For the attention of:
Connexions staff working with young people, Managers of Connexions services and Connexions staff responsible for providing information services.

Actions:
All Connexions staff should be using this Information Note with immediate effect.

This Information Note replaces Connexion Action Notes CXP 216 and CX 234 and provides updated information for Connexions staff in relation to EMA.

Purpose of this Information Note

This Information Note provides advice on the role of Connexions in relation to EMA, including the actions required for endorsing EMA applications for 2009/10.

Annex 1 provides the documentation that Connexions Personal Advisers should use to endorse EMA applications.

Other relevant guidance includes the 2009/10 Education Maintenance Allowance Provider Guidance to be found at http://ema.lsc.gov.uk/ema-guidance/guidance2009-10

Key Information

- The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a weekly payment of £10, £20 or £30, paid directly to young people who stay on in learning after they reach statutory leaving age (i.e. after the end of their compulsory schooling).
- Young people in receipt of EMA may also receive bonuses if they remain on their course and make good progress. For those learners following the FE route bonuses will be payable in January and July. Learners following an Entry to Employment (E2E) programme or Programme Led Apprenticeship (PLA) will receive bonuses which they accrue at the rate of £5.00 per week. Providers of PLA/E2E programmes will agree the criteria for bonus payments and their frequency at the start of the learner’s programme.
EMA can be used to encourage a wide variety of learners to remain in learning between the ages of 16-18. To be eligible a young person must live in a household with an income of £30,810 or less (for the EMA year 2009/10), and meet certain residency criteria.

Those learners who are estranged from their families and in receipt of Income Support (IS) are eligible for EMA, and can combine IS with EMA.

Young people living with foster parents, in Local Authority care, or a care leaver can qualify for EMA at the maximum weekly rate (receipt of EMA does not affect Fostering Allowance or Care Leavers Allowance).

Young Offenders who are serving a custodial sentence in a Young Offenders Institute (YOI), Secure Training Centre (STC) or Secure Children’s Home (SCH) will be able to apply for EMA whilst in custody.

16-18 year old parents who are mainly responsible for their child will also be able to qualify for the £30 maximum, and may also be able to claim IS. Receipt of EMA does not affect any DWP administered benefits.

The EMA Guarantee

Learners who were income assessed and have been paid EMA during the 2008/09 academic year do not need to re-apply. The EMA Guarantee means that they will be eligible for support at the same level until the end of the academic year in which they turn 19.

Learners who received an EMA payment during 2008/09 will automatically receive a continuing entitlement letter and an EMA Agreement. Providers should use this continuing entitlement letter in exactly the same way as the EMA NoE, i.e. to add the learner to the payment system using the Learner Support Reference Number.

Some learners may choose to reapply if their household income has reduced and they may be eligible for EMA at a higher rate.

Learners who are enrolled on E2E programmes that will not extend beyond 31 August 2009 and who have not received a full income assessment in the 2008/09 EMA year are not eligible for the EMA Guarantee and should reapply for support in 2009/10.

EMA and Entry to Employment

E2E Providers may find they are presented with the EMA 2009/10 application form by learners who are enrolling on an E2E programme. It is
important that Providers complete the section on page 1 of Part A of the form to verify the learner’s E2E status as this will allow their forms to be processed under the special arrangements for E2E learners. Providers will need to supply their UPIN, their Provider name, contact number and a postcode. Although E2E learners are not required to have an income assessment in order to receive payments of £30, learners are still encouraged to complete Parts B and C of the application form so that their eligibility for EMA can be assessed should they progress onto FE or PLA provision.

Learners enrolling onto Entry to Employment (E2E) will automatically qualify for the £30 weekly EMA payment. They will not require an income assessment in order to be eligible but must meet all the other criteria to receive EMA.

**Further Information**

Further information can be found in the 2009/10 EMA Guidance. The Guidance is presented for the first time as one document and replaces the previously issued separate guidance documents that contained advice for providers of FE provision and providers of E2E and PLA respectively. A range of other supporting documents is also available and can be found on the website along with the main scheme guidance.

The help line numbers for providers and young people respectively, are: 0845 600 7979 and 0800 121 8989.

**Connexions Role**

**Endorsing EMA Applications**

Connexions colleagues have a role in endorsing EMA applications for:

- Estranged young people who are in receipt of Jobseeker’s Allowance Severe Hardship (JSA [SH]) and Jobseeker’s Allowance Income Based (JSA [IB]) under the prescribed groups rule.
- Connexions staff will no longer have a formal role in endorsing EMA applications from young people aged 19. We have removed the extended period of entitlement (or ‘3-in-4’ rule) which allowed learners to receive a delayed 3rd year of EMA support in the 4th year following the end of their compulsory education. The EMA Guarantee now replaces this policy.

