



House of Commons
Education Committee

Participation by 16–19 year olds in education and training

Fourth Report of Session 2010–12

Volume III

Additional written evidence

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The Education Committee

The Education Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Education and its associated public bodies.

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Mr David Wickwar

Jo Sugrue

Letters from Swallow Hill Community College, Leeds

Cath Hepburn, Lecturer, and two students from City of Sunderland College

Jules Pipe, Mayor of Hackney, on behalf of the London Borough of Hackney (Annex A)

Written evidence

Written evidence submitted by Mrs K Cleave

I would like to express my concerns regarding EMA grant cuts.

As a mother of a son in his early twenties, who was in receipt of this grant whilst studying for two years at college, to obtain his business studies BTEC National Diploma, which enabled him to pursue his career, and become a useful member of society, who is currently employed in a well paid position, because of the opportunity to attend further education, I would like to tell you how much this grant helped him.

Due to family circumstances—I am a carer for his stepfather, with multiple health problems, the costs of attending college, eg bus fares, and equipment etc were difficult to find. The EMA grant was a necessity, not a luxury, for his future prospects.

I strongly disagree with cutting this grant.

There are countless young people who are hardworking and are willing to learn, who come from poor backgrounds, and need a helping hand to achieve their ambitions.

To remove this grant will remove their opportunity to improve their lives.

It is not a great deal of money each week, but can make the difference between attending/not being able to attend college.

I have read that it is sometimes referred to as a grant that is used by young people to waste/buy alcohol etc.

I do not know of any young person that wastes the grant money.

The EMA grant paid for necessities, and was greatly appreciated.

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE DO NOT STOP THIS NECESSARY GRANT FOR OUR POOREST HARDWORKING FUTURE GENERATION.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Sue Ballard

Please consider the impact that scrapping the EMA payments will have on middle class families. My daughter is 17 and currently studying Level 11 hairdressing full time at college.

As a family I am working single Mum of three, the EMA payments contribute in helping my daughter to travel to college and buy equipment as and when needed. The EMA payments also act as a reward in encouraging her to be punctual. Her attendance is excellent and each week she looks forward to payment as an incentive. What incentive will she have if you stop the payments?

I cannot afford to give my daughter an EMA payment, I am stretched to the limit financially as it is. I cannot cut back anymore than what I am already and the government are squeezing families like mine already.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Mrs Sam Newman-Mckie

Please do not link the replacement of the EMA scheme to the benefits system: **working** single parents on low incomes do not qualify for income support and therefore free school meals but struggle to find the money for children to get to college.

(My daughter gets £30 EMA and pays £25 per week for a train pass to college.

Without it she could not have gone to the academically best Sixth Form College in our area but would have had to go to a less suitable institution nearby.)

We would have been satisfied with a free travel pass instead of EMA, based on household income.

25 March 2011

Ev w2 Education Committee: Evidence**Written evidence submitted by Careers South West Limited**

1. The rapidly increasing competitiveness of the global economy means that this country must discover, develop and deploy the talents of all its young people if it is to remain in the game as a leading economy. Too often in the past many young people have not seen the possibilities open to them at first. This is where impartial and independent career information, advice and guidance can put them in touch with future possibilities.

2. The idea of “short term pain, long term gain” is difficult to understand if your family have significant financial worries. This is exacerbated if there is little history of commitment to extended education within the family or community. Transition support starting in the last years at school and continuing for a number of years after is vital to ensure young people remain engaged and progress.

3. The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) has helped to counter the argument that the young person needs to leave school and find work to bring money into the household. Reducing this anxiety has meant more young people have had a wider range of learning and career pathways open to them and a longer spell in education should enable them to increase their qualifications for the benefit of them as individuals and for society.

4. There is a danger that the move to a Discretionary Learner Support Fund will bring uncertainty back into many young people’s minds. This means the raising of the participation in learning agenda is more likely to be seen as a negative in their eyes.

5. With the move from the EMA to the Discretionary Learner Support Fund good career guidance will become even more important to encourage and support young people’s engagement in learning. Yet there is a very real danger that changes in the way this service is funded will significantly reduce the amount of time available in schools to support career decision making. Removing the statutory requirement for a school to deliver careers education will also weaken those mechanisms that support young people’s transition into adult life.

6. Good career guidance helps individuals recognise their potential and show the possibilities open to them. To support young people’s participation in learning and work the Government should develop systems for the all-age career service that demonstrate that the service:

- raises aspirations;
- removes barriers to learning and work;
- increases understanding of career pathways and what is required to take them;
- develops career management skills in individuals to be successful in learning and work; and
- supports individuals make good career decisions.

7. Career guidance has the potential to bring big benefits to the individual and society but at the time of access the individuals may not recognise the benefits immediately. The careers service pays back the investment in it over time, to cut it drastically now, along with many other services, to young people is a false economy.

8. If the Government is to stop the EMA at the same time as raising participation in learning the case for independent, impartial career guidance available to all young people becomes even more important. With challenging but appropriate measures in place to monitor the all-age career service there is a real opportunity to impact positively on the lives of young people. Doing so will give the country a real chance of remaining competitive in the global economy and help individuals raise skill levels.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Saint John Fisher Catholic College

(1) (a) Evidence in each cohort of each of the following:

- (i) Individuals with good GCSE grades who are strong A level candidates whom we would want to encourage to move on to university but who would struggle without the EMA and without the very tiny level of independence it has offered. It has also served to encourage parents to support youngster’s decision.
- (ii) Individual where families may not be in the lowest earning bracket but for whom the capacity to access EMA can reduce the burden on families and thus raise the chances of them completing A levels and progress to HE.
- (iii) Able but aimless young people who might otherwise enrol at a college but drop out or drift from one course to another before dropping out but for whom the structure of sixth form contributes to them achieving success. If EMA is not available many of these will drift without even enrolling at a college thus becoming NEET.
- (iv) The Discretionary Learner Support Fund, if targeted only at the very lowest income level will contribute to a massive rise in NEETs and to a stark division between those in education post 16 (those families who can easily afford to maintain 16—19 year olds) and the majority. In areas such as Stoke on Trent and the most deprived areas of Newcastle under Lyme many of even the

most supportive parents struggle to support 16—19 years old in full time education. There is a very clear danger that post 16 education could quickly become the preserve of the affluent and it is difficult to banish the fear that this may be the political intention.

2004–05—pre EMA

Total Numbers	
Y12	88
Y13	59
Total	147

2005–06

66 students on EMA 44.6% of cohort

Total Numbers	
Y12	89
Y13	59
Total	148

83.1% of Y13 students progressed to University

2006–07

64 students on EMA 47.4% of cohort

Total Numbers	
Y12	62
Y13	73
Total	135

75.3% of Y13 students progressed to University

2007–08

44 students on EMA 34.9% of cohort

Total Numbers	
Y12	67
Y13	59
Total	126

100% of Y13 students progressed to University

2008–09

53 students on EMA 44.9% of cohort

Total Numbers:	
Y12	71
Y13	63
Total	134

74.6% of Y13 students progressed to University

2009–10

61 students on EMA 50% of cohort

Total Numbers	
Y12	69
Y13	69
Total	138

59.4% of Y13 students progressed to University

2010–11

60 students on EMA 44.9% of cohort

Total Numbers:	
Y12	88
Y13	59
Total	147

84.7% of Y13 students applied to University

(b) Salient Features

- (i) There have been year on year rises in total student figures each year since 2007–08.
- (ii) % of cohort obtaining EMA runs at an average of 45% of students.
- (iii) Increasing EMA figures in line with decreasing % of students going on to HE indicate we are attracting a wider range of students not just those who wish to study at level 4. Many more students are leaving education now with level 3 qualifications rather than level 2 qualifications.
- (iv) Retention of students from year 12 into the following year 13 has increased by 30% since the introduction of EMA.

Ev w4 Education Committee: Evidence

- (v) Students in receipt of EMA regularly apply to Oxbridge universities. We currently have two students who continued their studies at Oxford—reading Medicine and Law.
- (2) (a) In order to prepare for the raising of the participation age to 18 years providers and local authorities need to have confidence that the qualifications offered will be respected by government. They also need adequate and guaranteed levels of funding.
- (b) The removal of entitlement of funding for post 19 students in FE will lead to a frenzy of aggressive recruitment by FE Colleges. This will destroy existing partnerships and collaborative arrangements between schools and colleges at post 16 level and will almost certainly lead to the destruction of substantial numbers of school sixth forms. It has been clear for some time that this is the preferred outcome for government and colleges. A number of practical and moral difficulties are presented by this scenario, not least that it could entirely eliminate the rights of parents and young people to choose denominational education from 3—19. This is a basic human rights issue.
- (c) This school is working with two other Catholic voluntary aided schools in the area to set up a formal collaborative/federation of sixth forms so that we can:
- (i) Enable parents to choose a Catholic school secure in the availability of 3—19 provision,
 - (ii) Offer a broader range of both A level and other level 3 courses.
 - (iii) Offer some level 2 courses especially to enable young people to secure the English Baccalaureate benchmark and thus enhance their progress to level 3 and HE.
- (3) (a) The impact of raising the participation age will be limited unless the government proposes to legislate to prohibit employers from taking on under 17's and then under 18's full time in line with the existing situation with 16 year olds. In situations where providers have already begun to consider the implications of RPA and where recruitment to courses is carefully matched to the needs and proper progression routes of individual students there could be a genuine increase in academic achievement. Where providers recruit numbers onto courses without ensuring the relevance of course to prior attainment, aptitude, interest and progress routes there will be a serious mismatch between number of courses and the provision of suitable courses. This will lead to discontent, disaffection, problems with attendance and behaviour and is likely to result in the disengagement of substantial number of 16—19 years olds. The resulting impact on society in terms of low skills, unemployment, anti-social behaviour, deterioration on the mental health and general well being of young people and the financial cost of responding to these issues will be colossal.
- (b) A much understated issue is the proportion of 16 year olds, greater in some schools and areas than in others, who despite the vast time and resources devoted to encouraging them into good provision have no intention of engaging with education and/or training and whose families see no value in encouraging or supporting them to engage. It will not be reasonable for schools or colleges to be held accountable for the non engagement of this group when dedicated support, well thought out alternative provision and superb pastoral care have not succeeded in engaging some beyond the age of 12 or 13. Is the intention to criminalise these young people or to operate a coercive benefits system? This would place unacceptable pressures on schools, colleges and other post 16 providers in terms of policing, attendance, behaviour and general compliance. In turn this would lead to a lowering of achievement across the body of engaged students as a result of the tense and fractured atmosphere in which they would be trying to learn and their teachers trying to teach.
- (c) The recently announced removal of entitlement funding for adults in FE is likely to lead unscrupulous recruitment of 16—19 year olds, with scant attention being paid to matching provision to needs. It seems a strange way to raise the skills level of the general population and make more people employable and productive. Some of those who offer alternative provision could be driven to and beyond the brink of survival, if the loss of post 19 funding applies to them.
- (d) Unless very careful thought is given to implementation, and unless there is clear statutory oversight the danger exists that rather than raising skills, improving education outcomes and increasing employability these policies could be responsible for disempowering a significant section of the population for several generations. The additional outcome of bankrupting the economy will follow when large numbers of poorly qualified, unskilled people are unable to access what few jobs exist.
- (e) While many of these governments proposals have aspects of considerable merit there seems to be an absence of coherent thinking linking the effects of one area upon another. Seeking to achieve what are no doubt intended to be worthwhile outcomes while simultaneously dramatically reducing funding will create problems for which solutions prove costly both financially and in terms of social and community cohesion and well being.

As the Headteacher of a Catholic 11—18 school which has recently been graded outstanding for community cohesion, inclusion and partnership working by both Ofsted and diocesan inspection I am concerned for the future of young people in our community.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Audit Commission

SUMMARY

- There have been recent improvements in increasing participation for 16–18 year olds, but there is a risk that Raising the Participation Age (RPA) will simply delay the point at which young people become unemployed, or not involved in training.
- Without a suitable and sustainable offer of high quality education and training, RPA may not be able to prevent long-term problems for a vulnerable group of young people.
- There is a risk that sufficient provision for RPA will not be available to the planned timetable.
- Resources could be allocated between universal and targeted services better by using available information about young children and 16–19 year olds who already are, or are at risk, or being unemployed or not engaged in training.
- The range of services that support young people should be coordinated to improve impact and reduce wasteful duplication.
- Early intervention, in primary and early secondary schooling, will help ensure that 16–19 year olds choose the right education or training, and prevent young people becoming unemployed in the future.

INTRODUCTION

1. This submission covers two items in the inquiry's terms of reference:

- What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness?
- What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision?

PROVIDERS' READINESS FOR THE GRADUAL RPA TO 18

2. Local authorities and other providers must ensure they have suitable and sustainable services to support RPA. Councils and their partners need to understand the profile of their population of young people and the research about what works. We found that better use of information, collaboration among providers and early intervention can improve opportunities for 16–19 year-olds:

- Better use of information about 16–19 year-olds at risk of becoming unemployed or not in training, will improve allocation of resources among universal and targeted services. Information must be relevant, high-quality and well-presented (**Ref 1**). Local areas should use local information to understand the nature of their 16–19 year-old population. With this information they can identify barriers to progression, and take action to deal with them. Connexions teams in rural Gloucestershire, for example, had struggled to meet their targets for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) because there was little local education, training or employment provision. A jointly funded Connexions and LSC project mapped what was available and developed ways to make projects more accessible. This mapping led to one provider developing projects in rural areas that used outreach methods to give young people access to services. LSC funding supported bespoke provision for young people with specific barriers to entering work. Connexions also reviewed local public transport and arranged support for young people to overcome their mobility problems (**Ref 2**).
- The range of services that support young people should be coordinated and there should be no duplication of resources. Commissioners and providers should take an approach that centres on young people and ensures closer integration of services to avoid duplication. Schools, colleges and other providers can collaborate to bring the best curriculum offer to young people and, where possible, share staff resources and locations. In Tower Hamlets, schools identify young people at risk of not participating in education or training. Connexions ensures these young people can take part in positive activities and have identified, applied for, and signed up to suitable work and learning options. There is a 70% success rate.

Ev w6 Education Committee: Evidence

- Intervention will support 16–19 year olds to remain in education or training. Local action to encourage young people to participate must include effective pre-16 support through schools and children's services and through Connexions to prevent young people becoming unemployed or not in training. There should also be effective and sustained support for 16–19 year olds from schools, colleges and Connexions services. The new All Age Career Service, operational from September 2011, will need to make sure that early intervention is a priority. Early intervention and a high-quality transition for young people between primary and secondary school are crucial. Schools have a vital role in identifying young people at risk of not participating in education and training, and ensuring they get the right support. Our briefings for schools and colleges (Ref 3, 4) provide practical tools to help them think about early intervention and a collaborative approach. Interventions for the current group of young people who may not participate must focus on their personal problems and barriers. In Rotherham, the council negotiated individual targets with schools to increase the number of young people who progressed into education and training. The numbers of young people who participated in education, employment and training increased from 92% in 2007 to 94% in 2008.

PROVIDERS' CURRENT STATE OF READINESS

3. **There is a serious risk that sufficient provision for RPA will not be available to the planned timetable.** In the current economic climate there are greater pressures on providers to make resources go further, while demand for places is rising. With the high entry requirements for apprenticeships, this suggests greater competition for places—isolating those 16–19 year-olds at risk of not being able to participate in education or training. With reductions in government grants and less ring fencing, local commissioners and providers must review how low-cost interventions at age 16–19, or earlier, can bring large savings in the medium and long-term. Our report illustrated how the right level of low cost support from Connexions to a teenage mother brought about a net contribution to the public purse of £90,000 over her lifetime. This compares to a net cost to the public purse of £197,000 for a scenario where there is no early intervention.

