

# **Consultation Document**

## **16+ Learning Choices: First Step Activity and Financial Support**

## Foreword by Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning

Curriculum for Excellence is our framework for learning for all young people, aged 3-18, across the whole spectrum of learning providers – school, colleges, private and third sector organisations. It is predicated on helping young people acquire the four capacities - successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens - that form the basis of one of our national outcomes. Building the Curriculum 3, published in June this year, sets out a number of entitlements for young people: these include an entitlement to a **senior phase** of learning where the young person can continue to develop the four capacities and also obtain qualifications.

Those young people who do not stay in school in S5 and S6 face considerably more complex pathways and support arrangements in their post-16 learning. The OECD report, *Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland*<sup>1</sup>, identified continuing issues of inequality in Scottish education, particularly for those young people from lower-income families. Successful implementation of Curriculum for Excellence – and progress towards the national outcome – demands action to improve support for these young people. Local authorities, through their Single Outcome Agreements, have all made a firm commitment toward this.

16+ Learning Choices is our new model for planning for the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence. It brings a particular focus on improving outcomes for those young people who do not stay in school for S5 and S6. I expect this model to have a major impact on the national indicator on improving the proportion of young people in positive and sustained destinations post-16.

There are three critical elements to 16+ Learning Choices. First, the **learning provision** available to young people must be appropriate to their needs; this is largely the responsibility of local authorities and their partners as they implement Curriculum for Excellence. Second, young people need high quality **information, advice and guidance** to help them choose the right learning option; I expect Skills Development Scotland to have a key role in this. Third, the **financial support** available to young people must also be accessible and coherent – particularly so that those young people from low-income families do not have their choices limited to the options that offer the most money.

Many young people in Scotland are already well-served by a world-class education system. A system which works for most young people is not good enough; we must work harder to ensure that system supports the most vulnerable young people, with the most chaotic lives. This requires a new focus of our energies – and resources – on those young people for whom school is not the right option post-16.

This means that pathways through learning in a community setting or with a third sector provider must be as clear and as well supported as those for young people who remain in school; it means that learning which might previously have been described as an “alternative” curriculum offer must be considered just as mainstream as Highers are for those young people who remain in school.

To achieve this, we must consider the way learning opportunities in a community or third sector setting are resourced, the way they are promoted to young people, the way success for those young people (and those providers) is measured and the support young people are able to access while they are participating. For all of those considerations, we must question whether young people learning outwith school are treated differently; where this is the case,

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<sup>1</sup> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland*, (OECD 2007)

we must align our systems so that young people are not disadvantaged by choosing the learning option that is right for them.

The first section of this consultation paper therefore considers how we provide that “first step” type of activity to young people in a community or third sector setting. It invites your views on how such activity is commissioned for young people by a variety of public sector agencies, how we can ensure that the learning opportunities involved are appropriately recognised in the context of Curriculum for Excellence and how we ensure that information, advice and guidance for the most vulnerable young people is properly responsive to their needs.

Following on from this, the second section of this consultation paper considers in more detail the financial support that is available to young people. Currently, young people who are in school, or taking a course of further education at college, are able to access the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA); young people taking part in Get Ready for Work receive a Minimum Training Allowance (MTA); and young people who are engaged in “first step” activity in a third sector or community setting do not receive systematic financial support. This consultation paper, for the first time, takes a coherent view of that support and seeks your views on how we can ensure the financial support system supports the vision of Curriculum for Excellence.

The job of Government is about making tough choices, not least about where most effectively – and most fairly – to deploy the inevitably finite funding available. The current fiscal climate makes it even more important that we are deriving the maximum effect from the resource at our disposal.

The changes we need to make to improve support for those young people learning in a community or third sector setting require investment; within the very tight spending review, this means consideration of the resources we already dedicate to young people and how best to employ these. We want to go about that analysis transparently and by taking the views of those with a contribution to make. This consultation provides a basis for a wide discussion on how this can happen, how our existing resources can be used more effectively to support a wider range of opportunities for young people and how we can better target resources at those young people who are most in need of help. I encourage you to respond.

Fiona Hyslop MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning

## Introduction

1. Young people's destinations post-16 matter; they are a key indicator of success in adult life. We know that young people who experience spells of disengagement from learning and employment between 16 and 19 are significantly more likely to be unemployed as adults. 16+ Learning Choices is our new model for supporting young people to stay in learning post-16.
2. This is why, in Skills for Scotland, we committed to encouraging young people to remain in learning post-16 as the best way of ensuring their long term employability and contribution to society.
3. We also recognise the importance of this in Scotland Performs, where one of our key performance indicators is the proportion of school leavers in positive and sustained destinations.
4. Building the Curriculum 3 gives young people an **entitlement** to a senior phase of learning. To fully realise the vision of Curriculum for Excellence, those young people who learn in a non-school setting during the senior phase must be as well supported as those who remain in school.
5. 16+ Learning Choices is our new model for planning the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence. It envisages all young people, well in advance of their school leaving date, being made an offer of an appropriate, attractive place in learning post-16.
6. For many young people, the most appropriate choice will be to remain in school for S5 and S6. Some will choose to study a course of further or higher education. Some will take part in one of our national training programmes; others will get a job, which may have key elements of training attached to it. Still others will volunteer, or will engage in non-formal learning opportunities in a community or third sector setting.
7. For most of those options, pathways and the associated support for young people are already clear. But for those young people engaging in learning in a non-formal setting, progression routes are often less certain and access to financial and other support may be limited.
8. This is compounded by the fact that young people for whom learning in a non-formal setting is the most appropriate choice are often the most vulnerable, and at the highest risk of disengaging altogether.
9. This consultation paper therefore focuses on how we can better support and resource those young people engaged in non-formal learning.
10. It also considers more widely the financial support that is available to young people across all learning options. We are considering these together for two reasons – firstly, to take for the first time a coherent approach to funding support for young people, a major step towards our commitment thereto in Skills for Scotland; and secondly, to ensure that the available resources are targeted most effectively at those young people most in need.
11. As policy on pay is reserved to the UK government we are not consulting on waged provision such as Modern Apprenticeships and Skillseekers; we are also not consulting here on proposed changes to student support in higher education, due to parallel plans to consult on those and to the wider age group of the student body involved.

