance 2009/10.

The success of EMA depends heavily on the way the scheme is publicised to young people and their families as well as on how the scheme is managed and operated.

This document is of interest to post-16 Providers, LSC area partnership teams, Connexions staff and other institutions involved in 16–19 FE provision and Learning and Skills Council-funded E2E and PLA Providers.

*Ian Pursglove*

**Young People’s Learner Support Director**

*June 2009*
Raising awareness

The promotion of EMA is not the responsibility of one partner alone; it is dependent on a collaborative approach. The following is a brief overview of the various roles of each partner.

**National Learning and Skills Council**

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) will continue to promote EMA at a national level. This includes ongoing responsibility for:

- managing a national media and PR campaign to promote EMA, including key messages (see Annex 1);
- producing branding guidelines and national marketing materials;
- producing EMA marketing campaigns, for example, TV adverts, radio broadcasts, press adverts and so on; and
- raising awareness of EMA with national partners and organisations that support learners and parents.

The LSC will also continue to develop a range of materials to equip partners with the necessary information to support young people and their parents through the EMA application process (see page 5 for more information).

**LSC area partnership teams**

The area partnership teams are responsible for leading local partners in their delivery of EMA and helping to embed EMA in their activities. Please see the guidance document *Our Single Statement of Requirements* (December 2006) for more information on the role of area partnership teams.

**Local partnerships**

Each area has an EMA local partnership in place. Although membership will differ in each area, in general key partners include the LSC area partnership team; local authorities; the Connexions Service; schools and colleges; Citizens Advice; Jobcentre Plus; Learning Provider representation; and other relevant groups, for example, third sector organisations such as Gingerbread.

Local partnerships know their areas best and should plan and target awareness-raising activities that effectively serve their local communities. Local partners need to communicate with and market to groups of young people themselves, but they should also engage with people who may influence young people’s choices.

Each local partnership will need to consider which partner should target which group, for example, the Connexions personal advisers are well placed to target young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Groups include: young people; parents and other carers; and other influencers.

**Young people** include:

- Years 8, 9, 10 and 11 in all secondary schools – working with younger learners is particularly valuable in shaping choices;
- disengaged young people who are NEET; and
- vulnerable groups, for example, teenage parents, young carers, homeless young people.

**Parents and other carers** include: parents, foster parents, grandparents and adoptive parents of the young people listed above.

**Other influencers:** local partners will need to work with a range of local council service areas and third sector groups to reach some young people. The list is extensive. Examples include:

- local authority contacts: youth, community care, social services or children’s services (the contacts will vary from council to council);
- youth services;
- faith groups;
- third sector organisations that work with young people;
- the Youth Offending services and Offender Learning teams; and
- Citizens Advice.
Raising awareness of EMA and encouraging young people to stay in learning is a broad and complex task. Local partnerships will be best placed to determine the most appropriate local solutions. Some examples could be:

- Connexions personal advisers promoting EMA, alongside other available financial support, to all eligible young people at careers events and in one-to-one sessions (see Annex 1 for key messages);

- local partners establishing systems to ensure that EMA promotional materials are distributed to all Year 11 learners in their area; local partners should also ensure that young people know how to apply — that is, by calling the Learner Support helpline, by filling in an EMA application form, or via the EMA website — and may set up specific local mechanisms to support young people with their applications;

- local partnerships ensuring that EMA promotional material is distributed to key local partners who can reach parents, for example, advice centres, Citizens Advice, doctors’ surgeries and/or antenatal clinics;

- the provision of extra support to some groups of young people and their parents, for example, outreach information sessions — local partners are best placed to decide where young people and their parents or carers can be reached; and

- evaluating effective ways in which EMA is being administered, where local authorities have responsibility for auditing school sixth forms — this would be related to any assessment of attendance monitoring systems and of pastoral support.