IMPACT OF RPA

4. For RPA to be successful there must be suitable and sustainable local provision for young people. Taken alone, there is a risk that RPA will only delay to age 19 the point at which young people become unemployed. RPA must be complemented by quality education, employment and training opportunities for post 19 year olds.

- **There have been recent improvements in increasing participation levels for 16–18 year olds.** Between 2007 and 2009, 68 per cent of local areas significantly increased participation levels for 16–18 year olds. The September Guarantee, combined with Educational Maintenance Allowances, alongside the breadth of courses on offer to young people at the time, acted as the incentive to continue with education and training. As unemployment rose and the prospect of a job diminished, many young people decided to pursue further education or training. However, while the number of young people remaining in education has improved, there remain risks for the future employability of some 16–19 year olds. The picture is not as encouraging for 18–24 year olds. In the same period, from 2007–09, 85% of local areas saw an increase in 18–24 unemployment—most by more than 20%. Therefore, while local areas have reduced 16–18 NEET levels, there is a risk the problem is postponed until young people are older.
- **Therefore RPA may not be able to prevent long-term problems for vulnerable young people.** *Against the Odds* identified three major risk factors for young people who may not participate in education or training: loss of self-esteem, boredom and depression, and falling into crime. These create costs to the public purse over the medium and long term (police, probation and prisons, NHS, benefits, social housing and so on); and opportunity costs in losses to the economy. Our research estimated this could cost more than £22 billion over the lifetime of the current group of young people who are not in education, employment or training. The average cost for each young person NEET in 2008 was £56,000 in public finance costs and £104,000 in opportunity costs. There is a risk that, if there is not a high quality of education and training, RPA will not prevent those most vulnerable young people from suffering long-term problems.

25 March 2011

REFERENCES

- Ref 1.** Audit Commission Is there something I should know? Making the most of your information to improve services Audit Commission 2009
- Ref 2** Against the odds—re-engaging young people in education, employment or training Audit Commission, 2010
- Ref 3.** Against the odds—re-engaging young people in education, employment or training—briefing for schools, Audit Commission, 2010

Ref 4. Against the odds—re-engaging young people in education, employment or training—briefing for colleges and sixth forms, Audit Commission, 2010

Written evidence submitted by the Young Nottingham Select Committee, Nottingham City Council

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Young Nottingham Select Committee is an overview and scrutiny committee of Nottingham City Council. Its membership comprises City councillors and representatives of relevant groups in the community, including parents, school governors and church dioceses. The role of the Committee is to review and scrutinise issues relating to children and young people in Nottingham.

2. SUBMISSION

2.2 This submission relates primarily to the first strand of the inquiry's terms of reference relating to "what impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it".

2.3 In December 2010 the Young Nottingham Select Committee held a meeting to consider the changes to Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), as part of an exploration of the potential impact of changes in further and higher education on young people in Nottingham and risks to the City's objectives of raising aspiration and enabling more of our young people to attain higher level qualifications and access employment. Witnesses called to give evidence at the meeting included pro-vice chancellors from two universities in the City, a principal of a large further education college in the City, those currently working on schemes such as Aimhigher and students studying in the City. The aim of the meeting was to identify the implications for young people in Nottingham and to explore possible actions to mitigate any negative impacts on young people.

2.4 A number of findings were made by the Committee, including:

- The continued increases in participation post-16 since the introduction of EMA suggest a positive impact is attributable to its availability.
- A significant proportion of current EMA recipients were previously not in education, employment or training and therefore the withdrawal of EMA is likely to have a negative impact on the number of NEET young people in the City.
- A range of evidence suggests that a significant proportion of EMA funding is used by students to cover transport costs. The existing criteria for the Discretionary Learner Support Fund only enables providers to award funding to meet individual learners' transport costs on a temporary basis and cannot be used to routinely fund transport costs for learners aged 16–18 years. This could be a particular issue for students accessing specialist courses delivered at institutions further from their home.
- It is important that funding for the Discretionary Learner Support Fund is sufficient to address the support needs of learners, with a methodology that accurately reflects the level of need.
- It is important for students, and potential students to be fully aware of the full range of support options available to them so that decisions can be made in an informed way.
- Programmes such as Aimhigher have also contributed to the cultural shift in Nottingham towards participation in further education, but the withdrawal of funding for this programme means that such activity to widen participation will have to be undertaken by existing organisations and programmes.

2.5 Following consideration of evidence presented to it, the Young Nottingham Select Committee concluded that abolition of EMA has the potential to damage the significant progress made in recent years in Nottingham to not only raise post-16 participation but also the improvements made to retention and achievement rates in further education. As an outcome from the meeting the Committee wrote to John Hayes, MP in his capacity as Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning, raising a number of issues to assist in mitigating the risks felt to exist. These were:

- Enabling all students engaged in learning during the 2011–12 academic year to have equal access to funding support, regardless of the timing of their application.
- Given that information shows a significant proportion of EMA funding is used by students for transport costs, removing current criteria of the Discretionary Learner Support Fund that prevents the fund from being used "to routinely fund transport costs for learners aged 16–18, including any learners who have chosen not to attend an institution closer to their home address offering the same provision".
- Ensuring funding available through the Discretionary Learner Support Fund accurately reflects need, for example including recent EMA take-up as part of the allocation methodology.
- Maintaining the guarantee for students currently accessing EMA that they can access the maximum level of funding from the Higher Education Student Support Guarantee; and maintaining a similarly progressive measure in new arrangements.

Ev w8 Education Committee: Evidence

2.6 The findings from this review are submitted as evidence to the inquiry of the Education Committee.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Catholic Education Service for England and Wales**1. INTRODUCTION**

This response is made on behalf of the Catholic Education community by the Catholic Education Service for England and Wales (CESEW), the strategic body acting as the Catholic Bishops' agent on educational matters in England and Wales. This submission, therefore, speaks on behalf of the Bishops and others involved in Catholic Education nationally.

2. What is the Government's policy for 16–19 Education and Training?

- (i) We know that the Government intends to raise the age for participation in education to 17 in the year 2013 and to 18 years in the year 2015. We also understood that it is policy to ensure that young people between 16–19 remain in education or training but we are now challenged by what we see happening. This is both in terms of the removal of EMA and other changes to Further Education funding so that we no longer feel confident in saying that it is policy that young people should remain in education or training until 18 years. This is because some of the recent actions, by the removal of EMA for example, and the reduction in entitlement funding, coupled with the effects of the recession, seem to militate against this aim.
- (ii) The evidence from our Sixth Form colleges and schools is that instead of keeping the upward trend of retention at 16, the removal of the EMA and other reductions in funding will deter young people from staying on into Further Education (and by implication, mean that they do not progress to Higher Education). At a time when unemployment is rising, why would Government create policy or fund in ways which are likely to increase the number of young people not in education or training? This would mean that there are more young people on the streets, aspirations are depressed and the cycle of disadvantage spirals downwards, reducing examples of bucking the trend re good practice and hopes; what example will this send to upcoming cohorts of young people? Whilst we understand that Government has to make financial savings in the current time, we suggest that education and the wellbeing of young people is the last place where cuts should be made; such young people are the future talent and infrastructure of our society and we should be making due investment in this for the wellbeing of all our communities, now and for the generations to come.
- (iii) If they are not in employment or training, young people are likely to begin an early reliance on benefits. I am advised by Headteachers and Principals that they fear that a statutory requirement to remain in education until 17 and then 18 will be insufficient to ensure that young people comply if they see no benefit to them in terms of future opportunities and current support. Making it harder for young people to remain in education by the removal of the EMA and reduced entitlement (see below) is a very unhelpful sign to all young people and one with very hard practical consequences for many. Young people are not only affected by the removal of EMA but other financial cuts too, for example, in Manchester the Integrated Transport Authority's removal of concessionary fares. Thus 16–19 year olds are affected by a multiplicity of harsh financial factors.

3. What our schools and colleges tell us about the impact of the EMA and its removal:

- (i) High proportions of students in our Catholic Sixth Form colleges are currently in receipt of EMA, eg 60% at Xaverian College in Manchester, the same level at Christ the King Sixth Form College in Lewisham, East London. Similar figures are found across our other Sixth Form colleges and in many of our schools' Sixth Forms. Many of these institutions are doing a sterling job in terms of breaking the cycle of disadvantage experienced by many students (see below).
- (ii) The EMA enables those in challenging family financial circumstances to continue their education from 16–19, chiefly because it enables the student to afford travel to college, their lunch and the purchase of necessary text books and materials (bearing in mind these are not provided in colleges).
- (iii) Families facing financial difficulties reportedly tend to prioritise their younger children, ie those at Primary school or up to 16 in Secondary schools, for support. If resources will not stretch, it is the 16–19 year old's support that families reluctantly cut back on. Some students also tell us that they withdraw themselves from education if they fear that they are being a burden to their parents or standing in the way of their younger siblings. Having an EMA is a way of taking away the guilt, enabling the young person to remain in Further Education.
- (iv) We have numerous examples of how the EMA support makes a very positive difference. In particular, for example, it enables young people to choose Further Education provision that best matches their needs rather than necessarily being siphoned to the closest to avoid travel costs. At Xaverian College, Manchester, for example, a student wrote of the way in which Xaverian was able to provide him with the subject combinations that he most wanted, enabling him to now progress to study medicine at Oxford. The subject combination was not available at his local FE college and without the EMA he

could not have afforded the travel to Xaverian college. This student's father is unable to work because of long term illness. Another student from Xaverian studies French and Spanish at Oxford but reports that her basic needs for material and travel expenses to enable her study of French, Spanish, English Literature and English Language at A Level at Xaverian would not have been possible without an EMA. She is from a single parent family.

- (v) Students and teaching staff have told us of the spur that EMA provides to attendance and application to work. As one student put it, she struggles because of personal issues, but the EMA gives her the extra incentive, helps her to resist the temptation to take a day off or leave early because she focuses on targets to get her EMA for the week. Staff say that the leverage of the EMA has helped them to monitor and support young people, drawing them into greater confidence in their own abilities, helping them to see what they can achieve when they try, all the time building confidence and developing more independent, mature learners with that all important motivation to succeed, accompanied by high aspirations for the future. It helps staff to establish a contractual, supportive relationship with the student and a symbiosis that helps the student to stick at it and to achieve. This is no mean feat for such a relatively small sum of money and the sense of being valued and worth it.
- (vi) Enabling young people to remain in education at 16 years can have a very positive effect on their communities and community cohesion. Many of the young people at Christ the King Sixth Form College in Lewisham, for example, are classified as disadvantaged by the YPLA (66%) and 85% of their students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The College was ranked 15th highest in the country for students in receipt of EMA. Despite serving an area of high deprivation, success rates at the College are outstanding and above the average for Sixth Form colleges in the country. Every year over 500 students progress to university and this important progression route has a significant impact in terms of the promotion of local community cohesion. The College notes that students in receipt of EMA often come from families and areas where disadvantage is multi-layered; it expects the impact of the withdrawal of the EMA scheme to have significant impact on the welfare of nearly 1,000 students from among its total student population of 1,618 young people. Many of the young people come from areas where there is a pervading youth and gang culture; continuing in education keeps them away from this and helps them to resist its pressures.
- (vii) At a depressed time in our economy and, consequently, in our communities, young people remaining in education is uplifting to that local community and enhances spirit and hope.

4. Entitlement funding and pastoral care

There is great concern in the Catholic sector about the reduced funding for colleges through the reduction in entitlement from 114 guided learning hours to 30. Entitlement supports the student through a range of critical activities including: tutorials; the development of transferable skills and studies skills; pastoral care, support and intervention; sport; drama; art; music; Duke of Edinburgh and expeditions and educational visits; experience in debate and public speaking, to name but some of the aspects. These areas of personal growth are vital to the young person's learning and development and are key to narrowing the gap—both that of social disadvantage, sense of self worth and overall educational progression.

5. Keeping Catholic provision

Catholic provision does an excellent job of educating young people between the ages of 16–19. It has the confidence of both student and parents and for many will offer them continuity in Catholic education as they remain in their school's Sixth Forms. This enables their education to continue in a climate where their religion is respected (whether they are Catholic or not) and in a climate of values and a model of the human person that helps the student to flourish. In our Sixth Form colleges many students will have previously been in our schools but move across because there is no Sixth Form in their school. However, nearly 50% of the overall population of our Sixth Form colleges is made up of students who are not Catholic and may not have been in Catholic schools. They clearly make the personal choice to come to one of our colleges and the excellent results speak for themselves. These points are rehearsed to emphasise the continuing need to make Further Education with a distinctive religious character available to students. Choice helps to motivate and demonstrates respect for the student.

6. CONCLUSION

Keeping young people in education from 16–19 is crucial to breaking cycles of disadvantage and to changing the life chances of young people. To state the obvious, if young people are not in Further Education they will be very unlikely to find their way into Higher Education. Investing in young people's education pays dividends to them personally and to society. We are fully supportive of the raising of the participation age and see it as a potential opportunity to further enhance the learning and lives of young people. However, a robust progression infrastructure needs to be in place to support the benefits of staying on in education. Although this consultation is not dealing with Higher Education, it would be remiss not to point out the fears that we have for young people and their educational progression because of the cuts in HE funding, the possible reduction in places available and the increase in fees—all of which may serve to dissuade them from seeing university as a realistic progression route.

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Finally, I would like to quote one of our Headteachers. She states that:

“While many of the Government’s proposals have aspects of considerable merit, there seems to be an absence of coherent thinking linking the effects of one area upon another. Seeking to achieve what are no doubt intended to be worthwhile outcomes whilst simultaneously dramatically reducing funding will create problems for which solutions prove costly both financially and in terms of social and community cohesion and wellbeing.”

The same Headteacher expresses her concerns that the economy will be bankrupt when large numbers of poorly qualified, unskilled people are unable to access what few jobs exist. An outcome which none of us would wish to see and which is undoubtedly not the intention of Government but it is stated as a wakeup call and an expression of the real anxiety that very seasoned and successful educators have about the future of 16–19 Participation in Education and Training.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by the National Foundation Educational Research

1. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the Education Committee’s New Inquiry: 16–19 Participation in Education and Training and to contribute to policy thinking for this priority area of the Coalition Government. Key national statistics relating to categories of the 16–19 age group show how pertinent the New Inquiry is: 8.5% of the 16–18 age group are young people not in education, employment or training (DfE, 2011) and 44.3% of economically active 16–17 year olds who have left school are unable to find a job. These are the highest unemployment rates for 16–17 year olds since comparable records began in 1992 (ONS, 2011). It should also be noted that the Education Bill retains the intention of raising the participation age (RPA) legislation in 2013 (to age 17) and 2015 (to age 18) whilst removing the requirement to apply enforcement procedures on young people, parents and employers.

2. In addressing the three points of inquiry specified in the invitation document, this submission draws on available evidence including key publications from NFER’s extensive research portfolio relating to young people’s transition from school to further education, training and employment. Selected references are provided at the end of the submission.

What impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it

3. The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) was introduced in England in 2004 as a means-tested allowance to support young people’s participation in full-time education. In academic year 2009–10 638,793 young people aged 16–19 received EMAs at a total cost of £553 million. Depending on the level of household income, young people receive weekly EMA payments of £30, £20 or £10. EMA recipients receive bonuses for remaining on their learning programme, making good progress and achieving against their learning goals.

