
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	12 June 2012
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/07/12/WB
Contact Officer:	Wilma Bain, Head of Education	Contact No:	01475 712824
Subject:	Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Academic Year 2012-13		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the continuation of the grant from the Scottish Government for the purposes of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Scotland programme.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) provide means-tested financial support for post-16 learning to encourage young people from low income households to remain in non-advanced post-compulsory education with the aim of increasing skills and life chances for this group.
- 2.2 The EMA programme has been protected for 2012 – 13 with the budget remaining at the same level as the last two years.
- 2.3 The Committee will be informed of any future revisions to the process.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

Albert Henderson
Corporate Director
Education, Communities and Organisational Development

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 encourage access to, and participation in, learning beyond the statutory school leaving age. They provide financial support for post-16 year-olds who meet the criteria for eligibility by fulfilling conditions set out in an EMA learning agreement.
- 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 less than £20,351, 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 less than £22,403 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 2011/12, 463 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 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 An Activity Agreement is an agreement signed by a young person stating that they will take part in a programme of learning and / other activities which will help them to become ready for formal learning or employment.
- 4.11 The main aim of Activity Agreements is to ensure that a targeted group of young people are supported to move into a mainstream destination. All young people in Inverclyde who are covered by this approach are participating in activity that will support their progress into mainstream provision.
- 4.12 In 2011 – 12, Activity Agreements achieved the following results :

Referrals	33	Offered an AA	33	Uptake	32	Early Leavers	4
Of 7 young people who have completed agreements :							
To a negative destination		1	To a positive destination		6		

5.0 PROPOSAL

- 5.1 That the 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.

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Personnel

None

6.4 Equalities

None

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 EMA Guidance Document 2012 – 2013 is available
EMA Business Model 2012 – 2013 is available