12. We are specifically seeking your views on:

- The development of a new approach to “first step” learning for young people in a community or third sector setting, which we describe as Activity Agreements; and
- Financial support arrangements for young people, including:
  - the EMA programme in schools and colleges;
  - the allowances payable to young people taking part in Get Ready for Work;
  - the financial support that should be available to young people taking part in Activity Agreements; and
  - the Young Person’s Bridging Allowance.

12. A full description of the support currently available to 16-19 year olds is at Annex A.

## Section 1 – Activity Agreements

1. Some young people are not ready or able to access formal learning as they reach their school leaving date. They may face multiple barriers to participation (health problems, addiction, a history of offending, homelessness), need support to build their confidence and social skills, or benefit from opportunities to develop team-working skills and self-esteem.
2. For those young people, an offer of learning which meets their needs must be as mainstream an offer as participation in school or college or the national training programmes is to young people for whom those are the right options.
3. It is also critical that the right support is available to young people as they take part in this type of learning and development – for the most vulnerable young people, intensive advice and guidance will have to be a central element of their activity – particularly when their learning activity must fit in with other issues such as healthcare. This intensive advice and guidance forms the basis of an “activity agreement”.
4. It is important to see this activity as a “first step” towards employment or further learning or training. This is crucial to our implementation of Curriculum for Excellence – where young people will be best able to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens in a community or third sector setting, we must support them as effectively as those who learn best in a school setting.
5. We recognise that implementing a more coherent approach to this will require investment. Your views on where that investment would make the greatest impact are invited in more detail below.

### Context

6. More Choices, More Chances identified some good practice in this area in England, and committed to developing a Scottish approach. Activity Agreement pilots in England began in April 2006 and have centred on the Connexions service (which offers careers advice and guidance to young people), working with young people who have not been in education, employment or training for 20 weeks or more. The young person’s Connexions advisor works with them to create a personalised, tailored programme of activity and personal development which might involve a wide range of learning providers and other organisations. An evaluation of the first year of the pilots published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families has showed positive results, with around 50% of participants progressing immediately into more formal education, employment or training<sup>2</sup>.

### A Scottish Approach

7. It is important to ensure that this new development does not compromise existing good practice, but rather builds on it. There are already many good examples of non-formal learning opportunities which help young people to re-engage and ultimately progress into more formal learning or employment. Our challenge is to make this more coherent, with

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<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/programmeofresearch/projectinformation.cfm?projectId=15377&type=5&resultpage=1>

pathways which are as clear for those young people as the existing pathways for young people in school or college.

8. The aim of this would be threefold:
  - The support available to those young people must be as robust, systematic and clear as that available to young people staying on in school, going to further or higher education or entering the national training programmes;
  - The learning provision which is right for those young people must be as mainstream an offer to them as staying on in school, going to further or higher education or entering the national training programmes is to those for whom those are the right options;
  - The opportunities available to young people for personal and social development, tailored to their needs, must be aligned to and embedded in Curriculum for Excellence.
  
9. In developing this, the following will be key considerations:
  - the range of activity young people might undertake;
  - quality assurance and accreditation;
  - an appropriate system for monitoring young people's progress;
  - funding and administration; and
  - the link with DWP benefits and other forms of financial support.

### **Current relevant activity**

10. Current activity which focuses on this type of learning and development for young people includes:
  - Community learning and development opportunities including youth work
  - volunteering opportunities
  - the Life Skills strand of Get Ready for Work
  
11. Community learning and development opportunities are offered to young people by a wide range of providers. Local authorities, Scotland's colleges and third sector organisations at both a national and local level are of key importance.
  
12. These opportunities are developed by engaging directly with young people and working with them on what they want to change in their lives, in order to be less threatening to young people who have had negative experiences in school, and more responsive to the young person's needs. Their participation might be in response to other needs such as drugs problems or homelessness.
  
13. This type of activity has a strong focus on building motivation and confidence. It can include literacy and numeracy learning, local employability programmes, personal and social development, , time management and goal-setting.
  
14. It is widely recognised that volunteering can provide skills and build confidence and therefore act as a stepping stone into further education, training or employment.
  
15. Volunteering also helps people feel good about themselves and good about their communities, encourages networks and is especially effective at building "soft" or "entry level" skills such as problem solving and co-operative working.

16. The vast majority of young people who volunteer do so part time. However, full time volunteering can be an attractive option to young people at a transitional point in their life and, where appropriate and high quality, can deliver substantial personal development over a fairly short period of time.
17. The only nationally-commissioned activity which is directly relevant to this area is the Life Skills strand of the Get Ready for Work programme. Unlike young people in the other options described above, participants in Life Skills will already be in receipt of a training allowance, and have access to relevant IAG.

### **Quality, progression and monitoring**

18. The learning and development in which a young person takes part must be the right option for them, with clear opportunities for progression. It will be important to ensure that the learning and support provided to the young person is high quality.
  19. It will also be important to ensure that there are appropriate pathways open for young people to progress towards further learning and employment. There is a balance to be struck between ensuring that the opportunities available to an individual young person are tailored, flexible, and supported, and ensuring that those opportunities both allow the young person's achievements to be recognised and facilitate progression.
- **How do we ensure that the learning and support that young people engage in is of sufficiently high quality?**
  - **Please give your views on how a balance may be struck between flexibility and accreditation and what approach/structures should be adopted to ensure that this is the case.**
  - **How could we develop a coherent measure of success for organisations engaged in this type of activity with young people?**

### Establishing non-formal learning as a mainstream option

20. AA must be focused on activity that helps young people to develop the four capacities which are central to a Curriculum for Excellence – to be effective contributors, successful learners, responsible citizens and confident individuals. For some young people, the path towards employment will be a longer one, and learning and personal development activity which are focused on confidence and social skills will be needed before they are ready to engage with formal learning.
21. However, young people in a community or third sector setting currently do not enjoy the same level or consistency of financial or other support as those young people who sustain engagement in school. We need to move towards a model where the support available to young people is dictated by their needs rather than by the institution in which they are learning.
22. The first significant change we could make would be to extend the same type of support and monitoring arrangements to those young people learning in a community or third sector setting as we already make available to young people in school. Improving this, through the use of AA, would depend on effective communications between the partners involved in delivering activities and support organisations.