4. There are several evaluations of EMAs which show that the incentives they provide have had some impact on young people’s behaviour. In his review of these evaluations, Fletcher (2009) stated that EMAs “have proved successful at raising and sustaining participation. The research evidence is not only clear but is of high quality—this is one of the few initiatives where performance of the ‘treatment’ group can be clearly matched against that of a control group”. He notes that there is evidence that EMAs have been successful in engaging some of the most disadvantaged young people including young women, ethnic minorities and those from deprived communities. Chowdry and Emmerson (2010) reported that a 2007 study by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) found that “the EMA significantly increased participation rates in post-16 education among young adults who were eligible to receive it. In particular, it increased the proportion of eligible 16-year-olds staying in education from 65% to 69%, and increased the proportion of eligible 17-year-olds in education from 54% to 61%”. In addition, Chowdry and Emmerson (2010) noted that subsequent IFS research found that “in areas where EMA was available, students as a whole were around 2 percentage points more likely to reach the thresholds for Levels 2 and 3 of the National Qualifications Framework; they also had A Level grades around 4 points higher (on the UCAS tariff) on average”. Fletcher (2009) concluded that EMAs have been successful in delivering their intended outcomes and have been effectively focused on the target group.

5. Assessing the impact of the EMA requires consideration of whether some recipients would have taken their courses had they not received the payments. Although acknowledging that some EMA “deadweight” exists (“65 out of every 69 individuals aged 16 who are eligible for the EMA would have stayed in education without the payment”), Chowdry and Emmerson (2010) asserted that the increase in participation that EMAs achieves, means that “the costs of providing EMA were likely to be exceeded in the long run by the higher wages that its recipients would go on to enjoy in the future”. This is the case as higher wages will involve more tax revenue for the Exchequer.

6. Research carried out by the NFER, Spielhofer *et al.* (2010), on barriers to participation in education and training, found that only 12% of a subset (838 EMA recipients) of the sample of young people they surveyed said that “they would not have participated in the courses they are doing if they had not received an EMA”.

This finding may be explained in part by young people's realisation of the value of education and training. For example, 94% of all the 2,029 young people surveyed (who had all completed compulsory education) agreed that it was important to achieve qualifications to get on in life. It is worth noting though that the research found that issues such as finance or transport can be experienced as either a barrier or constraint—a barrier stops them from doing a particular course, while a constraint causes difficulties but does not prevent them from participating. Thus, for many of these young people, not receiving the EMA may have been perceived as a constraint—it would not have stopped them from continuing in education or training, but would have caused some of them, for example, to spend more time working part-time and less time on their studies.

7. Spielhofer *et al.* (2010) suggested that there was a case for targeting financial support on vulnerable groups such as teenage parents, young people with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD), those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and those in jobs without training (JWT) because young people in these groups were more likely to experience finance as a barrier or constraint. For example, a quarter of the LDD group of young people interviewed who were receiving an EMA said that they would not have done their current course or training if they had not received this support.

8. The effectiveness of replacing EMAs by the Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF) will depend partly on how it is implemented and partly on the extent to which young people are aware of, understand and can access it. The purpose of the DLSF—to provide some financial assistance for only the learners in greatest need of assistance—is different from EMAs which aimed to incentivise participation in learning nationally, using the same criteria of eligibility for all learners. The DLSF is a discretionary grant used to provide exceptional support for students aged 16–19 experiencing financial hardship to complete their course by providing contributions towards items such as books, equipment, tools, re-sit exam fees and travel to study. The annual cost of the DLSF, £26 million for 2010–11, is considerably less than the comparable costs of the EMA (around £550 million per annum). The scope and scale of the DLSF indicate that it will support far fewer young people aged 16–19 than the EMA to benefit from further education, suggesting that in comparison the DLSF will provide a marginal measure of financial support.

9. As regards levels of awareness and understanding, the review of EMAs by Fletcher (2009) noted that “all the evaluations show that they are well understood ...”. Research conducted by Spielhofer *et al.* (2010), found that 96% of the young people surveyed were aware of what an EMA was and 43% of those aware were receiving EMA funding. In contrast, fewer young people (11%) were aware of hardship funds or discretionary support funds for continuing in education or training after Year 11 and, of those aware of the funds, only 12% said that they were receiving money from such a fund. These findings suggest that there is a danger that, unless more widely publicised, only a small minority of young people are likely to be aware of the DLSF and how to access it. Another possible inhibitor concerns the rules of eligibility for accessing the DLSF—these are likely to vary at the local level which could result in confusion and few young people accessing education or training with the support from the DLSF.

What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness

10. Raising the participation age (RPA) to 18 years will require local authorities to assess the adequacy of the local range of education and training provision in order that this will meet the needs of the additional young people staying in learning including their potential travel-to-learn patterns. This reflects the changing role for local authorities, announced in the Schools White Paper (DFE, 2010), which stated that “local authorities will move over time to a strategic commissioning role, championing educational excellence” (see sections 5.42–5.44). The work that they undertook during 2009–10, in preparing for the 16–19 transfer, when they were expected to take on the responsibility from the Learning and Skills Council for planning and commissioning education and training for 16–19 year olds, has helped to prepare local authorities to support the implementation of the RPA.

11. Research by the NFER throws light on what preparations are necessary to underpin this change process. The preparations focus on the collaborative planning of learning provision, and the provision of appropriate information, advice and guidance (IAG) for young people. In their study of the 16–19 funding transfer, McCrone *et al.* (2009a) noted the importance of effective collaboration for the successful planning of provision. They found that collaboration between local authorities and education and training providers was critical to shaping the type and range of post-16 learning provision and that the pace of building and progressing collaborative relationships was noticeably reliant on pre-existing relationships. However, achieving effective collaboration is not without its challenges as many local authorities reported not having enough time and staff capacity to further develop collaborative relationships and the more rural local authorities found it a challenge to find time to travel to and attend meetings.

12. A gap was identified by McCrone *et al.* (2009a) in local authorities' and learning providers' understanding of the 16–19 education and training sector. While most of the local authorities interviewed considered that they had developed an understanding of the sector and some said that they had developed an appreciation of the complexities of both the further education system and the tasks involved in commissioning 16–19 provision, the providers interviewed did not generally share this view. They considered that local authorities lacked knowledge of the complex and diverse provider and further education system, the educational and training needs of 16–19 year olds and the systems for funding post-16 learning provision.

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13. Collaborative good practice was identified in another study by McCrone *et al.* (2009b) which found that collaborative working where all partners contributed to planning was reported to have enhanced the range and quality of provision available and improved transition support for learners. Colleges valued being involved in planning provision and the sense of equality in their partnership with local authorities. Other key features viewed as necessary to secure a positive impact on young people included: regular formal and informal communication, strategic buy-in, a joined-up structure, shared vision, and a commitment to raising the educational standards for young people.

14. The second main RPA preparation focus concerns the provision of appropriate IAG for 16–19 learners. The responsibility for strategic planning and provision of high-quality and impartial IAG lies with local authorities. The Coalition Government announced in May 2010 plans to cut the current year's Area-Based Grant from which Connexions services are funded which means local authorities are having to make difficult decisions about the future of Connexions' services, some of which are being scaled down.

15. An NFER study by McCrone *et al.* (2010) of the "fitness for purpose" of the IAG services provided to young people aged 14–19, based on a national survey of Heads of Connexions and local authority strategic managers, reported that two-thirds of respondents expressed confidence that, since the transfer of Connexions services to local authorities in 2008, local authority managers possess the knowledge and understanding to commission quality IAG services that meet local needs. The study also found that IAG services were widely considered to contribute to raising learners' aspirations and learners were seen to be provided with support from a range of IAG providers and/or partners who understood their roles and responsibilities. The study reported that, although around two-thirds (67%) of respondents were confident that appropriate IAG strategies were in place to help retain young people in education or training in response to the RPA, about a quarter of respondents (24%) were "not very" or "not at all confident", indicating that there was room for improvement in their areas. The research found higher levels of confidence in relation to strategies and support for young people who were NEET: 90% were confident that appropriate IAG support was in place for those at risk of becoming NEET. While a majority of respondents (88%) were confident that appropriate IAG support was in place for young people with LDD who might be at risk of becoming NEET post-16, fewer (43%) were confident that appropriate learning provision was available for this group which indicates that this is an area for further development.

What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision

16. An NFER study of increasing participation by Spielhofer *et al.* (2009) found that nearly half (58) of the 120 young people they interviewed were largely positive about the policy of RPA. They thought it would encourage young people to make more positive choices at 16, require schools and colleges to give young people who had failed at school a second chance, and force providers to develop courses suitable to all young people's needs, levels of learning and preferred learning styles. They emphasised that the success of the policy would depend on there being sufficient non-classroom based provision that would engage those disaffected by school and seeking opportunities for more practical learning. Just over a quarter (31) expressed negative views of RPA, saying that it would infringe their freedom and that they could not see the benefit of increased participation.

17. An NFER review found that there was very little direct evidence of the impact on young people of raising the compulsory age of participation in education or training beyond the age of 16. The impacts identified in the literature related to voluntary participation in post-16 education or training, or compulsory participation in education only. Spielhofer *et al.* (2007) concluded that the young people most likely to be affected were those who, in the absence of RPA, would probably have been NEET or in JWT. They stated that: "Given the characteristics of these young people (few or no qualifications, and often a negative experience of school), it seems likely that—when participation to 18 becomes compulsory—most will move into jobs *with* training, vocational courses or courses leading to qualifications at level 2 or below".

18. Spielhofer *et al.* (2007) identify the main benefit of RPA for young people as increased earning power linked to their acquisition of more qualifications and their greater likelihood of staying in employment. Since the review was conducted the employment prospects of the 16–24 age group have declined substantially which means that more young people are likely to decide to stay in post-16 education and training and that the demand for vocational courses and apprenticeships is likely to increase. Evidence of other impacts was more limited and less robust.

19. There were several RPA-related challenges identified by Spielhofer *et al.* (2009). These included providing a range of post-14 and post-16 pathways which are suitable to young people, high-quality guidance and support, viable work-based options and good alternative provision which will engage participants. In their study of effective alternative provision, Kendall *et al.* (2007) identify the key features including identifying gaps in provision and developing a cohesive approach through networks of providers and agencies. A successful implementation of RPA will involve scoping alternative provision, reviewing its adequacy and appropriateness, and evaluating the effectiveness of delivery partnerships.

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Written evidence submitted by NUT

Impact of cuts to the Education Maintenance Allowance and “Enrichment” funding on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people

1. Forty-six per cent of students studying at English colleges currently receive the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). The abolition of the EMA will be detrimental to improving the life chances of those students from areas of England that have low levels of educational attainment. Many young people struggle to stay on in education past the age of 16 and the EMA helps to pay for course costs, lunch, travel to and from colleges or sixth form and for other essentials.
2. The value of the EMA is that it is not simply just an allowance but a contract between the student and the college which ensures that attendance and progress are monitored.
3. The evaluation of the EMA pilots in 2005 illustrated the sizable impact the EMA has on participation rates of 16 and 17 year olds (6.1% greater participation than those in the control areas)—the effect was particularly strong amongst young men (8.6%) and those in socio economic groups 4 and 5 (9.1%). The EMA also had a substantial impact on young people who had been “low” or “moderate” achievers at the end of Year 11.¹
4. Alongside the cuts to the EMA the Young People’s Learning Agency (YPLA) funding announcement in December 2010 on 16–19 funding for 2011–15 confirmed that sixth form colleges will face increasing funding problems over this period.

¹ <http://www.crsp.ac.uk/downloads/publications/ema/rr678.pdf>

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5. Funded guided learning hours for the “entitlement curriculum” (enrichment/ tutorial) will be cut by 75% to 30 hours—the Times Educational Supplement estimates this may lead to a 10% cut in overall funding nationally by 2015. “Enrichment” in colleges generally means opportunities for students to take part in musical, theatre, dance and sports activities; volunteering and charity work; and a whole range of other courses.

6. The YPLA indicate that they will reduce the impact of this cut to a 3% reduction per student in 2011–12 and continue this “transitional protection” over the planning period in order to make it manageable. Some funds will also be made available to assist schools and colleges recruit from disadvantaged areas. No school or college has yet learnt how much “disadvantaged funding” it will receive or the criteria which will be used to determine the allocation, but since the overall quantum is known (£150million) it is clear that this funding is unlikely to go more than a quarter of the way towards making good the loss of funding for enrichment and tutorial. We do not yet know if sixth form colleges nationally are to manage cuts of the magnitude proposed, it appears certain that they will turn into little more than examination factories and that a considerable number of staff will be made redundant in the process.

7. The impact upon students will potentially be severe. At Varndean College in Brighton, for example, the cuts threaten support for university applications and careers provision, including support for Oxbridge entrance and medical courses. Monitoring student's attendance and progress is currently funded through entitlement and is therefore now under threat. The College is particularly concerned that non-completion rates will soar. Health education will be cut and the capacity to engage with health agencies to bring their professional expertise into the College to benefit students severely reduced.

8. Ministers need to understand that the proposed funding cuts will mean that able, committed 16 and 17 year-olds with supportive families will continue to succeed, even if not to the best of their ability. Anyone else may not. The outcome of these cuts along with the loss of EMA, the abolition of Aim Higher and the decimation of the Connexions service will mean the removal of the entire network of support and guidance services from all but the most vulnerable. These cuts come at a time when youth unemployment has soared to 20.5%. The severity of the recession has had its hardest impact on young people trying to enter the job market.

What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision

9. Raising tuition fees will impact severely on widening university access to working class, black and minority ethnic students. Education is the major factor in social mobility. Raising tuition fees will result in poorer participation rates and a decrease in social mobility.

10. If the 50% target of young people attending higher education is dropped, then access to higher education for whole groups of students will be restricted.

11. With the cost of university rising and fewer jobs on offer for graduates, it is important that young people are offered an appropriate curriculum that is not restricted to the GCSE/A level/degree route. Offering young people the option of exploring non-academic routes at school is central to them getting a rounded education. Providing vocational options in secondary schools will also help those young people who find it hard to stay engaged with education.

12. Parents are more likely to look favourably on their children studying vocational qualifications now the UK is going through a period of economic difficulty. An enthusiasm for practical learning has risen sharply as unemployment increases. Access to vocational education and apprenticeship opportunities must not be restricted. This is the time when young people need these opportunities the most.

13. Vocational courses and qualifications must have real currency with universities and employers at a time when some young people are being denied access to university places and are facing the reality of high unemployment. The Russell Group of Universities have not always given vocational qualifications equal currency with advanced academic qualifications. This has to change.

14. Vocational education has suffered from being treated unfavourably; as the “cinderella” of the education world. Its lack of status cannot be rectified through piecemeal tinkering with the qualifications system as happened with the introduction of the 14–19 Diplomas.

What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness

15. It is important that an up-to-date audit is conducted by local authorities regarding the capacity of schools and colleges to meet the requirements for all young people to stay on in education, training and employment, especially now at a time when schools and colleges are experiencing cuts to their budgets. Further Education colleges, for example, will be under considerable strain if they have to cope with additional 16–17 year olds in their institutions.

16. Local authority spending cuts are falling disproportionately hard on young people. If participation in education and training is to improve, then alternative educational provision at local level has to be maintained to support young people. The NUT believes that young people are best served by developing neighbourhood-based, multi-disciplinary teams with management infrastructure. This service will boost the educational and

life chances of young people and is particularly important in developing prevention initiatives aimed at those 14–16 year olds who are still at school and have been identified as at risk of disengaging from education.² Research has shown that such preventive initiatives are more effective when there is provision of co-ordinated holistic support at school from a range of agencies, particularly where multiple interventions are required.

17. It is crucial, also, that the needs of young people are also met by the provision of professionally trained youth workers. This is not the case at the moment. All over the country, community services supporting young people are being targeted for cuts. Seven thousand youth worker jobs, providing support for hundreds of thousands of young people, could disappear in a matter of months. This cut in youth services will severely impact on young people who are in danger of not participating in education, employment or training. Services that support young people volunteering in the community are also disappearing.

18. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) is key to the success of raising the participation age. Over the years, there have been a number of re-organisations of this service. It is regrettable that the Government has now decided to provide careers education as a duty to schools only in Wales. This is a regrettable step, unlikely to lead to any improvement in the provision of careers guidance for young people in England.

19. IAG services need to be sufficiently strong and robust to give the independent, impartial information young people require in making critical decisions as to what routes to take into education, training or employment. It is of great concern, as well, that the Connexions Service across the country is struggling to continue because of budget cuts.

20. The role of local authorities is crucial in co-ordinating post-16 education, especially for those young people not in education, employment or training. Local authorities must have the capacity to co-ordinate a systematic approach to tracking those young people in danger of dropping out of education, employment and training. This group of young people are a priority.

21. It is reasonable to assume that staying on in education or training is motivated by an expectation of increased future earnings or even employment. Young people will, however, be demoralised by the knowledge that one in ten students, at the moment, are unable to find a job when they leave university and one in five 16–24 year olds are unemployed. Such bleak circumstances will put a strain on schools and colleges who will be working to keep young people in education and training up to 18 years of age.

22. Young people are more likely to be motivated to remain in education if their pre-16 experience of education is positive. A pre-16 curriculum needs to engage young people and encourage them to want to continue learning after reaching school leaving age. The current National Curriculum proposal, which proposes heavily prescribed content and a focus on traditional subject areas, is unlikely to do this.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by OCR

EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

What impact has the Education Maintenance Allowance had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it?

1. We are not in a position to comment on the front-line experience of young people who have benefited from Education Maintenance Allowances.

2. However, we have recently become aware of widespread concern from students, providers, support and development agencies, and some politicians about the impact of their withdrawal. We will leave it to them to raise the matter within this consultation.

3. On one specific issue, we are being advised by colleges that the removal of the Education Maintenance Allowance alongside the significant reduction in 16–19 entitlement funding is likely to make learning in schools and colleges a less attractive proposition and therefore jeopardise the aim of increasing participation.

PREPARATIONS FOR RAISING THE PARTICIPATION AGE

What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness?

4. The participation age is being raised at exactly the same time as the school system is being encouraged to diversify into free schools, academies and UTCs, each choosing their own curriculum. Simultaneously the capacity of local authorities to coordinate development is being reduced through public expenditure cuts and top-slicing of budgets to fund the new types of school. The advantages and disadvantages of this combination of circumstances are pretty clear.

² LSN/Institute of Education, University of London, 2009: "Tackling the NEETs Problem".

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5. On the positive side, we are already observing widespread indications that schools which are intent on forging their own independent future with their new freedom relish the opportunity to create their own curriculum for their new learners. Those which select their students against specified criteria, and therefore have the opportunity to channel their young learners down particular paths, find this easier than those with open recruitment policies who have to find a wider range of options.

6. For example, OCR has been involved from the outset in the establishment of the JCB Academy at Rocester, Staffordshire, which opened in September 2010. Recognised as the first University Technical College, it is encouraging high-level engineering and business studies backed by major companies and firmly rooted in academic subject studies. This embodies clarity of vision which would be transferable to other specialisms and other institutions.

7. This raises the key curriculum issue: what is appropriate for the high percentage of learners who are not attracted by a traditional subject-based post-16 offer? OCR has extensive feedback on the range of new subjects and practical courses, many of them work-related that have attracted young learners who were otherwise becoming disengaged. Crucially they have gained the confidence of their parents too. Many of these courses enable schools to engage learners better and teach the essential core subjects in different, more appealing ways, and they also have a strong record in progression to reputable further education and employment.

8. However, there is an issue of responsibility: are any individual schools actually obliged to provide for this group, particularly if they offer a narrow curriculum which is likely to prove unattractive? Or can they simply offload the responsibility to other more adaptable and socially-minded providers?

9. The colleges and independent training providers who are likely to accommodate a higher proportion of the new participant cohort pride themselves on their ability to provide for a wide clientele, as we know from the wide range of OCR qualifications they offer and their contributions to OCR's various consultation forums. They offer valid full-time and part-time courses with specific purposes and outcomes leading to further study or employment.

10. However, they advise us of one massive proviso: they need a consistent funding stream which rewards them for recruiting and retaining learners who then achieve approved outcomes. Repeated changes in (a) the amounts that are payable for different outcomes or (b) the courses—or even the number of hours—that are eligible for funding, particularly when actual figures are confirmed after courses are offered and learners accepted, destabilise their programmes and blight their planning. And ultimately this works against the interests of learners.

11. Unfortunately in the current employment climate we see little indication that employers will make a significant contribution to the raised participation age by managing 16–19 learning in the workplace on anything like the scale that would be desirable. We understand that the rightly-trumpeted economic value of adult Apprenticeships will make them more attractive to employers and therefore exert downward pressure on 16–19 Apprenticeships. So although there is an increasing response to the Government's promotion of Apprenticeships, we fear the projected figures will make relatively little impact on the age cohort.

12. Since these are the young people for whom school has been a less than successful experience, their likeliest preference will be for colleges and independent training providers. But whichever organisation provides their learning programme, providers advise us that they increase the unit costs and demands on the infrastructure of support and guidance services.

13. Incidentally the Institute for Careers Guidance's professional development initiative, in which we are partners, to improve the expertise of careers advisers aims to make an increasing contribution to the careers aspect of these essential services. However, at the same time financial cutbacks have seriously weakened the organisational structure within which they are seeking to make this contribution.

14. On the issue of qualifications rather than providers, in theory the Qualifications and Credit Framework should improve young people's opportunity to accumulate units of achievement towards relevant qualifications, providing the data management systems are up to the job. However, in our experience providers overwhelmingly offer full-qualification courses for two reasons: they keep learners engaged longer with a substantial end target; and the funding, scheduling, data management and support requirements of unutilised provision are inefficiently complicated and resource-intensive, particularly in the current period of financial constraint.

15. In relation to the pedagogy applicable to the new participant cohort, staff development in a wide range of practical learning methods is likely to be appropriate. However, it is difficult to see who will be the providers of staff development on the scale required, particularly given the accelerating diminution in local authority services.

16. We are of course encountering the view that QTLS-qualified further education staff should be able to teach in schools, which might improve the quality of their 16–19 curriculum. In recent national conferences colleges in particular have been (not always fairly) dismissive about the limited workplace expertise which teachers can draw on in teaching vocational courses in schools.

17. OCR has been fully engaged in the increasing professionalisation of education-industry partnership activities led by the Institute of Education Business Excellence (IEBE). Its education-business organisation

accreditation scheme, the Award for Education Business Excellence (AEBE), and its rigorous membership structure are making a strong initial contribution to its professionalisation ambitions. We believe that the two key elements in its next phase, the accreditation of individual institutions and the structured continuing professional development of teachers, will make a further significant contribution to the improvement of practice for the new 16–19 group.

IMPACT OF RAISING PARTICIPATION

What impact will raising the participation age have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision?

18. When A Levels were first introduced, they were taken by a small and relatively self-selecting elite. A wide spread of achievements was expected so high grade achievers were few, only a subset of the successful students applied to university and only some of those were accepted. Thus the cohort was pruned in several stages to ensure a self-defining group reached university, easing the task of university and employment recruiters. And of course there were no non-A Level applicants for higher education to consider.

19. This is not the case now. With the whole age group aware of the opportunities for higher education, and learning providers unwilling to write off several phases of casualties, in theory any teenage learner can aspire to any post-18 destination. Nonetheless, many self-select out of the race and divert into employment, active unemployment or listlessness, with no further education or training. These will need learning programmes from one provider or another, but they will be a very difficult group to service.

20. Many of those in employment will find their workplace unaware of, or turning a blind eye to, the raised participation age requirements. Others may resent or ignore coercion; and we understand from learning providers, particularly those in the voluntary and community sector dealing with the most reluctant participants, that they are likely to have erratic attendance, completion and achievement records. Thus any statistical modelling based on extrapolation from current achievements will produce wildly inaccurate results. Assumptions about achievement from the raised participation age cohort will need to be extremely cautious, given their unpredictability.

21. Secondly, attendance models based on their counterparts in full-time school or college education would be misguided. More appropriate models will be found in the examples of good practice of which OCR has become aware in voluntary learning providers, youth services and organisations such as football clubs, involving persistent and often one-to-one mentoring and monitoring, in some ways more akin to social work than education but with the added bonus of educational attainments as specified goals. It would also encompass some of the valuable support and personal development which has been available through activities formerly funded as “entitlement”, for which the budget has been cut.

22. The raised participation age also necessitates a range of learning programmes and qualifications different from the standard GCSE and GCE route which, crucially, the new participant cohort has de facto turned down. Whatever definition of vocational education the impending Wolf Report proposes and whatever learning routes government encourages in response, there must be 14–19 routes which play to the range of different aptitudes of the new participants, whether artistic, caring, administrative, sporting, technical or whatever. Narrowly defined curriculum models which rule these out will disenfranchise large numbers of learners who are already at a disadvantage.

23. To expand on this theme, there are taxonomies of employment skills such as that compiled by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) which could be exercised in real practical contexts in local workplaces and, in tune with the Government’s evolving community policies, social enterprises and suchlike. Again, voluntary sector learning providers know what works and what doesn’t; they should be a major influence on the design of the available options.

24. Their priority often seems to be on the personal and social development programmes embracing more specific employability skills, many of which hitherto would have been encompassed in “entitlement” and similar programmes in colleges. These, upgraded to reflect different levels of potential achievement and therefore qualification levels, may be better attuned than specific practical skills to future workplace demands for flexibility, emotional intelligence and so on. There is evidence from sixth form colleges and independent schools in particular that ingrained personal, social and employability skills survive longer than today’s specific occupational and technical competences, and provide a sounder basis for future learning.

25. Thus the levels of participation, attendance and achievement will be determined as much by the breadth of curriculum on offer as by the intrinsic characteristics of the new participant group.

Written evidence submitted by ASCL

16–19 PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) is the professional association for the leaders of secondary schools and colleges. ASCL represents over 15,000 members of the leadership teams of schools and colleges throughout the UK.

2. ASCL school and college leader members have contributed extensively to this evidence to the Education Select Committee and their views are reflected here.

EMA

The impact of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) on participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective the Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLS) will be in replacing it

3. Many school and college leaders consider that EMA has had a considerable impact on provision. Young people from households with an income of less than £20,800 per year currently receive £30 per week, which is of great significance to many families and influences choices post-16.

4. For example, at Birkenhead Sixth Form College, over 55% of students receive EMA. Of the 680 students doing so in 2010–11 so far, 83.8% receive the full £30 allowance, which clearly indicates the importance this income must have on low-earning families in the area.

5. Members are keen to establish that EMA funding contributes to many family budgets, pays individual travel to get to college and provides funding for additional study materials. It is likely that many young people will not be able to continue with their education without this support. ASCL can provide case studies to support these points.

6. Those students with learning difficulties and disabilities in receipt of EMA are particularly vulnerable to being kept at home by families who may not appreciate the value of education and training in stretching their son or daughter to achieve their potential and prefer the services of a free baby-sitter to the costs of transport and equipment.

7. The University and College Union (UCU), in conjunction with the Association of Colleges (AoC) published in February 2011 the results of a survey of 700 learners, indicating that seven out of 10 young people would seriously consider dropping out of college if they no longer received their EMA.

8. Whilst many members believe that EMA is a contributory factor to post-16 enrolment initially, they feel that by far the most significant impact it has had is in encouraging high attendance levels (with resulting benefit to individual and institutional success rates) and is a key factor in preventing drop-out.

9. The result of EMA withdrawal is likely to impact on figures of young people not in education and training and will provide another cohort of young people who have missed life chances at a time when they are receptive to education and training and can study and train in order to contribute to future national wealth.

10. It is likely that those students who do manage to stay on in education and would have been eligible for EMA will have to seek part-time work in order to sustain learning. In the past, students often undertook long hours of poorly paid work and this inevitably had a detrimental effect on their studies.

11. The details of the way in which the government is going to replace EMA with “more targeted support” are not yet available. Many students in years 10 and 11 already doubt that they will be able to continue in education, and no real reassurance has yet been given to them on this point as schools and colleges do not yet know how the money will be allocated.

12. In 2010–11 the amount allocated to EMA nationally is £560 million. The DLS national allocation proposal is to raise it from £50 million to £75 million. The increase in DLS will be less than 5% of the support currently available. DLS is not perceived as a realistic means of ensuring that support reaches the most vulnerable learners, if the same methodology used at present is applied.

13. DLS is allocated to all providers. Historically it was the amount of money paid directly to providers to give support to young people experiencing financial hardship. However, DLS is not allocated to providers based on means testing of their cohort.

14. For the first time in 2010–11, DLS was calculated using a formula to link with disadvantaged cohorts by using weighted Standard Learner Numbers (SLNs) as the basis of calculating an allocation. This was not fully implemented and allocations were restricted to a 10% upwards or downwards variation on the previous year. Therefore, current allocations do not reflect the relative levels of disadvantage in institutions.

15. If the methodology for calculating DLS is not transparent and based on genuine disadvantage then it is clear that it cannot provide targeted support for those facing genuine barriers to continuing in education.

16. The proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds varies widely between providers. DLS allocations do not vary so widely. This means that some institutions will be able to support some young people who are less disadvantaged while others will struggle to support students facing extreme poverty.

17. The government should recognise the inequality that is currently built in to the system. Students from low-income households in one area will not be able to access support because there will be many others who are eligible for the limited funds, but could have accessed support in a more affluent setting.

18. If a provider has a very high proportion of disadvantaged students it will be extremely difficult to distinguish who is the most needy

19. There is as yet no guidance on how DLS is to be used and there is a high risk that providers in different circumstances may apply very different criteria, leading to competitive use of funds (for equipment or bespoke transport) in order to encourage student choice of their particular institution.

20. ASCL members acknowledge the fact that funding will be limited but believe that limited resources should reach those most in need.

PREPARATION

Preparations necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age (RPA) to 18 years and the current state of readiness

21. The government's proposal to extend the participation age is welcome, but there is concern that the ability to deliver the government's commitment to universal participation whilst massively reducing the associated level of resourcing will damage this initiative.

22. Apart from the well-rehearsed points made above on the absence of EMA as a means of supporting RPA for those that require financial support and the concerns associated with the distribution of DLS, members have also already met difficulties in maintaining and creating partnerships with local businesses in order to establish opportunities for apprenticeships.

23. At a time when commerce and industry are shedding jobs, it is difficult to persuade small businesses to accept young people as employees who will also be obliged to receive training.

24. Unemployment jumped by 44,000 in the final three months of 2010 to just under 2.5 million, meaning that 7.9% of workers were out of a job. But the youth unemployment rate reached 20.5%, following a 66,000 increase to 965,000, the highest figures since records began in 1992.

25. Whilst completely supporting the removal of any idea of penalties for enforcing RPA, ASCL members feel that the voluntary nature of its proposed format may well lead to increased numbers of young people who are in neither education nor training.

26. ASCL members in rural schools, for example in Suffolk, are concerned that the relatively small 16+ cohorts that require extensive partnership arrangements to function at present will be further stretched to provide for extended cohorts under RPA. There has been little financial support for the establishment of existing partnerships over the past five years, so resources are already severely stretched.

27. RPA will cause severe problems in rural communities where the cost to students of school transport can exceed £400 per year. In the example provided by a member based in rural Northamptonshire, there is no public transport available and these costs lead to severe financial pressure for some families.

28. Where many current students use their EMA to finance their individual bus pass, there is no local authority plan in Northamptonshire, for example, to replace this by free transport for over 16 year-olds. It is unlikely that the DLS will match the need and this situation is seen as a severe inequality of opportunity between urban and rural provision.

29. ASCL members are committed to partnership working between schools, colleges, training providers and employers and perceive this as an important part of preparing for RPA.