**Estranged Young People in receipt of JSA (SH)**

Connexions already have a role in supporting 16/17 year old young people who are in receipt of Jobcentre Plus Benefits into employment or learning.
To avoid potential delays for JSA (SH) claimants or JSA (IB) claimants under the prescribed groups rule who want to enter learning we have asked the Learner Support Service to accept EMA applications which are accompanied by a letter from a Connexions Personal Adviser (PA), on Connexions letter-headed paper, certifying that the learner is in receipt of JSA (SH) / JSA (IB) under the prescribed groups rule. An example letter is attached at Annex 1.

The learner must switch their claim to IS before they can get EMA payments and we strongly suggest as best practice that learners should confirm on their learning agreement that they have switched their claim to IS. A learner must not combine JSA and EMA.

If a learner is in receipt of benefits and is living with their parent/ carer, they should apply on the basis of the household income.

Providing Application Support

This is an ongoing activity which peaks from April to September. Connexions staff should:

- Provide Application Packs to individual young people, parents and/or carers seen in Connexions offices or other settings, where there is a Connexions presence.

- Support young people who need help to open a bank account, or put the individual in contact with another source of support (a useful leaflet can be downloaded from the Financial Services Authority) at www.moneymadeclear.fsa.gov.uk/publications.

- Help in completing EMA application forms. The Application resource pack can also be downloaded from the website at http://ema.lsc.gov.uk/resources

- If necessary, support young people at enrolment (e.g. when discussing their patterns of attendance).

Promoting and Marketing EMA

Connexions should work with all schools and other local stakeholders to make young people aware of EMA as part of making post-16 choices, e.g. in PSHE lessons and through youth groups etc. They should support applications for EMA and help with form filling. They should therefore understand the basic eligibility conditions - such as the types of courses, minimum number of learning hours etc. – which young people need to know in order to make decisions about their preferred post -16 options. The eligibility criteria can be found in the EMA Guidance.
Connexions partnerships are responsible for informing some of the hardest-to-reach young people about EMA. They will have the best links with some of the more disadvantaged and vulnerable young people. They will be working with those who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) or those who are at risk of entering this group.

Connexions should use national marketing materials to promote EMA to young people and their parents or carers. These and a range of support materials available are listed below.

Most marketing materials and support materials are available from LSC Publications. Where this is not the case, the correct source is highlighted. Please use the reference numbers in all cases.

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<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<td>LSC Publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMA Leaflet – My EMA My Choice (Braille)</td>
<td>LSC-P-NAT-090004-BR</td>
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<td>EMA Leaflet – My EMA My Choice (Large Print)</td>
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<td>LSC-P-NAT-080005</td>
<td>LSC Publications</td>
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<td>A Guide for Providers Working with Young</td>
<td>LSC-P-NAT-090006</td>
<td>LSC Publications</td>
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<td>EMA Application Pack</td>
<td>LSC-P-NAT-090013</td>
<td>LSC Publications or Learner support</td>
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<td>Application Form Resource Pack</td>
<td>LSC-P-NAT-090047</td>
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<td>LSC-P-NAT-080087</td>
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<td>EMA DVD</td>
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<td>Marketing and Communications Guidance 09/10</td>
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Example letter (must be on the Connexions delivery organisation’s letter headed paper).

Freepost RRUB-BEXE-TJLK
Darlington
DL1 4WD

Confirmation that [insert learner name here] is estranged from their parent/ carer is in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance (Severe Hardship)/ JSA (IB) under the prescribed groups rule.

I confirm that [insert learner name here] is estranged from their household and is currently in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance (Severe Hardship) or JSA (IB) under Prescribed Group 1, but wants to enter learning.

[Learner name] understands that he/ she must now switch their JSA claim to an Income Support claim, as you cannot combine Education Maintenance Allowance with Jobseekers Allowance. Contact your local Jobcentre Plus office for advice on how to do this.

NB Claimants who are in receipt of JSA and:

- are still living with their parents/ carers;
- are married/civil partners and the partner is 18 or over;

must apply for EMA on their household’s income rather than their own benefit status.

INSERT NAME
ROLE WITHIN CONNEXIONS PARTNERSHIP
CONTACT DETAILS