- **Which types of existing activity should we include in our development of an Activity Agreement approach? Please comment on the proposal to include (a) community learning and development opportunities and (b) volunteering opportunities.**
- **Do you think there are any important subcategories or distinctions to be made?**
- **Do you think there are any other learning options or opportunities for personal and social development which should be available to young people that have not been discussed above? What are they?**

#### Commissioning bespoke activity

23. For some particularly vulnerable young people, the existing landscape of learning options will not include anything which is fully responsive to their needs. The English pilots of AA include the commissioning of specific interventions and activities on behalf of a single young person by an advisor. There is currently no similar process in Scotland.
24. Such activity would require intensive advice and guidance to be available to the young person, with a detailed knowledge of the young person's needs and aspirations, an understanding of the opportunities available locally, and a discretionary budget with which advisors could commission relevant activity for the young person, as part of a pathway towards engagement with formal learning or employment.
- **Would some young people benefit from a “broker” to negotiate the right opportunities for them? Should that broker be able to commission services focused on individual young people? Please explain your answer.**
  - **Do you think that commissioning services on behalf of individual young people would assist in enabling access to a range of options? Would there be any constraints for providers in responding to this model of commissioning?**
  - **Do you have any views on how that might operate in Scotland?**

#### Longer-term resourcing and investment

25. The Life Skills strand of the Get Ready for Work programme is currently the only approach to first-step engagement in learning and development which attracts a specific funding stream. Other relevant funding streams will include local authorities' approaches to community learning and development, college investment in community provision, ESF, the Big Lottery fund and other independent donors, and the new Inspiring Scotland fund.
26. The implementation of Curriculum for Excellence requires, in the longer term, local authorities and other funders of learning activity to consider the needs of young people and the responsiveness of the provision they fund to those needs. AA could be used as a model, over time, to build up a picture of the needs of young people and the effectiveness of interventions.
- **Do you think this more strategic commissioning role would add value?**
  - **How might this operate?**

- **Do you have any further comments on the type of activity which might qualify for Activity Agreements or how such a programme might operate?**
- **Given the particular needs of the young people who would be involved in activity agreements, how might the scheme be most effectively administrated?**

## Section 2 – Financial Support

27. Young people are able to access a number of different streams of financial support, depending on the learning they are undertaking. This section considers some existing models of financial support – the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) in schools and colleges and the Minimum Training Allowance payable to young people on Get Ready for Work – and also considers how we might extend systematic financial support to young people involved in learning in a community or third sector setting as described in Section 1. Within our existing resources, your views are invited on how we can best target our investment at those young people most in need of support.
28. This section also invites your views on Young Person’s Bridging Allowance.
29. Annex B provides more detailed information about evaluation and research on the existing EMA programme.

### Financial support in school and college

#### **EMA – background**

30. The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) was originally a UK-wide initiative. It was piloted in Scotland between 1999 and 2004 and rolled out nationally from 2004-05. It provides financial support to 16-19 year olds from low income households who are attending non-advanced full-time education at school, college or who are home educated. In Scotland, it replaced Higher School Bursaries and Category A Bursaries.
31. The original aim of EMA was to address the link between low income and low attainment by providing a financial incentive to young people from low-income households to remain in full-time education beyond the statutory school leaving age. Young people from low income families face financial barriers to continuing learning and the EMA is designed to remove those barriers.
32. EMA is a means-tested weekly allowance of £10, £20 or £30 and is paid fortnightly during term-time.
33. All eligible EMA applicants must complete and sign a learning agreement before they can begin to receive weekly payments. The learning agreement will contain a number of details such as the student’s study aims and goals, a study programme including attendance and course work requirements and a statement of understanding that the EMA may be withheld if the terms of the learning agreement are not met.
34. Weekly payment of the EMA requires 100% attendance at all timetabled sessions although absences can be authorised by the educational provider where there is good cause.
35. EMA recipients may be eligible for two bonus payments of £150 each during the academic year. The purpose of the bonus is to reward achievement and they reflect progress within the terms of the learning agreement and reward completion of course work, behaviour, attitude and attendance.
36. EMA is seen as a strong model for distributing support – which is very different from our other support schemes – for two main reasons.

- First of all, support is on a “something for something” basis – so payments are tied to attendance and achieving goals set out in a learning agreement.
- Secondly, EMA is passported against benefits meaning families of students receiving EMA are still entitled to child benefit etc. This is not the case for other forms of support. This is an essential element of the scheme as the ability to retain benefits clearly has a significant impact on decision making from families on the lowest incomes.

### **Evaluation and investment**

37. The Scottish Government is committed to creating opportunities for its young people. A strategic priority of *More Choices, More Chances* is to review the financial support arrangements for 16-19 year olds in Scotland and specifically looks to address the issue of parity for young people in education and vocational training.
38. Evaluation of EMA (detailed at Annex B) shows that, although it has some impact on behaviour, attendance and attainment, most young people would have remained in school even if they did not receive EMA. The Scottish Government would like to consider ways to better target the EMA scheme to help those young people hardest to reach and who face the greatest financial barriers to staying on in learning and training.
39. If there is clear evidence that our current investment is not having a significant impact on this then we need to seriously consider whether this is the best use of our resources and if there is a strong case for them being re-invested elsewhere. Section 1 above describes areas where we would like to reinvest any resources which are made available from EMA.

### **EMA options**

40. There are some options for making the EMA more focussed on the young people who are in greatest need of support that can be considered.
41. Firstly, we could consider phasing out the £20 and £10 payments. Most EMA recipients receive the maximum weekly payment of £30. In 2006-07 81% of EMA recipients received the maximum weekly payment. The rationale behind this is supported by recent English research which found that lower payments (particularly the £10) have little impact on participation rates. Savings made by phasing out the £10 and £20 payments could be used to support other young people in other types of learning who are in greater need of this support.
42. The bonus payment is available to reward completion of course work, behaviour, attitude and attendance. We believe it is important to retain the bonus; the issue is at what level. The English research studies suggest that there is no evidence that increasing the bonus would improve attainment so we would suggest maintaining the bonuses as they are. In 2006-07 61% of EMA recipients who attended for the entire year received both bonus payments while 84% received at least one bonus payment.
43. The income threshold for the EMA could be aligned with the FE bursary income thresholds. The threshold for the £30 payment of EMA in 2008-09 is £21,835. The income assessment for students who are at college and to receive a full FE bursary is £19,835. We believe that it would make sense to align these thresholds.