30. Current changes in the roles of local authorities, cutbacks in careers services through Connexions and different approaches in different parts of the country will create problems for the continuance of established partnerships and the creation of new initiatives.

31. Many school and college leaders believe that it would be better to protect front-line services as promised and postpone the extra participation target until funding is less constrained. However, in areas where there is a demographic decline in the total number of 16–18 year-olds this gives an opportunity for an increase in participation rate to offset the decrease in total numbers, which would allow a more efficient transfer. Reducing service and staff numbers in one year only to increase them again the next is not an efficient use of limited funds.

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IMPACT

The impact of RPA on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision

32. Access to vocational education and training depends on the ability of different providers to work together. Points made above on the difficulties experienced by ASCL members in maintaining and creating such opportunities are also relevant here.

33. It is widely accepted that the curriculum offer designed to attract and retain those who might otherwise not have stayed in education and training post 16 should be carefully designed to stimulate individuals and meet their needs and those of prospective and actual employers.

34. The new Specifications of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) provide guidelines requiring a minimum of 280 Guided Learning Hours (glh) of which 100 glh or 30% (whichever is the greater) must be delivered off the job and clearly evidenced.

35. The practicalities of ensuring that these guidelines are met will be very difficult for some providers, where local employment is lacking, where travel is difficult and resources, including specialist workshops and laboratories and the finance to run them are limited.

36. Additional funds will be needed to provide a stimulating and relevant experience for those who are attending as a result of RPA, whose needs will be to some degree different from, and often greater than, those of the existing student body. If these needs are not met there may be an impact on behaviour and discipline within the school or college as a whole, with adverse repercussions on the learning of other young people in the institution.

37. Foundation Learning may provide the most suitable programmes for many of the young people who will be attending school or college as part of the RPA programme. Whilst there have been some successes related to this new curriculum initiative, there have also been difficulties in its implementation and recording. There are still lessons to be learnt from the pilot.

38. Schools and colleges are finding long-term curriculum planning extremely difficult within the context of the curriculum review, the Wolf review of vocational learning and the unexpected introduction of new performance measures such as the E-bac.

39. All these potentially threaten the ability of schools and colleges to offer the sort of personalised curriculum plans that they have been developing successfully over recent years and which would be tailored to suit the needs of young people who may stay in education and training through RPA.

40. Without RPA compulsion, schools and colleges will need to work harder on their curriculum design, advice and guidance. ASCL members are willing to do this, but need time and effort and people—and funding—if they are to be successful.

41. From the point of view of provision of stimulating and supportive learning experiences at a time of financial shortage, ASCL members are again concerned that RPA is being introduced at an unsuitable time.

CONCLUSION

42. ASCL members believe strongly in equality of opportunity and recognise the limitations of funding available to support students.

43. We have access to case studies that can demonstrate points made in this submission and would be pleased to have the opportunity to expand on them or to answer questions on details.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by A4e Ltd**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 A4e welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Education Select Committee's inquiry into participation in education and training of young people aged 16–19 years.

1.2 Established over 20 years ago, A4e was set up with the aim of lifting people out of poverty in Sheffield; originally through helping ex-steel workers re-train and find jobs in other industries. Since then the company has grown on a global scale, supporting over one million people on their journey and helping to improve their lives.

1.3 A4e helps over 400,000 customers every year and delivers employment and skills services to 100,000. A4e was a major Train to Gain deliverer and has built a growing apprenticeship training service. In addition the business delivers a range of skills programmes to some of societies most disadvantaged individuals on behalf of Local Authorities, focusing on young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

1.4 A4e has established nine Vox Centres across the UK, aimed at helping those excluded from the education system, offering young people the chance to train across a variety of vocational occupations and work towards recognised qualifications. Our approach is flexible and personal, working alongside trainees to create a challenging and rewarding experience. All of our centres are working venues, making real use of real facilities—from cafes to hair salons and construction sites—to train young people in a work based environment. A recent impact analysis of A4e's Vox centres revealed:

- 92% student retention rate from referral to successful progression;
- 72% achieving at least one qualification at Level 1;
- 58% achieving at least two qualifications; and
- 75% progressing into education, employment or training.

1.5 A4e plans to open a further thirty centres over the next five years and extend the offer to young unemployed people through work boost trials. It is from this position of experience and expertise that we are able to respond to the call for evidence into participation in education and training of young people aged 16–19 years.

2.0 What impact has the Education Maintenance Allowance had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will the Discretionary Learner Fund be in replacing it?

2.1 Much of the research regarding the impact of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) on participation highlights that attainment in GCSEs and A Levels, by recipients of the EMA, has risen 40% (Institute of Fiscal Studies). This figure is even greater for those living in deprived neighbourhoods. In addition, RCU market research services carried out research on the national scheme and concluded.

2.2 “EMA has had a positive impact on the retention, achievement and success of certain groups of learners, traditionally those associated with lower levels of achievement such as: male learners; learners from minority ethnic groups; those with backgrounds of high deprivation and learners on low level and vocational courses”.

2.3 A4e's experience mirrors these findings. Many of our younger clients come from low income families and the incentive of EMA can be the difference between participation and non-participation. Our clients often face family pressures to contribute to the household income and many would be unable to take part in further training or learning without this support. EMA has historically helped to enable social mobility, allowing individuals to break through financial boundaries and access further education and training.

2.4 One of the negative impacts we have seen of EMA is the financial incentive for young people to remain in inappropriate learning that does not meet their needs or abilities. There is a real issue in dropout rates post-October each academic year, which can lead to a young person spiralling into NEET—they either cannot access ESF programmes to help them get more suitable training or will not accept a place on a course that doesn't offer EMA or an equivalent level of funding. This can lead to an attitudinal standoff where they would rather remain NEET than re-engage. As funding for NEETs is reduced, it is difficult to match the EMA payment leading to a situation where the young person reserves the right to abstain.

2.5 Without funding, many young people will not continue in education or training, which will consequently have a serious negative knock-on effect for their future employability. The cost of dealing with disadvantage that result from worklessness far exceeds the cost of EMA.

2.6 We call for the Discretionary Learner Fund (DLF) to match or exceed the previous EMA funding, helping ensure we are not excluding a whole generation of young people who already face severe disadvantage and financial hardship. We also seek more clarity around the purpose and value of this fund for the end user as the detail is not yet clear and therefore we cannot comment about the wider implications of DLF. Our recommendations for the DLF include:

- Everyone who currently receives, or is eligible for, support under EMA continues to receive this in the same way, against the same criteria;
- The proposed cut in budget of £500m for DLF is not implemented; and
- The decision for no national system is revoked, as local institutional management can lead to a postcode lottery which hinders access. This was one of the key issues identified in the 1998 Lane Report that introduced EMAs.

3.0 What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness?

3.1 There is a danger that Local Authorities will assume that because FE colleges have the capacity to deliver a wealth of higher qualifications, they make the assumption that learners will be able to adapt to large FE environments. Colleges do not always understand the social element of participation for the most disadvantaged and it is essential that funding for alternative provision is raised in line with increased market demand.

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3.2 Studies have shown that much disaffection takes place before the age of 16, which is significant as post-16 transitions are strongly linked to students' pre-16 experience of education. Thus for most young people to be engaged in education and training post-16, they need to be engaged pre-16. This highlights the need for a higher standard of IAG to ensure young people are fully informed of the options and choices available to them.

3.3 A review by EdComs (2007) found a considerable body of research which demonstrates that, for a significant proportion of young people of moderate or low ability, the traditional curriculum does not meet their needs and can lead to a gradual build up of disaffection. This is supported by research that many young people not in education, employment or training have had bad experiences of education. Again the key here is quality of IAG available for young people to access.

3.4 We argue for a much more radical investment in alternative vocational provision, linked to local enterprise and employment. This may not require an increase in the current budget but a refocus on how it is distributed amongst providers.

4.0 What impact will raising the participation age have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour and alternative provision?

4.1 There is a risk that schools will continue to hold on to higher achieving learners and urge lower achievers to automatically take a vocational route. However this may not be the aspiration of the learner (both high and low achievers). A4e's experience shows that when learners do not pursue the option they want, it often results in negative outcomes, such as bad attendance, poor academic results and anti-social behaviour. Many schools and colleges face the risk that forcing young people to remain in education will result in disruption in classes, with a negative impact on the learning experience for those who actively want to remain in education. Funding for alternative provision, such as our Vox centres, must reflect the need for additional alternative education provision, and whilst we are not calling for additional investment, we urge for the existing budgets to be refocused.

4.2 The key here is quality Information Advice and Guidance (IAG). In order to ensure that young people are getting a positive experience from a mandatory programme, they need to be fully aware of the local offers and the range of options open to them. A4e has long advocated peer-led IAG services, which are more "partial" than "impartial", offering clear coaching alongside specific pathways based on both the positive and negative experience of previous cohorts. This would give young people the opportunity to listen to a credible source rather than relying on the traditional combination of friends, teachers and parents.

4.3 Young people most likely to be affected by the raised participation age are those who, in the absence of this new policy, would probably have been not in education, employment or training. Given the characteristics of this cohort, with few or no qualifications or having had negative school experiences, it is far more likely they will look to move into paid employment with training. The link between this and the current vocational funding for apprenticeships should not be underestimated. It is critical that apprenticeships continue to be promoted to employers to help ensure that supply can meet demand. Incentivising employers through tax incentives may help stimulate this demand.

4.4 Raising the participation age will increase demand on alternative provision and we call for school funding to be refocused proportionately. We have seen firsthand that lack of budget can result in a young person not receiving the same alternative education opportunities as their peer group, having long term negative impacts which can carry on long into adulthood. We recognise the pressures on school budgets but also call for this to be offset against the longer term costs of a young person not in education or employment.

4.5 In addition to this, raising the participation age will have to involve a level of flexibility / transferability to be successful. Young people cannot be locked in to the first course they choose. Many of us did not know what we wanted to do at the age of sixteen and the right to change options is key. There is a role for both A4e's Vox centres and outreach work in offering tasters and short interventions to help young people arrive at the best learning and training choice for them. Transferable skills and employability skills should underpin all of these interventions, ensuring we are equipping today's young people with the skills they need to help achieve sustainable employment. Indeed, this service could be offered by A4e alongside the formal process to help place young people into the activity that will be best for their short term enjoyment and long term development.

Written evidence submitted by 157 Group

CALL FOR EVIDENCE

The 157 Group is a membership organisation that represents 27 large, highly successful and regionally influential further education colleges in England. All our members are key strategic leaders in their locality, who take seriously the role of leading policy development, and improving the quality and reputation of further education.

Providing a national voice on strategy and policy for large, mostly urban colleges in England, we aim to promote change for the benefit of our members and the sector as a whole. Our members' knowledge, capability, experience and commitment brings a unique breadth and depth of expertise to bear on every aspect of further education and skills. We also work together as a peer support network, and are committed to equality and diversity.

We are actively promoting the development of a strong and world-class college sector that not only has a transformative impact on individuals, employers and their local communities, but also makes a real difference to the economic and social well-being of the nation and its global success.

Together, 157 Group colleges:

- turn over £1.6 billion a year;
- serve 700,000 learners;
- employ 39,000 staff; and
- engage with 32,000 employers.

For the purposes of gathering evidence for this call for evidence, we have pulled together the views and evidence of our Members to present an informed view of 16 to 19 participation.

What impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it

1. On announcement that the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) was to be scrapped at the end of January 2011, the 157 Group carried out significant research into the impact EMA has had on 16 to 18 year olds. We drew upon the findings of our 27 colleges and collated this evidence into two briefings for Ministers; “*EMA Cuts—Establishing a Bottomline*”³ and “*Why EMA supports success—Here is the real evidence...*”⁴. Our research has shown that:

- The EMA has led to increased participation in FE colleges by around 7 percentage points.
- The EMA has reduced dropout rates in colleges by around 5 percentage points on average.
- The EMA is directly associated with strong increases in success rates, particularly for the most disadvantaged students.
- By and large, the EMA is used most widely for funding travel to and from college, and without it, many learners feel they would not be able to study in FE.
- The EMA strengthens the ability for learners to make a choice about what course they want to study by helping to cover the costs of equipment and course material.
- The EMA helps to support learners who would otherwise have to apply for hardship funds, which are already over-stretched in FE colleges.
- Currently, there is no equivalent in FE to the money available for grants in HE.

In a recent IfL poll, results reinforce our views that the removal of the EMA will have a profound impact on both learners and on teachers. Of the 1,700 respondents to the poll:

- 69% believed it would have a significant effect.
- 19% a moderate effect.
- 12% no effect.

2. The replacement discretionary fund is unlikely to particularly favour “re-engagement” learners or to focus on NEETs⁵ across the whole college, as we imagine it will be decided on a case by case basis—and lack of engagement happens for a host of reasons—not all of which are quantifiable.⁶ We therefore believe the withdrawal of EMA will have a significant impact on recruitment and retention of these learners.

³ 157 Group *EMA Cuts—Establishing a Bottomline...* please find enclosed.

⁴ 157 Group *Why EMA supports success—Here is the real evidence...* please find enclosed.

⁵ <http://www.157group.co.uk/neets>.

⁶ <http://www.lsis.org.uk/Services/Policy/Policy-Seminars/Documents/Understanding%20NEETs%20research%20seminar%20final%20report.pdf> .

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3. We feel strongly that a discretionary learner support fund would only be effective if the following changes were made to it:

- We propose that the dLSF is re-named and re-shaped into “**College Bursaries**”.
- That in order for a realistic alternative to EMAs to go ahead successfully, the government needs to set aside a budget of **£225 million as a bottomline**.
- That this budget will enable on average £750 payments be made to the poorest 25% of learners and made **termly** as a guideline but also at the discretion of the provider.
- That in the spirit of **self-regulation** there should be maximum discretion and minimum of guidelines imposed by the government.
- We propose that funds are allocated to colleges by comparing free school meal on historical cohort data for the first year of the College Bursary schemes. However, this will or may need to be adjusted in successive years. ALTERNATIVELY, the government may want to look into comparing student postcodes as a method for establishing levels of deprivation to allocate funds fairly.

What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness

4. Both providers and local authorities will need to support the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years. To support delivery the below needs to be taken into account:

- Strong leadership to ensure the provision of a coherent learning and support offer for young people, through strategic integrated commissioning.
- Collaboration between curriculum senior staff in schools and colleges—with a focus on progression routes and foundation learning in particular and the development of a progression policy.
- Provision which is flexible enough to meet the needs of some young people who need to re-engage in learning at different times of the year, including young people who are leaving youth custody and enabling those in employment without accredited training to access learning and training alongside their job.
- Expansion of the level 1 offer (in school and amongst partners)—for learners who would normally have left school.
- Development of work with training programmes and funding to match this pathway—like the East Sussex Work Pairing pilot
- Assuring that Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) is sufficient, effective and relevant to school, college and labour market needs.
- A fair and reasonable method and system of sanctioning and monitoring those who do not abide by the raising of the participation. It will be necessary to track young people, and enforce participation in cases where they refuse to engage voluntarily. Countries which operate a similar system use sanctions such as fines (for young people and/or their parents) and withholding driving licences, but as yet there is limited direct evidence indicating how successful these sanctions are.
- Mapping of future labour market trends across local areas to ensure progression routes result in sustainable employment.
- A focus on 14–19 continuum and a blurring of the jump from year 11 to year 12, particularly in an area with a lot of 11–16 schools.
- Development of infrastructure including capital spend for those colleges whose numbers will increase in the long term.

5. In terms of current states of readiness, 14 to 19 partnerships are already:

- Engaging the knowledge and expertise of local providers and agencies in order that all sectors inform commissioning through the 14–19 Plan.
- Focusing particularly on the needs of the most vulnerable young people and those in jobs without training.
- Working across their sub-regional grouping, local authorities will need to ensure their 16–19 commissioning plans support their trajectory towards full participation.