Schools with pre-16 students

Schools play a vital role in communicating the availability of EMA to their pupils. Raising awareness of EMA among younger learners and their families is particularly valuable in influencing choices and in creating a culture in which remaining in learning is seen as a viable option. Some examples could be:

- actively promoting EMA through ongoing discussion with pupils and their parents in Years 8, 9, 10 and 11 in forums such as parents’ evenings or careers events (see Annex 1 for key messages);

- distributing marketing materials and application forms to pupils (see page 5 for more information);

- actively promoting EMA within careers education and guidance, and personal, social and health education (PSHE) — a DVD and Resource Pack are available to support this (see page 5 for more information);

- working with the Connexions personal advisers for the school to give balanced advice on EMA and other financial support, especially to students and their parents who are less likely to consider progressing to post-16 education;

- working with young people to develop financial management skills including setting up bank accounts;

- providing advice and assistance to pupils and their families during the EMA application process (see page 5 for more information); and

- directing pupils and their parents to the EMA website: direct.gov.uk/ema.

Schools with sixth forms, colleges and Learning Providers with post-16 students

Schools with sixth forms, colleges and Learning Providers are responsible for ensuring that learners who are undertaking post-16 courses at their establishments are aware of EMA and other financial support that is available to them. Some examples of how they might approach this could be:

- actively promoting EMA through discussions with young people and their families, for example, via open evenings (see Annex 1 for key messages);

- promoting EMA through the use of the EMA My Choice DVD and the Learning Provider Resource Pack;

- displaying leaflets and posters and encouraging young people to take them home to discuss with their families (see page 5 for more information);

- promoting EMA and other Learner Support funds while discussing choice of courses with potential learners;

- promoting ways to apply for EMA via the telephone, an application pack or the EMA website, and offering support to help young people or families through the application process (see page 5 for more information);

- informing young people about who else can give advice on financial support; and

- referring young people and their parents to the EMA website: direct.gov.uk/ema.
Resources to help you

There is a range of marketing materials to help promote EMA as well as a range of resources to support key partners as they help and advise young people and their families.

The EMA website (direct.gov.uk/ema) contains up-to-date information about EMA for young people and their families. Partners involved in delivering EMA can access the EMA website at ema.lsc.gov.uk, which is the main repository of all marketing, publicity and support materials.

Short descriptions of the available materials follow. Annex 2 details how these can be accessed.

EMA publicity materials

The following products are designed to help partners promote EMA.

EMA leaflet: ‘My EMA, My Choice’

This leaflet is aimed at young people and their parents and carers. It explains what EMA is all about, the eligibility criteria and how to claim, as well as providing sources of additional help and advice. This leaflet is also available in large print and Braille.

EMA posters

These A3 posters use simple messages to promote EMA. The ‘My Money’ version uses messages relating to how much EMA is worth and the ‘My Choice’ version uses messages relating to various course options.

GCSE envelope

This A5 GCSE envelope includes a leaflet that explains options and choices for young people after they get their GCSE results. Advice includes information about Apprenticeships, A-levels and Diplomas. It also gives a brief description of EMA. Teachers are asked to encourage young people to pre-address these envelopes, which will then be used in the summer holiday to send them their GCSE results.

EMA support materials

The following products are designed to help partners advise young people and their families on EMA and how to make a successful application.

EMA application pack (for young people)

The EMA application pack comprises an application form and Guidance Notes on how to complete it.

Application Form Resource Pack (for partners)

This document provides practical advice on the completion of an EMA application form and is designed to help partners support young people and their families through the application process. It includes information on which EMA application form should be completed, a walkthrough of the application form, an explanation of the four main types of evidence to prove income and common mistakes that can result in application forms being returned as incorrect.

Leaflet: ‘A Guide for Providers Working with Young People’

The purpose of this A5 leaflet is to help partners advise young people and their families on how EMA might support those who remain in or return to learning at the end of their compulsory schooling in England. It includes an explanation of EMA, the eligibility criteria, how and when young people should apply for EMA and information on how to avoid common mistakes when completing an EMA application form.

EMA DVD: My Choice

The My Choice DVD has been updated and contains information regarding post-16 options, young people’s aspirations and real-life stories and information about EMA.

The format uses the experiences of young people who have had choices to make and have accessed EMA. There are animation sequences to hold the interest of learners and to help learners understand the process of applying for EMA.

It is in modular format and can be used as the basis for discussion as well as giving valuable information.

Learning Provider Resource Pack

The purpose of this pack is to support careers and PHSE teachers to help young people with their post-16 options.

