

Council Meeting – 10 January 2011

Notice of Motion – Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs)

Introduction

The following notice has been submitted from Councillor Oliver:

“This Council offers its support to the democratic campaign by students in Walsall and across the country against the abolition of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) by the coalition government.

This Council notes the relatively low attainment and achievement of many of our young people through the educational system, and supports such measures which encourage our communities to improve their skills, qualifications and life chances. We believe that the EMA enhances the opportunities for young people from less well-off backgrounds to remain in education - as opposed to the alternative for many of becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training).”

Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs)

Since September 2004, EMAs have been available throughout England to young people entering Year 12 and enrolled at a school sixth form or further education college.

To be eligible for EMA a student must be enrolled on a course in England which is one of the following:

- a full-time further education course at a college or school
- a Diploma funded by the Young People’s Learning Agency (YPLA) (where available) or a course that leads to an Apprenticeship
- a Young People’s Learning Agency-funded Foundation Learning Programme

The EMA is means-tested and can provide a weekly allowance of up to £30. EMAs are designed to help towards educational costs, including travel expenses. It comes in weekly payments of £10, £20 or £30 which go directly into the student’s bank account. It is only paid if the student attends regularly and works hard.


The amount received is calculated by looking at the household income. It isn’t affected by any money earned by the student from part-time work, and does not make any difference to any benefits received by parents.

To get EMA in the academic year starting September 2010, the annual household income must be below £30,810 (for tax year 2009-10).

Household income (for financial year 2009-10)	How much EMA you get
up to £20,817 per year	£30 per week
£20,818 - £25,521 per year	£20 a week
£25,522 - £30,810 per year	£10 a week
more than £30,810 per year	no entitlement to EMA

EMA will close to new applicants in England from January 2011. Learner support funds will be available through schools, colleges and training providers to help students who most need it to continue in learning. Current recipients will get EMA for the rest of this academic year, but will not receive it next academic year.

The EMA system is administered by an external company with no involvement from the local authority. According to the YPLA figures, the number of students with EMAs in Walsall has increased from 2653 in the year 2004/05 to 4182 young people in November 2010. Nationally the figure in November 2010 is over 580,000.



Pauline Pilkington
Executive Director
Children's Services

30th December 2010