What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision

6. To date there has been very limited evidence as to the impact that the raising of the participation age will have on achievement and access to provision.

7. However, young people most likely to be affected by the proposed legislation are those who, in the absence of the proposed policy, would have probably been Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or in Jobs Without Training (JWT). Given the characteristics of these young people (few or no qualifications, and often a negative experience of school), it seems likely that when participation to 18 becomes compulsory

most will move into jobs *with* training, vocational courses or courses leading to qualifications at level 2 or below.

8. The main benefit for young people of further participation is in terms of increased future earnings. Even though there is evidence that vocational qualifications at level 2 or below have little economic impact generally, research suggests that they are likely to considerably benefit young people who leave school with no qualifications.⁷

9. Young people who participate in post-16 education or training are also more likely to be in employment at a later date.

10. Although the proposal is for *compulsory* participation, it will be better to encourage young people to participate of their own free will, otherwise students will become resentful and it will be difficult for colleges to manage this and a risk to other students. To achieve this, evidence suggests it will be necessary to offer a range of suitable post-16 pathways; to ensure the availability of high-quality guidance and support; and to offer good, alternative pre-16 provision which will engage young people and encourage them to want to continue learning post-16.

11. For low attainers, RPA may not help them to reach level 3 by 19 as the issue is one of engagement with the curriculum, not years spent in education.

12. Vocational offer and entitlement at 14 is vital for learner engagement, but reductions in school funding, and the changes to school league tables (not including outcomes from vocational programmes) mean the trend is to move away from this. Locally some colleges are stating their 14–16 programme will be reduced by about 80% from its peak. In order to maintain a suitable alternative curriculum for 14–16 year olds for whom the E Bacc is unsuitable, Studio Schools (ideally on college campuses) and full time attendance at college by 14 year olds should be developed to address this.

13. Learners who would have achieved a level 1 or 2 by 16, if they had a college opportunity at 14, will now not start this until they are 16, making level 3 by 19 very unlikely.

14. Learners who have to follow an academic curriculum at school (E Bacc; predominantly GCSE) which is inappropriate and they do not find interesting, will disengage and be at risk of exclusion or becoming NEET.

Additionally:

15. The Government's drive to encourage academies and free schools to open up—including those with sixth forms—will spread more thinly the curriculum offer for 16–19 year olds. This will mean that economies of scale of operation cannot be obtained and therefore the investment in direct learning (per individual) will be diminished.

16. In order to ensure that colleges can invest appropriately in young people affected by RPA, and to ensure that there is fairness and equity for all young people across the education system, the funding levels for 16–19 in FE must be equalised with school sixth forms (as promised in the Government's initial policy proposals)

17. The Government's decision to enforce membership of IfL, but remove the GTC adds in anomalies (and additional costs) to the 16–19 landscape. There should be a single set of professional standards that apply across the whole of the 16–19 system.

18. This should be echoed in inspection arrangements—a single simple system that enables young people, parents and sponsors to compare readily between different types of organisation. Any new providers entering the system (eg voluntary groups, employers etc) should be subject to the same inspection arrangements.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education

ABOUT ACME

The Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education (ACME www.acme-uk.org) is an independent committee, based at the Royal Society and operating under its auspices, that aims to influence Government strategy and policies with a view to improving the outcomes of mathematics teaching and learning in England and so secure a mathematically enabled population. The ACME response has been informed by input from the mathematics community through the ACME Outer Circle, a group assembled to encompass a breadth of knowledge, support and influence which we consult on key issues.

SUMMARY

Mathematics is an enabling subject where increased proficiency is of value to the individual, to society and to the economy. Raising the participation age to 18 is likely to considerably increase the number of students on vocational pathways, many with below average mathematics attainment at 16. Almost all of these students would benefit from taking some mathematics. It will be necessary to develop and widen the post-16

⁷ <http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-RB012.pdf>

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mathematics curriculum to make better provision for such students, and to increase the number of people able to teach mathematics appropriately at this level. It will be essential that many more teachers of mathematics are recruited and trained to provide for these new students. CPD for those who teach vocational subjects which involve mathematics is also essential.

1. ACME (Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry, particularly addressing the second and third questions. Mathematics plays a unique role in the potential economic, intellectual and social contribution that individuals can make to the nation. Mathematics underpins many vocational and academic areas, so that a good knowledge of the subject opens many doors, while lack of skill and understanding in mathematics can impede progress in many areas of life.

2. There is a minimum level of competence and understanding which is required for an individual to be a functioning citizen. This level is not always achieved by those who currently leave education at the age of 16.

3. By international standards a very small proportion of students in the 16–19 age range continues to study mathematics at any level.⁸ This has serious economic and social consequences for the nation and also limits the prospects of many individuals.

4. To remedy this it is necessary both to increase the participation rate post-16, and to provide appropriate mathematical “pathways” to post-16 students. ACME has begun to address the issues concerned in its paper *Post-16 in 2016*.⁹ This paper recognises that it is not sufficient for post-16 provision in mathematics simply to consist of A-level mathematics for those who have been successful at GCSE and repeated attempts at GCSE for those yet to be successful. The paper describes four pathways which it believes should be available, ranging from Pathway A (which would be designed to give a qualification equivalent to GCSE mathematics, but would not simply be a repeat of GCSE) to pathway D which would be the full A-level programme.

5. A substantial number of those who continue to study post-16 drop mathematics. When at 18 they proceed to work or further study, many find that they have insufficient mathematics, and that even what they have is poorly remembered. This occurs for a number of reasons, including poor advice and guidance. Many who could continue with AS or A level Mathematics, or other level 3 related qualifications, do not do so because they think they will achieve higher grades in other subjects. Such students rarely consider the consequences of **not** studying mathematics at this level. However, the forthcoming ACME extensive research project on the mathematical needs of employers and higher education¹⁰ makes clear the importance of mathematics to individuals and the economy, and provides detailed insight to inform policy in developing the curriculum and corresponding structures to improve the provision of mathematics education. It is clear from this work that increased post-16 participation in mathematics across the full ability range is vital.

6. For the purposes of this inquiry, we will now focus on students who do not currently stay in education post-16, but will do so as the participation age increases to 18. It is highly desirable that the majority of these students will continue to study mathematics. For many of these the route referred to above as Pathway A will be appropriate. Some elements of this pathway already exist as Free Standing Mathematics Qualifications and Functional Mathematics. It will be important that the pathway is designed to give a qualification equivalent (both for employers and for progression purposes) to GCSE mathematics, and that it is not simply a repeat of GCSE. Materials adapted to more mature learners with an appreciation of more contexts would be developed, and the use of spreadsheets and other software would be integrated. Project work would be included in this pathway.

7. It will be absolutely vital to prepare for the increased participation rate by training more teachers (via initial teacher training and CPD) to provide mathematics to these students. It is already difficult to recruit sufficient good quality teachers of mathematics. A two-pronged attack will be necessary, involving an intensified effort to bring more highly qualified mathematicians into the system as a whole, and developing teachers who are not so well qualified in mathematics in a way which makes them effective teachers of mathematics to a wide range of post-16 students.

8. The existing training infrastructure will need to be expanded to ensure that it covers training for teachers to provide for larger cohorts of students of this age group who are not focused on A-levels. With the raising of the age limit, teachers will be required to review both the content of the teaching in mathematics, ensuring relevance, but will also need to consider motivational aspects for encouraging participation in the subject.

9. Considerable resource and expertise will be required here, but even in the current economic climate funding must be made available; this funding is likely to be cost effective in the longer term.

10. It will be necessary to develop teaching materials to help teachers relate the mathematics in specific contexts to a generic set of mathematical items so that there is improved opportunity for both teacher and student to see that a piece of mathematics learned in one context may be used in another, and to keep open the possibility of a student making further progress in mathematics itself.

⁸ Nuffield Foundation Report *Is the UK an outlier in upper secondary maths education?* www.nuffieldfoundation.org/uk-outlier-upper-secondary-maths-education

⁹ ACME report *Post-16 in 2016* <http://www.acme-uk.org/the-work-of-acme/proactive-projects/level-3-mathematical-project>

¹⁰ ACME *Mathematical Needs* project, www.acme-uk.org/the-work-of-acme/proactive-projects/mathematical-needs-project, to be published in May 2011.

11. Many of the points made in the ACME response to the Wolf review of 14–19 Vocational Education are also relevant to this inquiry.¹¹

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Leacan

1. LEACAN is a national network for inspectors, advisers, officers and consultants employed by local authorities in roles with a specific remit for strategic 14–19 planning and development. It is a charitable membership organisation. The network, started 20 years ago, has 140 members representing 80% of Local Authorities across England and includes representatives from the British Services, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

2. This submission is based on evidence provided by members from a range of Local Authorities ranging from small urban unitary authorities to large shire counties.

What impact the Educational Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it

3. Members referred to two widely quoted studies from the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the CfBT Education Trust showing that attainment at GCSE and A Level by recipients of EMA rose by between 5% and 7% since its introduction and by even more for those living in the most deprived neighbourhoods and that EMA is disproportionately taken up by those with low achievement levels at school, by those from ethnic minorities and by those from single-parent households. Members from a range of local authorities offered examples of increases in participation from groups in receipt of EMA since its introduction.

- 3.1 In one core city local authority 43% of 16–18 year olds receive EMA and post 16 participation has increased from 88.8% in 2007 to 92.2% in 2009.
- 3.2 In FE “53% of the 16–18 students receive EMA and EMA has improved both retention and achievement for those in receipt of it”.
- 3.3 A 6th form college states that “38% of students receive EMA...It is our assessment that some students would have elected not to come to College or would have elected to progress to a college nearer their home address at the expense of accessing more suitable progression and/or course choice without EMA.”
- 3.4 50% of learners are on the highest level of EMA and post 16 participation has increased by 17.4% between 2004 and 2009.
- 3.5 In one of the EMA pilot areas in 1998–99, 50% of the cohort qualifies for EMA (up to 81% for those engaged in Foundation Learning). Post 16 participation has risen from 56.3% in 1998 to 80.5% in 2009.

4. It is estimated that the withdrawal of EMA from learners at FE college and Sixth Form College in the core city (without factoring in schools and other providers) will result in the loss of around £4.2 million from incomes of families facing financial hardship and from the local economy. It is estimated that the replacement of EMA with a significantly smaller amount of funding from within the Discretionary Learner Support Fund will result in a loss of £8 million from the local economy.

5. EMA is linked to attendance and retention (ie EMA payments are dependent on the young person’s attendance at school or college) and this has a significant impact on the institutions Success Rate—the measure of how many students “succeed” against those who begin the course (retention + achievement). Success Rates are an element of the institutions Provider Factor—an element of the National Funding Formula—and therefore EMA has an indirect impact on institutional funding levels. There is evidence that young people may enrol at a provider but find they cannot continue without financial assistance. In addition, without support for transport costs, students’ attendance may suffer with obvious impacts on achievement and success.

6. A number of member Local Authorities raised the issue of funding for transport costs. There is significant evidence that EMA is currently used by many recipients to fund costs of travel to learn. In rural areas this is a significant cost. There is, at present, no confirmation that the DLSF will be available to fund transport costs. This is an issue of great concern to those learners in more rural areas. Examples of evidence include:

- 6.1 Student A is studying a first diploma in Information Technology and hopes to progress onto National Diploma in September. It costs him approx. £4.00 per day to travel into college (approximately 12 miles distant—no FE provision nearer) and he has to come into college three days a week. This student lives with just his mum and two younger sisters. His mum is not working, as she is unwell (mental health issues) and therefore this student relies solely on this money to be able to get into college as his mum is not in a position to be able to help him as she already has the younger two to support. With the loss of EMA it is unlikely that this student will

¹¹ ACME response to the Wolf Review of 14–19 vocational education www.acme-uk.org/news/news-items-repository/2010/11/acme-response-to-the-wolf-review-of-14-19-vocational-education

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be able to progress on the level 3 course, which long term would eventually open up much greater opportunities for him. On the occasions that he has not been paid his EMA the college have had to lend money for food and travel to ensure that the student is still able to attend. Living in a rural area puts a much greater pressure on these students as they have the outlay of travel and if the explore card (LA subsidised discount travel for 16–18 year olds) is withdrawn ...then this cost of £12.00 a week for travel could be doubled.

- 6.2 Student B is a 16 year old female student who started college in Sept 2010. The family applied for and were awarded £30 EMA. Out of this they had to pay £250 for kit for a Beauty Course and uniform. The family lives approximately 15 miles from college—(closest other FE in Cambridge is about the same distance) the bus tickets take up £20 of the EMA and lunch covers the rest. Mum and dad are on a low income and mum is disabled with dad as her carer. On the occasions when EMA has been delayed she cannot get to College. She has had to borrow the money from other relatives and pay them back when her payment comes. Her family finds this very embarrassing. The college student welfare officer spoke to her father last week; they are very concerned that they will be unable to send the student back to college in September without EMA. We have mentioned the LSF funding that we should have to the family, but there is no guarantee that we will be able to help with travel cost as this is currently prohibited for LSF funding.
- 6.3 “The removal of support for travel will have particular impact for those in our most disadvantaged wards. The replacement will be much less and as yet it is unclear whether travel will be a legitimate use of the LSD. We fully expect this to mean that fewer young people will wish to come to college and fewer will stay on if they do”.

7. An area of disquiet is the uncertainty over the implementation of the DLSF as a replacement for EMA. A key benefit of EMA was that disadvantaged learners and their families knew the support available regardless of the institution chosen and could make informed decisions in their educational planning. Where DLSF is managed by individual institutions this may lead to different levels of support being available in different institutions with learners making decisions based on financial benefits rather than educational choice.

8. There are concerns about the ability of providers to manage DLSF effectively or equitably with limited administrative resources. In addition, there will need to be robust appeals processes in place which will require further resources.

9. If DLSF is formula based it may be spread too thinly in some areas to be effective and if the formula is based on historic data it is unlikely to be responsive enough to support providers in adapting their offer to attract a more deprived cohort. In addition, learners enrolling on two-year programmes and accessing DLSF will need assurances on the maintenance of support to reduce risks of drop-out in the second year of a programme.

10. A critical uncertainty is whether there will be the flexibility within the DLSF formula to enable providers to fund transport costs for young people—this is currently not allowed with DLSF and, as we have seen, travel costs can be a significant deterrent to learning for some young people.

11. An argument made by a city working closely with its adjacent shire authority is that historic DLSF spend may be a more accurate reflection of need than EMA. In 2008–08 between them they had 2% of England’s EMA learners, were allocated 2.8% of national DLSF allocation but spent 3.4% of the national spend.

12. A final but critical difficulty with moving from EMA to DLSF will be the significant decline in the total amount of funding available with one authority estimating that 30% of local 16–18 year olds would lose access to funding for participation. In a North West urban authority, if the current level of DLSF was trebled (as has been indicated) the funding available to young people would reduce from just over £9 million pa to c£1.1 million pa.

What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness?

13. A vital task for local authorities, mentioned by a number of members, is the central coordinating role played by local LA officers through 14–19 teams and 14–19 Partnerships working with other agencies, especially Connexions. Linking this coordinating role with LAs strategic commissioning responsibilities outlined in the ASCL Act places local authorities in a central role. Bringing partners together, coordinating data and audits of provision, working with national agencies (eg YPLA, SFA, NAS etc), supporting quality of provision, developing the market and providing a leadership role are all important areas of local authority work. Severe reductions in LA funding will, inevitably, reduce the capacity available to carry out this central leadership and coordinating role. The LA has the statutory duty to secure appropriate provision for all 17 and 18 year olds but with limited levers to influence providers to develop provision to meet the needs of those currently or potentially not engaged or to enable new providers to respond to demand identified through strategic LA planning. Currently, examples of LA strategic planning targets include:

- 13.1 Securing accurate and relevant data to identify and profile NEET cohorts.
- 13.2 Securing accurate audits of provision including curriculum provision and quality data.
- 13.3 Supporting providers to diversify the offer to ensure the needs and aspirations of current and potential NEETs are met.