## **Schools and Colleges**

44. Given that the research identified slightly different attitudes to the EMA between the school and college sectors, the impact of any changes to the EMA would have to be considered for each.

- **What is your view on the impact of the EMA scheme overall? (Please comment on the scheme's impact upon post-16 participation, retention and achievement rates as well as any effects the scheme might have had upon behaviour, attendance and attitude of students).**
- **In your opinion, does the degree of impact vary according to the level of payment (i.e. £30, £20, £10)?**
- **How could EMA be targeted more effectively?**
- **Are the current conditions attached to the weekly payment appropriate (i.e. based on 100% attendance)? (If yes, please explain your answer. If no, please suggest ways in which this should be revised.)**
- **What is the current impact of the bonus payment? Is this current amount appropriate? Please provide an explanation for your answer.**
- **Please give your views on the proposal to align income assessment for parity among FE students.**
- **How effective is the learning agreement system?**
- **Please comment on the proposal to extend the system of learning agreements to other forms of learning or training.**
- **Please comment on any specific issues you think may arise in relation to the school or college sectors as a result of these proposals.**

## **EMA Issues**

45. Since its inception, the weekly payment bandings for the EMA (£10, £20 and £30) have never been changed.

46. The income assessment for the EMA is based on that used by HM Revenue and Customs means test for Tax Credit Awards. The household income assessment takes account of the income of those adults who have a caring responsibility for the children in their family household. The number of siblings within the household, who are in full time education are not taken into account in the income assessment.

- **Please give your opinion on the proposal to remove the lower payments from the scheme (i.e. £10, £20) and to retain £30 payments. What impact do you think this would have?**
- **If we remove the £10 and £20 payments, do you think £30 is still appropriate?**
- **In your opinion, should children living in the same household who are in full time education be considered in the income assessment for EMA?**

## Delivery of EMA

47. EMA is currently delivered via local authorities for schools and for those who are home educated and by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) via the colleges for college students.
  48. The local authorities and colleges make the payments directly to the young people and submit claims to the Scottish Government monthly in arrears. SFC make a claim on behalf of all the colleges. This means that the team who deal with the policy issues around EMA have also retained a key role in delivering the scheme.
  49. There are several reasons why this form of delivery was chosen. One reason is that EMA replaced the Higher School Bursary for school pupils and the Category A Bursary for college students and therefore there was already a delivery structure in place. The current model also means that EMA is served with the local discretion of guidance teachers and bursary officers and the administration of EMA is managed in common with other support for young people in school or college, e.g. free school meals, travel, childcare.
  50. The local nature of the scheme means that EMA is not applied consistently nationwide and it is marketed differently according to each local authority and college. Centralising the delivery of EMAs, as it is in England, could provide a solution and enable EMA to be applied consistently.
  51. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC), who administer the scheme in England, benefit from a data-sharing agreement with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). This means that automatic checks can be made on information given on EMA application forms. While there are clear benefits from our local delivery arrangement, this does make it difficult to establish larger scale system-led developments such as this.
- **What is your opinion on how the EMA is currently delivered?**
  - **Do you think the EMA should continue to be delivered in the same way, so that it benefits from local input, or should delivery be centralised so that it is more consistent across the country?**

## Financial support on the Get Ready for Work programme

### Background

52. Get Ready for Work (GRfW) was introduced in April 2002 as the national programme for young people (16–19 year olds) who without additional support are unable to access other training, learning or employment opportunities.
53. Mapping work illustrates gaps and inconsistencies in financial support for 16-19 year olds. In *More Choices, More Chances* we committed to reviewing the financial support arrangements for 16-19 year olds in Scotland addressing the specific issue of parity for young people in education and those on vocational training. In short, the most coherent package of support is currently available to young people following a 'traditional' route through school, college and university. Those individuals who enter vocational training, in this case GRfW, currently receive a training allowance.
54. Although a fixed rate training allowance is currently available for the GRfW programme in Scotland, this is not the case for equivalent programmes elsewhere in the UK. The then

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) introduced EMA for vocational training programmes, including the GRfW work equivalent Entry to Employment (E2E), in 2006. This replaced the existing training allowance in England of a minimum of £40 per week. The rationale behind the change was to offer parity between work-based training and school and college provision. Changes to Child Benefit and Tax Credit regulations extended eligibility for those young people who were participating in work based learning.

55. We were actively involved in the changes to this UK legislation and ensuring that GRfW participants and their parents are not disadvantaged by receiving a training allowance and are able to access Child Benefit, Child Tax Credits and other relevant DWP benefits.
56. This consultation provides an opportunity to consider replacing the current training allowance of £50-£55 per week for non-employed trainees, and extending the means tested EMA model to GRfW clients in Scotland. Changing the allowance from the minimum training allowance to EMA would put GRfW participants on the same financial basis as young people seeking to continuing their education through school or college. This would bring learner support for GRfW into line with most other means tested learner support provided by (or via) the Government.
57. In addition, young people participating in the Life Skills strand on an ad hoc basis for less than 15 hours a week will not currently receive a training allowance. EMA programme allows flexibility – including reduced timetables – for vulnerable young people. If EMA were extended to GRfW some young people may be able to access support where they cannot currently receive a training allowance.
- **Does the current higher training allowance of £55 per week skew the educational choices of individuals?**
  - **What is your opinion of the proposal to allow those on GRfW to receive EMA?**
  - **What impact do you think the extension of EMA to the GRfW would have on the programme? What about the impact on young people involved in ad hoc Life Skills provision?**

#### Financial Support for young people learning in a community or third sector setting

58. Section 1 of this consultation paper explores our proposals to improve the way we support and resource young people who are learning in a community or third sector setting.
59. Currently, those young people do not have access to any systematic financial support. In practice, ad hoc allowances may be paid, but these do not have any of the wider advantages (e.g. the passport against DWP benefits, or the clear link to attainment and progression) of EMA. Uncertainty over, or unavailability of, financial support may mean that some young people are unable to participate in non-formal learning, even where this would be the most appropriate learning option for them.
60. We must therefore consider how we can extend financial support to young people engaged in non-formal learning opportunities. This is an important step towards treating non-formal learning as an equally mainstream option for young people.
- **What is your opinion of the proposal to extend financial support to young people engaged in non-formal learning?**