It includes a booklet with information under the headings ‘Your choice’, ‘Your finances’ and ‘Your future’, a copy of the My Choice DVD, activity suggestions and worksheets that can be photocopied and distributed to students.
Branding guidelines

The LSC campaign resource website (lsc.gov.uk/campaignresources) provides access to EMA logos, template advertisements and a range of photographic images for local use. The site requires you to register before using the facilities.
Annex 1:
Key EMA messages

Why stay in learning?
• The main reason young people leave education and training at 16 concerns money.
• Without a minimum of five good GCSEs (grades A* to C) or their equivalent, such as an NVQ Level 2, young people are 10 per cent more likely to be unemployed.
• By 2010, fewer jobs will be open to people without at least five good GCSEs or their equivalent.
• Staying in learning at 16 is a springboard to getting good training, better qualifications and a decent job.
• The more qualifications people have, the more choice and earning potential they have when looking for a job.

What is EMA?
• EMA is a weekly payment of £10, £20 or £30 per week for eligible learners who are 16, 17 or 18 and are about to leave, or have already left, compulsory education.
• EMA is income-assessed with weekly payments dependent upon household income.
• Young people starting an LSC-funded E2E course receive the maximum £30 weekly EMA payment regardless of household income.
• Young people can also get bonus payments if they meet the criteria set by their Learning Provider based on progress against achievement of learning goals, effort and behaviour.
• From 2008/09, EMA support is available at the same level until the end of the academic year in which the learner reaches the age of 19. This is known as the EMA Guarantee.
• EMA is not affected by any money the young person earns from a part-time job.
• EMA is not part of the benefits system and therefore does not affect other family benefits or any Jobcentre Plus benefits (apart from Jobseeker’s Allowance). It is paid in addition to other support and benefits provided by government, including Child Benefit, Income Support and tax credits.
• EMA is a ‘something for something’ scheme, not an entitlement, and payments must be earned. A contract is signed, setting out what is expected of the young person in terms of attendance, progression and completion of coursework.

Making an application for EMA
• Young people can apply by calling the Learner Support helpline on 0800 121 8989, or by visiting our website at direct.gov.uk/ema and requesting an application form. Application packs are also available from schools, colleges, Learning Providers and Connexions personal advisers.
• Young people do not need to know which course they want to do or even where they want to study in order to apply.
• Once assessed as eligible, payments depend on the young person enrolling on a valid learning programme.
• Young people need to open a basic bank account (one that accepts BACS payments) in order to apply for EMA.
• Young people should be encouraged to apply for EMA at an early stage.
  – Young people undertaking an FE course at a school sixth form or college in the 2009/10 academic year must apply for EMA by the end of August 2009.
  – Young people undertaking an LSC-funded E2E programme or a course that leads to an Apprenticeship should apply as soon as possible.
• School sixth forms, colleges and Learning Providers should encourage learners to present their Notice of Entitlement at the earliest opportunity to allow their payments to commence.
Annex 2:  
How to order publicity and support materials

The following table details the various publicity and support materials referred to in this guidance. Most materials are available to download from the Local Partners and Administrators EMA website: ema.lsc.gov.uk.

Printed copies can be ordered by contacting LSC Publications as follows. Please quote the relevant publication reference number when ordering (and allow between five and eight days for delivery).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>EMA leaflet – ‘My EMA, My Choice’</td>
<td>LSC-P-NAT-090004</td>
<td>LSC Publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMA leaflet – ‘My EMA, My Choice’ (Braille)</td>
<td>LSC-P-NAT-090004BR</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMA leaflet – ‘My EMA, My Choice’ (large print)</td>
<td>LSC-P-NAT-090004LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMA poster – ‘My Money’</td>
<td>LSC-P-NAT-080001</td>
<td>LSC Publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMA poster – ‘My Choice’</td>
<td>LSC-P-NAT-080031</td>
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<td>GCSE envelopes</td>
<td>LSC-P-NAT-080005</td>
<td>LSC Publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMA application pack</td>
<td>LSC-P-NAT-090013</td>
<td>LSC Publications, Learner Support helpline 0800 121 8989 or the EMA website, ema.direct.gov.uk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Form Resource Pack</td>
<td>LSC-P-NAT-090047</td>
<td>ema.lsc.gov.uk</td>
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<td>Learning Provider Resource Pack</td>
<td>LSC-P-NAT-080087</td>
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<td>EMA DVD – My Choice</td>
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