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- 13.4 Developing the market to ensure provision is broadened to meet the needs of current and potential NEETs.
 - 13.5 Working with 11–16 providers to ensure Pre 16 learning secures continued engagement in learning Post 16.
 - 13.6 Working with providers to secure appropriate and high-quality Information Advice and Guidance.

14. A connected priority is that RPA will require strong collaboration and partnership. The growth of Academies, Free Schools, Studio Schools and University Technical Colleges has the potential to make this harder to achieve. A common view expressed by members is for Schools to be held accountable for the outcomes of their young people up to 18 regardless of when they leave the School.

15. The critical preparation needed to ensure the successful implementation of a raised age of participation is to develop appropriate provision to meet the needs and aspirations of young people. Particular areas of focus described by members include vocational provision, apprenticeship provision, Foundation Learning provision, and provision to meet the needs of Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LLDD).

16. The need to secure suitable high-quality vocational provision to meet the needs of those currently or potentially disengaged by the predominately academic offer Post 16 was mentioned by a number of members. While the future of vocational programmes is awaiting the publication of the Wolf review, the need for vocational provision is clear. The example of a core city which provides a comprehensive vocational offer across the city delivered in state of the art facilities as a partnership across all secondary schools and academies involving 2,000 young people working toward recognised qualifications is reflected across the country. The importance of investing in such programmes at Key Stage 4 to reduce disengagement is of critical importance in avoiding drop-out Post 16.

17. Securing appropriate apprenticeship provision is another key preparation highlighted by our members. This will require considerable work in engaging employers. This work often involves the LA exercising a key leadership and coordinating role (especially in linking the education/training area with areas such as regeneration) working in partnership with the National Apprenticeship Service. One authority has prioritised work with District and Borough Councils, Business Links and Chambers of Commerce to develop an effective employer engagement strategy. Others have an Apprenticeship Development Plan and have highlighted the need to support small employers who will offer young people employment without structured training.

18. A connected priority is to develop pre-apprenticeship programmes to ensure that young people have the right skills and attributes to enter employment with training. Such programmes are essential in meeting the aspirations of many long-term NEETs who want to gain paid employment rather than re-enter formal education but who lack either basic skills (including literacy and/or numeracy) or work-skills such as time-keeping or personal effectiveness.

19. A number of our members expressed the importance of further developing Foundation Learning provision. The flexibility of personalised programmes at Level 1 and below incorporating basic/functional skills, personal development skills and vocational/general learning building on the positive experiences of e2e (Entry to Employment) programmes was felt to be important. For example authorities have prioritised developing 14–16 FL provision to feed into RPA activities as well as support for providers in developing personalised FL programmes that meet the needs of learners with LDD and/or vulnerable groups and for ensuring high-quality work-related learning within FL programmes to support progression into employment and/or Apprenticeships. If Apprenticeship programmes become increasingly popular with more able learners (who may have previously undertaken A levels or Level 3 vocational programmes) this may reduce the opportunities for other potential apprentices who may need FL or pre-apprenticeship provision to help them secure work-based training options.

20. The importance of specific provision to meet the needs of learners with learning difficulties or disabilities was mentioned by members. Some have prioritised the identification of potential progression routes post 16 for all SEN learners in Year 11 with transitional discussions taking place in the Autumn term working alongside Lead SEN Connexions Advisors, providers and the local authority as well as the development of discrete post 16 provision for learners identified as School Action or School Action Plus and on the autistic spectrum who may require 1–1 support.

21. The running down of the Connexions service and uncertainty over Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) provision is emerging as an important barrier to effective RPA working. Connexions has played a leading role in bringing NEET figures down in all LAs who responded. Furthermore, the critical role of impartial high-quality IAG cannot be exaggerated. Giving responsibility for IAG to schools would appear a high-risk strategy when perverse incentives such as league tables, school autonomy and funding methodology will cause some schools to prioritise the needs of the school above those of the learner. LA funding pressures, reductions in Early Intervention Grant and a lack of clarity over the proposed All Age Careers Service as well as uncertainty over how schools will be held to account in their new statutory duties over IAG are creating the potential for considerable instability in IAG provision at a critical moment in planning for RPA.

22. Two LAs mention the importance of ensuring high quality facilities are in place to secure appropriate provision for Post 16 learners and have emphasised the difficulties caused by the withdrawal of Building

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Schools for the Future plans—both the loss of capital available as well as the role of BSF in bringing partners together to agree common partnership priorities for change.

23. The importance of high quality transparent common data sets is raised by a number of members.

24. The impact of Post 16 funding methodology and in particular lagged numbers also concerns members. The lack of clarity over how LAs will be able to bring in new providers to meet demand is an important barrier to planning and the lack of willingness of providers to expand or amend provision to meet demand when constrained by funding based on historic numbers and historic SLN ratios is causing problems to some LAs in carrying out their strategic leadership role.

25. Some local authorities have prioritised mechanisms to listen and act on the views and aspirations of learners including the development of the young people's empowerment network, Youth Councils and Every Child Matters Surveys.

What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision

26. A number of members commented that it is important to recognise and establish the connections between different but related parts of the Coalition's educational plans—in particular the national curriculum review (where this runs the risk of creating a more alienating curriculum at 14–16), the Wolf review of vocational provision, funding changes/reductions in providers and local authorities, reductions in Post 16 enrichment funding which can support more vulnerable learners, and rising costs of Higher Education which may increase demand for FE provision reducing available provision for current and potential NEETs.

27. It is difficult to predict the impact of RPA on academic achievement but there is no evidence to suggest it will increase or reduce.

28. It is important to avoid the assumption that learners move through the system in a linear fashion and there needs to be opportunities for a more varied learning journey.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Lincolnshire 14–19 Strategic Partnership

1. Introduction

This submission is in response to the Education Committee's request for evidence regarding:

- the impact that the Education and Maintenance Allowance (EMA) has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and the effectiveness of replacing EMA with the Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF),
- the preparations necessary for providers and local authorities for the gradual raising of the participation age (RPA) to 18 years and their current state of readiness, and
- the impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision.

The evidence has been collated on behalf of the Lincolnshire 14–19 Strategic Partnership by members of the Lincolnshire County Council's 14–19 Planning and Allocations team. The submitted information was collected during interviews with senior staff members of colleges, school sixth forms and independent private providers within the Lincolnshire Strategic Partnership.

The number of students accessing EMA in the Lincolnshire area covered by this evidence varied between 28% (Sixth Forms) and 95% (Foundation Learning Providers) with particularly high figures (60% to 80%) shown in the south of the county.

2. Executive Summary

EMA has been highly positive with a 7.4% increase in staying on rates over the period that it has operated nationally and the take-up in Lincolnshire was always higher than for the rest of the East Midlands.

The view of the partnership is that the weekly payment has been a great incentive which has kept young people in education and has had a positive impact on participation, attendance and achievement. The attendance requirement for the payment of the allowance has, almost without exception, been strictly enforced. The ultimate deterrent being: no attendance, no payment.

Not only has the EMA enhanced the participation, attendance and achievement of students, it has also contributed in a large part to the welfare of those learners in receipt of the allowance. Some of the young people from low-income families have been able to contribute towards the household budget including the daily transport and food costs. A common view was that the EMA payment threshold was set too high and that a number of students from families with incomes at the upper end of the scale would have continued with their studies whether or not they received EMA.

Some providers already receive learner support funds and believe that this is vital to the welfare of those students in need of financial assistance. The administration of the current discretionary funding is no real burden upon the providers as it is, in general, a small sum and the numbers of recipients few. However, concern is apparent among the senior management of most institutions with regard to the “new” discretionary learner support fund (DLSF). Far too little information about the payment is currently available and, with the funding amounts not known until March, the providers have been unable to plan for the future. The partnership is concerned that if the DLSF payment does not match the amount that had been allocated through the EMA, the inability to support the neediest of students will, in the partnerships view, almost certainly have a detrimental effect on their participation and welfare. What happens if a school uses up its allocation of DLSF and still has unmet needs but another school or academy under spends? Money is trapped in the system and cannot be redistributed. Equally concerning is the fact that whereas currently, the students do not regard the EMA, because of its distanced administration, as having any stigma attached to claiming it, there is worry that a locally administered fund may create a barrier to access due to the learners being worried about being identified as “poor” this has been identified in one institution where the take up of Free School Meals was approx 2% but EMA take up was 34%.

All providers are aware of the raising of the participation age (RPA) and the majority have already gone some way to introducing courses that are thought to be of the type and duration in which the learners in the cohort would be interested. The major concerns regarding the RPA are: the extra costs that will be involved in offering a wider range of courses, the reduction of information, advice and guidance (IAG) in the future and the questions surrounding the enforcement of the scheme.

There is a concern that issues around the rises in student fees in relation to Higher Education could have an effect on motivation to progress, which can impact on attitudes to learning.

Although transport costs do not feature in the questions asked by the select committee they do play an important part in the welfare of a large number of the students that live in remote areas throughout Lincolnshire. Exceptional concern is being voiced over the anticipated reduction in the funding to those students who currently claim EMA and to compound the situation, learners are expecting additional transport costs to be levied by the local council. It is the partnerships view that if the current proposals by the local authority are implemented then many post-16 students will have choice and access to education severely restricted. Further expenditure in this area for some families will be difficult and some parents have made it clear that if the expense is forced upon them their children would not be able to participate in post 16 learning.

3. The impact of EMA on Participation

“EMA is the hook to get learners involved,” is a quote from one of the independent Foundation Learning (FL) providers and is a message echoed by the majority of other interviewees. Without exception the EMA funding was thought to have had a positive effect on participation. It is known that in many cases where a student comes from a family with a low income that a fair proportion, if not all, of the allowance is passed on to supplement the household earnings. Certainly, with this particular cohort of learners the attraction of the EMA was a huge influence on the decision to participate. On the other hand, it is considered that a number of the learners whose family income is at the higher end of the income threshold would have participated in education without the weekly payment.

4. The impact of EMA on Attendance

There was little doubt from the evidence collected that the education maintenance allowance has had a positive impact at all of the institutions on students’ attendance. With a strict policy on “no attendance—no EMA payment” the learners were diligent about their presence in class. With a guaranteed allowance each week, some of the post 16 learners had given up their part-time work and concentrated on their studies.

It was not unusual to record very high percentages of students that bus in to their point of learning. Because of Lincolnshire’s rural nature and the learners being widespread across the county it is common for some institutions to see up to 95% of their young people using the bus to get to them. The EMA payment has been critical in assisting in the payment of some learners’ transportation costs.

5. The impact of EMA on Achievement

The improved incentive, in the form of EMA, to attend post-16 study has had a positive impact on achievement. Anecdotal evidence suggests that students who remained in learning due to receiving EMA became more motivated and that their attendance led to improved achievement. At one college the 16–19 year-olds showed some of the best performance—13% above the national average on level 1. A significant proportion of these learners were claiming EMA. Payment of EMA was also linked to progress on the course so that it was not only attendance but also work being completed that triggered the payment.

6. The impact of EMA on the welfare of young people

Without exception, each of the institutions subscribed to the view that the education maintenance allowance has had a positive impact on the welfare of young people.

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Access to the EMA is means tested, however, because the allowance is centrally administered and funded there is no stigma attached to claiming it. The allowance is viewed by some learners to be a right, an income, a payment for learning. However, it is considered that EMA has assisted in getting individual learners engaged and that once participating their focus has been about the learning rather than the money.

Indication that the allowance has had a greater impact on students that belong to lower income families was particularly strong from the majority of institutions. It is known that in a high number of cases a significant proportion of the EMA was being diverted to the family accounts.

Institutions have reported that transport and food were the most noted areas in which the allowance was used by the young people. A huge proportion of those attending post 16 learning have to use some form of transport to get there. In one instance only 300 of the 1,900 students attending one college are from the immediate area.

Providers have reported that fewer students were working long hours in part-time employment because of the EMA and that has improved attendance and achievement.

7. Was EMA a success?

The allowance had brought learners to education, kept them in education and assisted the neediest without any shame attached to claiming the allowance. In some cases EMA has become a fundamental part of the family's income. One college reported that statistics and extrapolation had shown that the allowance has had a direct impact on the students' attendance, achievement and welfare.

It is the view of the partnership that without the EMA a large number of students would not have continued in education and there would have been an increase to the NEET figures in many areas. It would have also led to an increase in the Jobs Without Training figures (JWT) as young people are forced to take up low skilled paid employment to meet family income requirements. Typically young people in jobs without training do not re-engage in education and training and suffer periods of unemployment mirroring the economic cycle.

8. How effective will the DLSF be in replacing EMA?

This question could not be answered by any of the interviewees as insufficient information concerning the "new" discretionary funding has been disseminated. A further problem exists in that the amount of discretionary learner support fund allocated to each institution will not be known until March 2011. It was highlighted that the lack of funding and guidance knowledge made it almost impossible to plan.

Concern was shown in regard to the administration of the discretionary funding and the lateness in distributing the scheme's guidelines. How would the payees be determined? What about the expected high administration cost? Would areas of deprivation be given consideration in the distribution of the funds? Would institutions be open to legal challenge around decisions they make for awarding funding?

Lincolnshire County Council is currently consulting on proposals to reduce their subsidy for post 16 transport. If the proposals are implemented it will result in an increase in costs to the learner of 100%. Providers are concerned that the DLSF will not be sufficient to cover these extra costs.

9. Have you been given, or have you found up-to-date information regarding the DLSF?

No up-to-date information had been distributed nor could any be found on the internet from sites such as YPLA, DfE, or Directgov. Providers are concerned about the lateness of this information being provided.

10. What preparations do you consider necessary for RPA?

Responses from the institutions ranged from "because of our niche market we do not expect any increase in numbers" to "we have been preparing for the last two years by introducing low level courses".

It is widely recognised that to meet the requirements of RPA providers and the partnership need to understand more fully the characteristics of the NEET group and provide appropriate programmes to engage them.

On the whole, independent learning providers' preparations appear to be reasonably advanced with the preparation of short "interesting" courses to attract the NEETs (those not in Education, Employment or Training).

A recurring concern though, was the possible lack of sufficient, high quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) for the future, partly because of the cuts that are expected within the Connexions service.

Raising the participation age requires young people to spend an additional one-year and then two-years in education or training. Many of these young people cannot afford to be in education or training for an additional two-years and so they will have to hold down a school/college place and work in the evening and weekends to earn money and as a result they may not be able to spend time doing the work required to achieve the result in their course of study. The only post-16 option that pays money to young people as a right is an Apprenticeship and many young people will not be capable of achieving this level 2 qualification in its entirety.

11. *What is your current state of readiness?*

With the advanced notice of the RPA most institutions have been planning for the changes. In general the envisaged extra capacity can be absorbed at some schools/ colleges/organisations, whereas a small number of providers consider that they do not have further capacity and the situation will therefore have no impact upon them.

12. *What impact will RPA have on academic achievement?*

By and large it was considered that the raising of the participation age would have a positive impact on academic achievement. However, this would only become a reality if appropriate, engaging courses, which prepared and equipped the learners for the world of work and helped them realise their aspirations, were available. Furthermore there was widespread agreement that IAG intervention, well before the age of 16, was of utmost importance.

13. *What impact will RPA have on Access to vocational education and training*

Emphasis was placed, by some institutions, on the need for the parity of academic and vocational qualifications to be recognised. A common view of those interviewed was that there is still a long way to go before a sufficient choice of appropriate vocational courses would be available. Equally impacting on the situation was the lack of employers willing to participate or offer employment.