- **What impact would this have on our proposals in Section 1? How can we integrate financial support into this approach?**
- **Should financial support for this group of young people be aligned to EMA?**

#### Young Person's Bridging Allowance

61. Young Persons Bridging Allowance (YPBA) is intended to support 16 and 17 year olds who are in transition between training places, and waiting for a suitable training place. It provides similar support for these young people as the Child Benefit "run on" period does to parents of those who are in between courses in full-time education.
  62. In April 2006, entitlement to Child Benefit was extended to unwaged trainees across the UK. In Scotland, this extension was to young people on Get Ready for Work and some Skillseekers. The English equivalent programmes are Entry to Employment and Programme Led Apprenticeship schemes. Child Benefit does not end immediately once a young person leaves these programmes but has a "run on" period of up to 20 weeks.
  63. Bridging Allowance is not available to young people for whom there is a Child Benefit entitlement. Because of this, the group of young people eligible for YPBA has reduced considerably, and it is only available to those leaving work, young offenders, and young people with disabilities for whom child and family benefits are not payable.
  64. The operation of the scheme means that Jobcentre Plus considers eligibility for the YPBA before Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) on the grounds of severe hardship. Last year, the UK Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) reviewed the need for YPBA in England. That review found that for young people who would be eligible for JSA on grounds of severe hardship, they are no better off receiving YPBA, and are worse off in some circumstances. Some stakeholders expressed concern that its closure might adversely impact on some young people who they felt might receive YPBA payments more readily than JSA on the grounds of severe hardship. As a result of that review, DCSF withdrew YPBA in England in October last year.
- **Do you think there is a continuing need for Young Person's Bridging Allowance?**
  - **What impact do you think there would be from removing it?**
  - **In what circumstances do you think a young person should access YPBA instead of other financial support?**

## **ANNEX A**

### **SUPPORT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE TO 16-19 YEAR OLDS**

1. The packages of support available to learners are determined more overtly by the type of learning they are undertaking, or the institution at which they are learning, rather than by the age of the learner. However, within the different learning sectors, the amount of support available is often differentiated on grounds of age. The below is a high-level summary and may not reflect support available in particular individual circumstances.

#### **Learning Opportunities for Which 16-19 Financial Support Is Available**

2. The following paragraphs summarise the support available to 16-19 year olds in different parts of the lifelong learning system. References to means-testing are on parental household income, though the means-test regime applied to that income may vary between programmes.

##### *School*

3. The provision of learning in state-funded schools is funded by local authorities – there is no upfront cost to the learner. Maintenance support to learners in school is provided through the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) programme, a scaled, means-tested entitlement of up to £30 per week. Local authorities also have the responsibility to provide transport for learners attending school. EMA is passported against benefits, which means that receipt of EMA will not affect any benefits entitlement. 16-19 year olds in school education remain eligible for Child Benefit (CB) and Child Tax Credits (CTC).

##### *College – further education*

4. Provision of non-advanced learning (further education) in colleges is funded through the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to colleges – for most full-time learners there is no upfront cost. Colleges receive a certain amount per learner from the SFC. Maintenance support for 16-17 year olds in colleges is provided through the EMA programme, a scaled, means-tested entitlement of up to £30 per week. Maintenance support for most 18-19 year olds in college is provided through further education bursaries. Bursaries are scaled, discretionary means-tested payments of up to around £80 a week. Discretionary decisions about bursary awards are made within the context of a national bursary policy, set by the SFC. While EMA is passported against benefits, FE bursaries are not. Where an 18 or 19 year old is in receipt of benefits in their own right, a bursary award counts as alternative funding and will reduce their benefits entitlement, which may result in them being worse off over-all; where this is the case, or for some other reason the learner will be made worse off by being awarded a bursary, an 18 or 19 year old will not be awarded a bursary, and may be awarded EMA instead. Colleges also provide assistance with travel expenses, additional needs support, and childcare costs. 16-19 year olds in further education remain eligible for CB and CTC.

##### *College / University – higher education*

5. Provision of higher education in universities or colleges is partly funded by the SFC, with tuition fees for individual learners being paid by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (though generally only for one degree's worth of learning). Maintenance support in HE is a scaled, means-tested entitlement, with both student loans and non-repayable bursary support available to young people (aged 16-25), to a total of around £80 per week. Institutions (both colleges and universities) also have funds available to help learners

with travel costs, additional needs support, and childcare. Student loans and Young Students' Bursary count as alternative funding for the purposes of DWP benefits. 16-19 year olds in higher education are not eligible for CB and CTC.

### *Modern Apprenticeships*

6. Modern Apprentices (MAs) are fully employed. They do not receive any maintenance support but are paid a wage by their employer. MAs are exempt from the national minimum wage but participation in the MA scheme guarantees that they will not receive less than they would as an unwaged trainee in receipt of a minimum training allowance (MTA), which is £55 per week. Actual salaries are a private matter between the employer and the MA but, in practice, we believe most MAs are paid substantially more than the MTA. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) contributes to the costs of provision of MA training, but most of those costs are borne by the employer. There is no specific public contribution to travel expenses, additional needs support, or childcare costs. As MAs are paid a salary, they will not be entitled to most DWP benefits. MAs are not eligible for CB and CTC.

### *Skillseekers*

7. 85% of Skillseekers are fully employed. As with MAs, they do not receive any maintenance support but are paid a wage by their employer, which must be at least as much as the MTA. Similarly, SDS contributes to the costs of provision, but most of those costs are borne by the employer. Those Skillseekers who are not waged receive the MTA. This is a flat-rate, non-means-tested entitlement of £55 per week. The full costs of provision for unwaged Skillseekers are met by SDS. There is no public contribution to travel expenses, additional needs support, or childcare costs. MTA counts as alternative funding for the purposes of DWP benefits. Unwaged Skillseekers are eligible for CB and CTC; employed Skillseekers are not.

### *Get Ready For Work*

8. Participants in Get Ready for Work, similarly to unwaged Skillseekers, receive MTA of £55 per week, and the costs of provision are met by SDS. There is no public contribution to travel expenses, additional needs support, or childcare costs. Get Ready for Work participants are eligible for CB and CTC. Young People who are participating in the Life Skills element of Get Ready for Work on a part-time basis (16-25 hours per week) receive a £40 allowance. Young people who are participating in Life Skills on a more ad hoc basis (15 hours per week or less) do not receive an allowance.

