



**PRESS RELEASE Ref: 608**

Leading learning and skills

**EMBARGOED UNTIL: 00:00 16<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

## **HELP AT HAND FOR SOUTH WEST STUDENTS WITH FEARS FOR FUTURE**

*- Education Maintenance Allowance offers relief for worried parents and students*

*-Yeovil Students Get a Helping Hand-*

School's out for the summer and so is the sun. With the holiday season now in full swing for thousands of young people around the country, you might expect them to be making the most of the holidays. However new survey<sup>1</sup> findings from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) released today show that 81 percent of young people in the South West are worrying about their career prospects instead, with around 5 percent currently battling sleepless nights as a result.

The survey commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to highlight the benefits of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), found that while 78 percent of young people in the South West have plans to stay on in education, not having enough money (18 percent) and exam stress (20 percent) are causing worry for students.

A similar survey of parents revealed that, while one in three (35 percent) believe their child has a better future ahead of them than they did, 48 percent are worried about whether their child will find the right job.

However, two young men from Yeovil College are looking forward to bright futures, with help from EMA, which provides up to £30 a week to help people between 16 and 19, from low income households, to continue in learning.

Darren Devlin, 17, has just completed a BTEC Foundation Diploma in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and is now studying a BTEC Foundation Certificate in Sport after discovering ICT wasn't for him. He has been receiving EMA for a year now after hearing about it from friends.

Darren, who is the first member of his family to go to college, is so pleased with the benefits of EMA that he has recommended it to some of his friends.

Darren said: "Getting EMA has helped me pay for some of the equipment I needed throughout the year and is helping me to pay for some of the sports equipment I will need for next year. I have told quite a few of my friends and they are now seeing if they qualify."

Once he finishes his course Darren would like to either become a children's sports coach or join the Royal Marines.

A-Level student, Jeremy Adcock, is also receiving EMA while studying. He applied because his brother qualified while he was at college. He said:

"After a few months of saving my EMA payments I was able to buy a computer. It generally makes my life easier as a student as I do not have to worry about my finances and I can just enjoy my time at college and study hard."

Jeremy is studying Maths, Further Maths, Chemistry, and Advancing Physics and is hoping to go to university to study Maths or Physics.

Malcolm Gillespie, LSC Regional Director for the South West, said: "These results show a very different image of young people than is often portrayed. They are ambitious and focused. A large majority of young people do want to further their education and career prospects are at the forefront of their minds.

"We know these are worrying times, but for parents who want to support their children during the downtime after exams, applying for EMA can relieve some of their concerns. Even for those young people who don't enjoy the traditional classroom environment, EMA could provide financial support for other options

---

<sup>1</sup> Survey carried out by Dubit, June 2009, sample size 1034 16-18 year olds.

such as Work Based Learning or Diplomas. Young people that are eligible and apply now can rest assured that they will receive their allowance when they start their new course, offering one less thing to worry about over the summer.”

Christine Fells, EMA and ALG (Adult Learning Grant) Officer for Yeovil College feels that the students really benefit from EMA. She said:

“I believe EMA is a great asset to students. As we are located in a more predominately lower income bracket area many families do not have the financial stability for their children to go to college. EMA has given young people the opportunity to continue in higher education. In the past it was not viable for them to do so, pushing them into lower income jobs or onto benefit. It has made life much easier by providing assistance in areas such as helping fund hair dressing kits and help with travel on residential trips. It has also given students some independence as well as helping them to learn valuable skills such as budgeting their income. “

The main motivations of young people surveyed in the South West for doing well in exams were getting a good job (59 percent) and to keep their options open (23 percent) ahead of impressing parents and teachers, and getting better results than their friends, the survey also revealed.

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is committed to providing practical help for young people. Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) offers up to £30 a week towards their continuing education for those eligible aged 16-18, dependent on household income. EMA is paid directly into the student’s bank account and additional bonuses are also available for students who do well and meet targets set by their teacher, tutor or provider.

To find out more about EMA please visit [www.direct.gov.uk/ema](http://www.direct.gov.uk/ema) or call the EMA helpline on 0800 121 8989.

## ENDS

### Notes to editors:

- This press release applies to England only. Separate schemes are operated by the administrations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Survey results source:
  1. Dubit, June 2009, sample size 1034 16-18 year olds
  2. YouGov Plc 16th - 24th June 2009. Total sample size was 10051 adults and figures have been weighted to be representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

### All media enquires please contact:

Sam Rae, COI News & PR: 0117 9003563

LSC Press Office: 024 7682 5793

### Additional research findings of 16-18 year olds surveyed by Dubit

- 82% intended to continue in full-time education after this academic year
- Having the right exam grades was more important (40 percent) to making the right choices about their future than family support (26 percent), careers guidance from school (14 percent), talking through with friends (13 percent) or other reasons (4 percent)
- The biggest worry for those who intend to continue studying is not getting good enough grades (38 percent), followed by exam and study stress (20 percent), not having enough money (20 percent), getting a job after (15 percent), fitting in socially (8 percent) and disappointing their family (3 percent).
- Parents with sons will be interested to know that boys (25 percent) were more concerned about the financial implications than their female counterparts (14 percent).

### Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

### Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

#### What are the key features of EMA?

- Weekly payment bands of £30, £20 and £10 per week, depending on household income.
- Intermittent bonus payments depending on the programme of learning.

- Available for both academic and vocational study, up to level 3, which can include courses such as basic skills GCSE retakes, GNVQs, NVQs, as well as AS and A2s.
- No other household benefits are affected.
- Young people can still have a part-time job.

#### **Who is eligible for EMA?**

- Young people are eligible to receive or to continue receiving EMA in the EMA year 2009/10 providing:
  - They will already be 16, 17 or 18 on the 1st September 2009
  - They are participating in full-time further education (as defined in EMA guidance) up to and including Level 3, or LSC funded e2e or a Programme led Apprenticeship
- The amount of EMA that a young person is eligible to receive in 2009/10 is dependent on their household income which must be £30,810 or less in the previous tax year, 2008-2009. The young person will then receive £10, £20 or £30 – a breakdown is as follows:

Up to £20,817	£30
More than £20,817 but less than or equal to £25,521	£20
More than £25,521 but less than or equal to £30,810	£10

For all public enquiries regarding EMA, please contact 0800 121 8989 (some mobile operators may charge for calls made to this number) or visit [www.direct.gov.uk/ema](http://www.direct.gov.uk/ema)

#### **Diplomas**

The Diploma is part of a national programme to improve the choice of courses for young people to motivate them and encourage them to continue learning for longer. It will help them to gain the qualifications they need for success – at work, at college or at university. For more information visit: [www.direct.gov.uk/diplomas](http://www.direct.gov.uk/diplomas)

#### **14-19 prospectuses**

14-19 prospectuses are an online resource which provides information for young people on all learning courses and programmes available in each local area. They can be viewed via the national portal at [www.direct.gov.uk/14-19prospectus](http://www.direct.gov.uk/14-19prospectus)

**Issued on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council by COI News & PR. Tel: 0117 9003563**