### *Full Time Volunteering*

9. Some full time volunteering projects such as Community Service Volunteers or ProjectScotland provide a small subsistence allowance which allows people to volunteer where they may not have been able to otherwise. In addition, there is no limit on the number of hours that people can volunteer and still claim benefits so long as they remain available for work and continue to meet the standard conditions of receiving benefit.

### *ILA Scotland*

10. ILA Scotland is available to young people from the age of 16. Although there are already a number of other schemes to encourage learning targeted at this age group, there is no other financial support for young people in low pay low skill employment. For those who earn less than £18,000 a year or are on benefits, ILA Scotland will provide £200 or £500 towards the cost of learning with a wide range of approved learning providers including

private and community based providers, colleges and some universities. This offers fee support to those young people who do not want to, or who are not yet ready to, participate in full-time HE or FE.

## **Learning Opportunities For Which No 16-19 Financial Support Is Available**

### *Community Learning and Development*

11. Community learning and development (CLD) opportunities for young people, offered by a range of providers across statutory and third sectors can be offered within frameworks developed by community learning and development partnerships, which are facilitated by local authorities. Other opportunities for non-formal learning offered most frequently by the third sector may be funded through a variety of means, e.g. Lottery grants or European Social Fund. While allowances may be available in certain local authority areas, and there may be some interaction with the New Deal for Young People and the Life Skills element of Get Ready for Work, there is no consistent programme of maintenance support available to young people engaged in this type of provision, and no systematic funding for provision or for other needs. Where a programme of learning or activity followed by a young person is full-time, post-compulsory and non-advanced, local authorities have – under existing legislation and guidance – the power to offer EMA to those young people. This power has, to date, not been widely used.

### *European Social Fund Projects*

12. ESF funding is available to a wide range of delivery agents across the spectrum of lifelong learning – FE colleges, local authorities, third sector organisations, training providers, and others are all eligible to bid for funding. Such projects may offer a “beneficiary allowance” to participants, which can be claimed by the organisation from ESF. There is no set level for the beneficiary allowance – each project can set its own level – and no strategic linkage between such allowances and the benefits system – each project is expected to negotiate with local JobCentre Plus offices.

## **16-19 Financial Support Which Is Independent Of Learning**

13. Note that other forms of assistance, e.g. Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, may be available to 16-19 year olds on top of the allowances detailed below.

### *Jobseeker's Allowance for 16-19 year olds*

14. Most 16-17 year olds are not eligible for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). Certain young people who are independent of their parents and who fit a range of other conditions, including a requirement to be registered with Careers Scotland, may be eligible. JSA for 16-17 year olds is currently £47.95 per week. The young person must be available for and actively seeking work, and must not be in full-time non-advanced education. Jobseeker's Allowance is also available at the rate of £47.95 per week to 18-24 year olds who are actively seeking work; the criteria for eligibility are less stringent than for 16-17 year olds.

### *Income Support for 16-19 year olds*

15. Income Support (IS) is available to those who are independent of their parents and who, for various reasons, are not able to work (e.g. caring responsibilities, disability, single parenthood). IS for 16-19 year olds is currently £ 47.95 per week.

### *New Deal for Young People (18-24)*

16. Young people aged 18-24 who have been continuously unemployed for 6 months must take part in the New Deal for Young People (NDYP). Those who have been unemployed for less than 6 months may be referred onto the programme.

- NDYP has four options for the young person:
- full-time education or training
- employment
- volunteering
- Environmental Task Force

17. NDYP participants on the full-time education or training option receive a payment equal to their previous JSA entitlement, plus a training premium – currently £15.83 per week. Those taking the employment option receive a wage from their employer. Those taking the volunteering or Environmental Task Force options will receive either a wage from their employer or a payment equal to their previous JSA entitlement, plus a training premium.

### *Incapacity Benefit*

18. 16-19 year olds may claim incapacity benefit if they have been sick or disabled for 28 weeks or more in a row and they are not in full-time education (21 hours or more per week). There are three rates of incapacity benefit – short term lower rate which is £63.75 per week, short term higher rate which is £75.40 per week, and long term basic rate which is £84.50 per week.

### *Young Person's Bridging Allowance*

19. If a young person aged 16-17 is registered with SDS but is currently in a gap between training placements or employment, they may be eligible for Young Person's Bridging Allowance (YPBA) if they experience financial hardship. YPBA is currently £15 per week for up to 8 weeks. Eligibility for YPBA is assessed before eligibility for JSA.

### *Young People in Care and Care Leavers*

20. Local authorities have a duty to provide financial support to young people aged 16 or 17 who are in care or leaving care. The exact amount given to individual young people is identified in a pathway assessment, but would be expected to meet the costs of rent, utility bills, food, household goods, insurance, clothing, travel and leisure. It should also be at least equivalent to the DWP benefits that would be available to 16 and 17 year olds at that time. This alignment with DWP benefits is important as young people move to the DWP system when they turn 18 and should not be faced with a loss of income at that point. Local authorities have the discretion to reduce payments according to savings or other income.

## ANNEX B

### EMA EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

1. Research studies into the EMA throw the effectiveness of the scheme into doubt as it seems clear that for large proportion of students the EMA did not have an impact on their decision to stay on. Although consideration of the different strands of research show a number of positive aspects to the EMA, particularly around improving attainment and retention, there are some important messages coming through about the wider value of the scheme and how well it meets its original objectives.
2. The original EMA pilots demonstrated that there was a positive impact on participation and retention in schools in the pilot areas. There was also evidence that there was an increase in attainment amongst the EMA group.
3. The Scottish Government publish an annual statistical analysis of the EMA<sup>3</sup> which shows how many young people have received an EMA, how much their weekly payment is and how many have achieved bonus payments. The statistics publication for 2006-07<sup>4</sup> demonstrated that 41% of all 16 year olds received an EMA. This raises the question as to whether its intended purpose can truly be achieved if such a high number of young people are in receipt of the EMA.
4. Government analysts are currently looking at linking this data into our wider statistical collections from schools so that EMA data can more effectively be matched to attainment.
5. A research report entitled *Young People's Awareness and Experience of EMAs and their Impact of Choices and Pathways*<sup>5</sup> was published in July 2007. The aim of the research was to gather young people's awareness and experience of the EMA and to assess the impact of EMA on young people's choices and pathways, in particular to assess whether the EMA encouraged those young people in need of more choices and more chances to remain in formal learning.
6. In the report, a number of positive effects were identified, including the improvement in the attendance and punctuality of some young people, increased retention in colleges, increased personal responsibility of young people and important financial support for college students. The statistical research into the pilots, which were limited to allowances to those from lowest income families, also found evidence that participation in post-compulsory education from low-income groups improved. In addition, the EMA has been generally well received by schools and colleges who have anecdotally reported improvements in student performance as a result of the scheme.
7. While there are a number of positives, the research study found that the majority of EMA recipients were studying highers and had planned to stay on at school regardless of the financial allowance. It found that the EMA was **not** an influential factor for the majority of young people in the study. This echoed the findings of an earlier English study, *Reflections of early leavers and second year participants on the EMA scheme* (2003)<sup>6</sup>. One of the main findings of this work was that for young people who have left Education, the EMA had not generally been a consideration when they were deciding to leave.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/12/18092401/0>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/12/18092401/0>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/07/30113243/0>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.crsp.ac.uk/projects/ema.html>

8. In addition, there was **limited** evidence to support the assertion that the EMA scheme is having a positive and direct impact on our most vulnerable young people across Scotland requiring more choices and more chances. However, both of these qualitative studies found that for a relatively small number of young people who were undecided as to what to do with post-compulsory education, the EMA encouraged them to stay on.
9. Another recent research report from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in England *Evaluation of the EMA National Roll-out (2007)*<sup>7</sup> which surveyed recipients and providers, echoed the findings of the previous qualitative research. It was found that the majority would have stayed in learning without the EMA. When this percentage is extrapolated nationally, the numbers are not insignificant – it is estimated that over 18,500 young people were retained in learning in 2004/05. However, this effect was strongly linked with the amount of EMA payment, with those in the lower bands (£10 and £20) being only half as likely as those in the highest payment band (£30) to say they wouldn't have continued without it. A clear message from the research was that the £10 award particularly seems to have had little impact upon participation rates.
10. The report also found that two thirds of respondents said that the EMA bonus made them work harder and the same proportion said that they attended more lessons because of the EMA attendance rule. These findings echo some of the positive points from the Scottish research.
11. Overall then, consideration of the different strands of research shows a number of positive aspects of the EMA particularly around improving attainment and retention. The research studies do throw the overall effectiveness of the scheme into doubt though as it seems clear that for a large proportion of students, the EMA did not have an impact on their decision to stay on. This suggests that the EMA is not delivering on its fundamental aim.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-emaevaluationreportnov07-jan2008.pdf>

## **ANNEX C**

### **LIST OF CONSULTEES**

Association of Scotland's Colleges  
CBI  
Commission for Racial Equality  
Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland  
Community Learning and Development Partnership lead officers  
Colleges  
COSLA  
Disability Rights Commission  
Equal Opportunities Commission  
Fairbridge  
Federation of Small Businesses  
Highlands and Islands Enterprise  
Institute of Directors  
Learning Link Scotland  
National Union of Students  
Prince's Trust Scotland  
Project Scotland  
Social Enterprise Academy  
SCDI  
Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People  
Scottish Chambers of Commerce  
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations  
Scottish Enterprise  
Scottish Financial Enterprise  
Scottish Funding Council  
Scottish Local Authorities  
Scottish MEPs  
Scottish Parliament Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee  
Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition  
Scottish Trades Unions Congress  
Scottish Training Action Group  
Scottish Training Federation  
Scottish Youth Parliament  
Skills Development Scotland  
The Smith Group  
Volunteer Development Scotland  
Young Scot  
Youthlink Scotland

## ANNEX D

### ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATION

1. This consultation is being issued to a wide range of stakeholders and is detailed in Annex D. Anyone that has an interest in the issues raised in this paper is encouraged to respond and we ask that respondents complete all sections of the consultation that they consider relevant.

#### Responding to this Consultation Paper

2. We are inviting written responses to this consultation by [16 February 2009]. Please send your response to:

Lorna Souter  
Scottish Government  
Lifelong Learning Directorate  
Enterprise and Employability for Young People Division  
Europa Building  
450 Argyle Street  
Glasgow  
G2 8LG

Or by email to:

[16+learningchoices@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:16+learningchoices@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

3. If you have any queries regarding please contact Lorna Souter on 0141 242 0134.
4. We would be grateful if you would clearly indicate on your response which questions or part of the consultation paper you are responding to as this will aid our analysis of the responses received.
5. This consultation, and all other Scottish Government consultations, can be viewed on the consultation web pages of the Scottish Government website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations>. You can Freephone 0800 77 1234 to find out where your nearest public internet access point is.
6. The Scottish Government has an email alert system for consultations (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Consultations/seConsult>). This system allows stakeholder individuals and organisations to register and receive a weekly email containing details of all new consultations (including web links). SEConsult compliments, but in no way replaces the Scottish Government distribution lists, and is designed to allow stakeholders to keep up to date with all Scottish Government consultation activity, and therefore be alerted at the earliest opportunity to those most of interest. We would encourage you to register.

#### Alternative Formats

7. The text to this consultation paper will be made available in alternative formats. Anyone requiring the document in an alternative format should contact Lorna Souter at the above address.

## Handling your Response

8. We need to know how you wish your response to be handled, and in particular, whether you are happy for your response to be made public. Please complete and return the **Respondent Information Form enclosed** with this consultation paper as this will ensure that we will treat your response appropriately. If you ask your response not to be published, we will regard as confidential and will treat accordingly.
9. All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

## Next Steps in the Process

10. Where respondents have given their permission for their responses to be made public (see the enclosed Respondent Information Form), these will be made available to the public in the Scottish Government Library by [20 March 2009] and on the Scottish Government consultation web pages by [20 March 2009]. We will check all responses where agreement to publish has been given for potentially defamatory material before logging them in the library or placing them on the website. You can make arrangements to view responses by contacting the Scottish Government Library on 0131 244 4552. Responses can be copied and sent to you, but a charge may be made for this service.

## What Happens Next

11. Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us reach a decision on the matters discussed. We aim to issue a report on this consultation by End May 2009.

## Comments and Complaints

12. If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to:

Lorna Souter  
Scottish Government  
Lifelong Learning Directorate  
Enterprise and Employability for Young People Division  
Europa Building  
450 Argyle Street  
Glasgow  
G2 8LG

or to [16+leaningchoices@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:16+leaningchoices@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

## ANNEX E

### RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

#### EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE (EMA) & OTHER SUPPORT FOR 16-19 YEAR OLDS

Please complete the details below and return it with your response. This will help ensure we handle your response appropriately. Thank you for your help.

Name:

Postal Address:

1. Are you responding: (please tick one box)
- (a) as an individual  go to Q2a/b and then Q4
- (b) **on behalf of** a group/organisation  go to Q3 and then Q4

#### INDIVIDUALS

- 2a. Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government website)?

Yes (go to 2b below)

No, not at all  we will treat your response as confidential

- 2b. **Where confidentiality is not requested**, we will make your response available to the public on the following basis (**please tick one** of the following boxes)

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

Yes, make my response available, but not my name or address

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

#### ON BEHALF OF GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS:

- 3 The name and address of your organisation **will be made available to the public** (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government website). Are you also content for your **response** to be made available?

Yes

No  We will treat your response as confidential

#### SHARING RESPONSES/FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

- 4 We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the Scottish Government to contact you again in the future in relation to this consultation response?

Yes

No

## ANNEX F

### THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION PROCESS

1. Consultation is an essential and important aspect of Scottish Government working methods. Given the wide-ranging areas of work of the Scottish Government, there are many varied types of consultation. However, in general, Scottish Government consultation exercises aim to provide opportunities for all those who wish to express their opinions on a proposed area of work to do so in ways which will inform and enhance that work.

2. The Scottish Government encourages consultation that is thorough, effective and appropriate to the issue under consideration and the nature of the target audience. Consultation exercises take account of a wide range of factors, and no two exercises are likely to be the same.

3. Typically Scottish Government consultations involve a written paper inviting answers to specific questions or more general views about the material presented. Written papers are distributed to organisations and individuals with an interest in the issue, and they are also placed on the Scottish Government web site enabling a wider audience to access the paper and submit their responses. Consultation exercises may also involve seeking views in a number of different ways, such as through public meetings, focus groups or questionnaire exercises. Copies of all the written responses received to a consultation exercise (except those where the individual or organisation requested confidentiality) are placed in the Scottish Government library at Saughton House, Edinburgh (K Spur, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD, telephone 0131 244 4565).

4. All Scottish Government consultation papers and related publications (e.g., analysis of response reports) can be accessed at: [Scottish Government consultations](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations) (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations>).

5. The views and suggestions detailed in consultation responses are analysed and used as part of the decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review
- inform the development of a particular policy
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented

6. Final decisions on the issues under consideration will also take account of a range of other factors, including other available information and research evidence.

**7. While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body.**

## **ANNEX G**

### **List of Consultation Questions**

Thank you for taking the time to contribute to the consultation on 16+ Learning Choices: First Steps and Financial Support.

You do not need to answer all of the questions.

All responses will be considered.

#### **Activity Agreements**

1. How do we ensure that the learning and support that young people engage in is of sufficiently high quality?
2. Please give your views on how a balance may be struck between flexibility and accreditation and what approach/structures should be adopted to ensure that this is the case.
3. How could we develop a coherent measure of success for organisations engaged in this type of activity with young people?
4. Which types of existing activity should we include in our development of an Activity Agreement approach? Please comment on the proposal to include (a) community learning and development opportunities and (b) volunteering opportunities.
5. Do you think there are any important subcategories or distinctions to be made?
6. Do you think there are any other learning options or opportunities for personal and social development which should be available to young people that have not been discussed above? What are they?
7. Would some young people benefit from a “broker” to negotiate the right opportunities for them? Should that broker be able to commission services focused on individual young people? Please explain your answer.
8. Do you think that commissioning services on behalf of individual young people would assist in enabling access to a range of options? Would there be any constraints for providers in responding to this model of commissioning?
9. Do you have any views on how that might operate in Scotland?
10. Do you think this more strategic commissioning role would add value?
11. How might this operate?
12. Do you have any further comments on the type of activity which might qualify for Activity Agreements or how such a programme might operate?
13. Given the particular needs of the young people who would be involved in activity agreements, how might the scheme be most effectively administered?

## Financial Support

14. What is your view on the impact of the EMA scheme overall? (Please comment on the scheme's impact upon post-16 participation, retention and achievement rates as well as any effects the scheme might have had upon behaviour, attendance and attitude of students).
15. In your opinion, does the degree of impact vary according to the level of payment (i.e. £30, £20, £10)?
16. How could EMA be targeted more effectively?
17. Are the current conditions attached to the weekly payment appropriate (i.e. based on 100% attendance)? (If yes, please explain your answer. If no, please suggest ways in which this should be revised.)
18. What is the current impact of the bonus payment? Is this current amount appropriate? Please provide an explanation for your answer.
19. Please give your views on the proposal to align income assessment for parity among FE students.
20. How effective is the learning agreement system?
21. Please comment on the proposal to extend the system of learning agreements to other forms of learning or training.
22. Please comment on any specific issues you think may arise in relation to the school or college sectors as a result of these proposals.
23. Please give your opinion on the proposal to remove the lower payments from the scheme (i.e. £10, £20) and to retain £30 payments. What impact do you think this would have?
24. If we remove the £10 and £20 payments, do you think £30 is still appropriate?
25. In your opinion, should children living in the same household who are in full time education be considered in the income assessment for EMA?
26. What is your opinion on how the EMA is currently delivered?
27. Do you think the EMA should continue to be delivered in the same way, so that it benefits from local input, or should delivery be centralised so that it is more consistent across the country?
28. Does the current higher training allowance of £55 per week skew the educational choices of individuals?
29. What is your opinion of the proposal to allow those on GRfW to receive EMA?

30. What impact do you think the extension of EMA to the GRfW would have on the programme? What about the impact on young people involved in ad hoc Life Skills provision?
- i. Do you think there is a continuing need for Young Person's Bridging Allowance?
  - ii. What impact do you think there would be from removing it?
  - iii. In what circumstances do you think a young person should access YPBA instead of other financial support?