14. *What impact will RPA have on student behaviour and attendance?*

The offer of appropriate courses including vocational courses is fundamental to successful student attendance and behaviour. There is a common question being asked by the senior representatives of the institutions was “how is this going to be policed?”.

15. *What impact will RPA have on alternative provision?*

Currently progression to post 16 learning from the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) is significantly lower than the overall cohort. Lincolnshire is in the process of reviewing alternative PRU provision. One of the drivers is the need to improve progression; specific targeted action will be required to achieve 100% participation in post 16 learning as some of the young people involved are the hardest to engage.

Currently the Foundation Learning Providers work with learners whose needs are quite diverse, previously the E2E programme was flexible and enabled providers to identify and deliver appropriate provision. The changes to this programme have made it difficult to engage and retain some difficult to engage learners.

There will be a need for more “bespoke” learning with providers being able to offer provision that meets the needs of the learner rather than being driven down the qualification route. The funding methodology will need to support the “drop in/drop off” nature of some of the programmes that will need to be in place to retain difficult to engage learners.

Written evidence submitted by Fiona Nicholson, Home Education Consultant

1. This submission focuses on young people who come into the category of elective home education.
2. In very many cases children are taken out of school after problems in a particular school or with the school system in general although some children—including my own son who is now almost 18—have never been in school.
3. It is thought that around 40,000 children in England are home educated. This means that several thousand home educated young people will be affected each year by the raising of the participation age.
4. If the Government's intention is to encourage participation and to foster the expectation that young people in all circumstances will continue in learning then flexibility will be required in the Further Education sector for some home educated young people.
5. Home educated young people have moved on to college and sixth form in the past but the raising of the participation age and the possible diversity in the range of educational opportunities may encourage more home educated young people to enter the further education system. There may be home educated young people wanting to access further education who have not previously been in the school system.
6. I would not wish to give the impression that all home educated young people require special consideration but I do need to place on record that the logistics of taking GCSEs can be a serious hurdle for home educators.
7. If the challenge of taking GCSEs as private candidates is not addressed before young people reach the age of 16 by widening access to exam centres and assisting with controlled assessments, then adjustments will need to be made post-16 for example by permitting non-standard entry to college or by opening up GCSE courses designed for mature students (21+) returning to education.

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8. It should also be noted that home education will continue to be a legal option for participation beyond the age of 16.

9. In this submission I also consider whether and how participation will be enforced since it may be difficult for non-specialists to keep up with the latest interpretation of the law.

10. I am making this submission as an independent home education consultant and long-term home educating parent. I am the former Chair of Education Otherwise Government Policy Group and also acted as Trustee and Director of the charitable company. I have given evidence on home education practice and policy to Government Committees in the past.

11. Elective home education is the term used for children who are educated at home by parental choice, although the “choice” element is qualified below.

12. Elective home education is to be distinguished from Education Otherwise Than At School or EOTAS where the local authority or school retains responsibility for pupils who are out of school for a number of reasons including where the young person is anxious, “school-phobic”, sick, pregnant, a young parent, a young carer, excluded or at risk of exclusion.

13. Ninety nine children in every hundred are “in the system”, hence laws and regulations framed for schoolchildren may inadvertently misrepresent or ignore the experience of home educated children.

14. Many children who are now home educated have previously been pupils at maintained schools. Parents send their child into the school system, but find—often after children have had a very difficult time—that school just does not work for their child.

15. Local authorities may have between six and 600+ home educated children “on their books.”

16. Because numbers vary so widely, local authorities may only have a few children in each age group. Alternatively, local authorities may have tens or even hundreds of home educated young teens who will soon be affected by the raising of the participation age.

17. Not all home educated children go on to attend a further education institution. Some children—for example my son—continue in home education after the age of 16, which may or may not include studying at home for examinations.

18. The job of overseeing home education within a local authority may be a full-time or part-time post or may simply be passed to someone who is already working in Education Welfare, EOTAS, Alternative Provision or Traveller Education. In some cases the task may be carried out on a contract basis by a retired teacher who will be paid for each assessment or “inspection.”

19. The law makes it clear that education provided by parents does not have to conform to school standards.

20. In some areas local authorities have been able to offer limited assistance and support to home educated young teens. For example, North Yorkshire Council obtained limited funding for a pilot study which offered joint working with Connexions and help with functional skills. North Yorkshire, Dudley and Sheffield have offered home educated young people the opportunity to take Maths and English GCSEs. Darlington Council will signpost home educated young people to alternative provision particularly for Gypsy Roma and Travellers in home education.

21. However, in my experience it is rare to find local authorities able to offer services to home educated young people and it should be borne in mind that local authorities receive no funding for home education.

22. In some cases families would say that they have no choice but to home educate for example where children have been badly bullied at school or where the child's special needs are not being met.

23. “Special needs” covers cases where a child has learning difficulties and also where a child is particularly gifted. The National Association for Gifted Children considers that it is not unusual for a child to be “twice exceptional” ie to be gifted and also to have learning problems.

24. Children with a statement of special educational needs may be educated at home by parents. The parent's responsibility is to provide education suitable to age ability aptitude and special needs. The parent is not required to meet any targets set in the statement of special needs or to deliver any specific learning programme which may be specified in the statement.

25. On the other hand some families make a considered decision to home educate when their children are very young. There may be philosophical or religious reasons for their choice.

26. Some families may delay the children's entry to formal education.

27. Children and young people may enter and leave home education at any point. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that children are perhaps more likely to leave the school system in the first year of primary or secondary school.

28. One of the problems for home educators is that they will repeatedly meet people who have only come across one or two home educated children in the past. This leads to prejudging the issue and bringing

stereotypes to bear based on extremely limited experience instead of treating each young person as an individual. For example college staff may anticipate problems because they simply do not realise that home educated young people are used to working in groups and socialising.

29. The law in England and Wales states that the parent has a duty to cause the child to receive education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

30. At present a school pupil who reaches the age of 16 after the beginning of September must remain in education until the end of the school year which is currently set as the last Friday in June. It is generally supposed that this timetable also applies equally to home educated young people, though this is not explicitly stated in law.

31. Section 436a of the Education Act 1996 gives local authorities the duty to make arrangements to identify children of compulsory education age who are outside school but who are not receiving education. Government guidelines indicate that the authority should begin by making enquiries of parents but if it still appears that education is not being provided the authority should seek further information and ultimately if the authority is not satisfied that the child is receiving education it has a duty to begin the process for a School Attendance Order.

32. Once a School Attendance Order has been served, the parent must register the child with the school named in the order. In cases where a parent does not comply, the authority must consider whether to prosecute parents for breaching the order. This is a criminal offence which is heard in the Magistrates Court.

33. Government guidance on enforcing school attendance affirms that the parent may offer the defence to the court that the child is receiving education otherwise than at school.

34. It is very difficult to get a picture of how the system will operate from 2013 because it is not clear how much will be retained from the Education and Skills Act 2008.

35. The last Government brought in the Education and Skills Act which provided for raising the participation age initially to 17 from 2013 and then to 18 from 2015.

36. The last Government was set on enforcement and discussions centred on whether to penalise parents for their children's non-attendance—or whether to criminalise the young people themselves or otherwise withhold desirable goods such as provisional driving licences for non-participants.

37. The Government received a great deal of feedback to suggest that enforcement would be unworkable in practice. The penalties would not be sufficiently serious to deter those who were determined to avoid participating but would criminalise other potentially vulnerable young people.

38. The final wording of the legislation still maintained that participation was compulsory and would be enforced at all levels but in the small print we found that the penalties for non-compliance were to be greatly scaled back.

39. The recent Schools White Paper and the Education Bill restrained the enforcement provisions of the 2008 Act even further.

40. The Schools White Paper 2010 said: “We will legislate to delay the enforcement of raising the participation age, in order to allow more time for the education system to embed the raising of the participation age.”

41. The Government's Explanatory Note to the Education Bill says: “The Secretary of State will keep under review the appropriateness of commencing Chapter 5 of Part 1, which provides for an enforcement mechanism involving local authority enforcement notices, panels, penalty notices, and ultimately a criminal offence for failure to comply with an attendance notice. The commencement of other duties may be affected, including those on employers, parents, and the requirement on local authorities to identify those young people not meeting the central duty.”

42. The Impact Assessment to the Education Bill seeks to weigh in the balance of the heavy cost of provision and enforcement versus the slender possible benefit of improved attainment. The IA states that “when the Government reviews the timing and commencement of enforcement provision, it will consider the latest estimates of costs and benefits.”

43. Flexibility will be needed with regard to academic entrance requirements once the participation age is raised.

44. Further education institutions will need to be aware of the difficulties home educated young people have faced prior to 16 in trying to take exams as private candidates. Problems include trying to find an exam centre which will accept private candidates. Controlled assessment is another major issue for home educated young people wanting to take GCSEs, where the writing-up stage of each project may need 15 hours under strictly supervised conditions.

45. One solution may be for colleges to offer catch-up GCSEs in one year at 16, before the young person begins a Level 3 course the following year. Alternatively, GCSEs in Maths and English could be offered at the

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same time as Level 3 qualifications if the young person is assessed as capable of working predominantly at Level 3.

46. It may become increasingly important for home educated young people to gain a wider range of academic qualifications at Level 2 and 3 if funding for higher education is to become tied to minimum qualifications as mooted in the Browne Review. Otherwise home educated young people may gain a place at university by demonstrating a particular aptitude and ability but be unable to access funding.

47. There should also be the offer of Functional Skills courses and qualifications either as a standalone course or as a complement to other courses.

48. Flexibility will also be needed with regard to the number of hours attendance at college. For a variety of reasons, some home educated young people would welcome increased opportunities for part-time attendance at school or college.

49. In some instances the home educated young person would not be able to manage full-time attendance due to special educational needs.

50. In other cases the young person will wish to continue education part-time at home but to attend college in order to study for a particular qualification.

51. I continue to have concerns about the legislation with respect to home educated young people with special educational needs for whom college or institutional learning is not always a possibility.

52. Some home educated young people may wish to access alternative provision, but currently this is restricted to young people at risk of exclusion.

53. However, one recent pilot study for reducing NEETs, the Activity Agreement Pilot, has made use of a 10% rule in order to fund provision for an additional cohort outside the main target groups of vulnerable young people. The additional 10% included young people who had been bullied at school and young people who had been part of School Action Plus. Future pilot studies could be encouraged to add young people in elective home education to the discretionary list of those eligible to participate.

54. Under the provisions of the Education and Skills Act introduced by the previous Government, young people would be allowed to take a job instead of going to college. However, young people under the age of 18 who were employed for 20 hours or more a week would also be required to participate in 280 hours of accredited learning per year.

55. The Education and Skills Act requires employers to check with the local authority that anyone under the age of 18 working in excess of the specified hours is on the register of young people participating in education and employers will be in breach of the law if these checks are not made or if young people are employed who do not meet the criteria.

56. There was very little information about any possible flexibilities envisaged for the previous system. I was particularly concerned about the possibility of different treatment for part time education and full time education where a young person was in employment, self-employment or working a substantial number of hours in a volunteer capacity. It seemed theoretically possible—although illogical—that where a young person was employed or self-employed, he or she would be obliged to attend college for 280 hours a year. In other words it would be possible to be in full time home education but not to be in part time home education.

57. In conclusion, more work needs to be done to find out what home educated young people want from further education and to ensure that home educated young people are not excluded from participating.

58. At the same time, the ultimate choice rests with the family, the decision must be taken freely and the young person should not be coerced into taking the course.

59. Small scale research could be carried out to learn from the experiences—both positive and negative—of home educated young people who have already made the transition to college or 6th form.

60. Eligibility rules governing the pilot studies for Raising the Participation Age could be reframed to include home educated young people.

Written evidence submitted by Devon County Council 14+ Learning and Skills Strategic Team

1.0 CONTEXT

Devon has worked hard to reduce the Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) figures through a variety of initiatives over a number of years. We are now working with the hardest to reach individuals who present with complex needs, for whom a more bespoke offer is required that is more tailored to meet learner need.

Most recent figures for Devon (Jan 2011) are:

Percentage in Learning	80%
NEET	6.2%
Not Known	1.0%

Figures for NEET at 17 remain a problem. This is often as a result of learners making choices to remain in full time education on a single year programme with no clear progression route. Such individuals present as NEET at 17 rather than 16. For the future this will contribute to the national picture of growing disengagement at 18–24, most recently evidenced by the National Quarter 4 2010 NEET figures.

2.0 *What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness?*

2.1 Local Authorities will need to build on and reinforce their strategic working relationship with providers and other key stakeholders in order to ensure the provision on offer better meets local need.

2.2 As part of the raising participation agenda the 14+ team in Devon currently undertake joint termly meetings attended by Connexions, FE and other provider colleagues. NEET figures are shared, broad engagement issues explored and solutions sought. There is an opportunity to disseminate best practice and support effective delivery with providers which has worked well in the current academic year. These strategic meetings have grown from effective September guarantee placement panels that were recognised as best practice from elsewhere and implemented in Devon across the Summer of 2010. These served to support delivery of the September guarantee.

2.3 As part of the RPA agenda the 14+ team developed an RPA action plan for the 2010/11 academic year which collated all the activity currently underway. This served as a catalyst to take a fresh look at local issues. They examined NEET and other historic data in order to prioritise work and given the restrictions to funding, base any additional activity on hard data.

2.4 Devon County Council was unsuccessful in their bid to take part in the then DCSF RPA trial in April 2010. They have however, as a result of their RPA Action Plan identified and prioritised several pieces of project work that aim to promote engagement of learners. These include:

- A Key Stage 2 project that promotes engagement across key stage 2/3 transition. This project recognises the fact that disengagement begins at an early age and aims to provide a solution.
- Two projects that offer transition mentoring from pre 16 to post 16 education. The aim is to deliver a better transition from an 11–16 school to a post 16 provider.
- A project working with one school to develop a more structured personalised curriculum offer for those learners who currently remain in school sixth form for a single year then leave with no clear progression route.

2.5 Schools are currently preparing to take over the statutory responsibility for Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance services in 2012 and remain at an early stage in this process. They will need to include the consequences of RPA in how they plan to deliver this function as it returns to school. There is a high risk that RPA may be conflated with staying on at school as this change takes place. This mistaken view, although made clear at the outset by the Department, has not received sufficient reinforcement subsequently as evidenced by colleagues referring to raising of the “staying on age” and meaning staying on at school.

3.0 *What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision?*

3.1 A significant challenge to all providers will be in offering a sufficient range of provision which is attractive to and meets the needs of a cohort of learners for whom progression and engagement beyond 16 has, up to now, not been an option.

3.2 This is further compounded by the fact that such provision is expensive due to the nature of delivery and is not particularly well funded when compared with a traditional offer. Proposed changes to simplify post 16 funding will need to accommodate this point in order to make the delivery of a curriculum offer that better meets individual need a financially attractive proposition.

3.3 The strategic challenge for Local Authorities remains to work with local providers and undertake their key leadership role to secure sufficient suitable education and training opportunities to meet the reasonable needs of all young people in their area.

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3.4 Given one of the objectives of RPA is to improve participation of those who have in the past not engaged in education or training beyond the age of 16, then the removal of punitive sanctions on individuals for non participation begs the question, what levers will here be to secure participation for those who choose to not engage?

3.5 The consequences of the Wolf review of 14–19 vocational education will most certainly impact on the nature and type of vocational provision available to young people.

3.6 The adoption in schools of the English Bacc as a core element of Key Stage 4 provision will not necessarily motivate a group of learners for whom the existing National Curriculum has failed to motivate. For this reason if the English Bacc becomes the only measure of success against which schools are judged then NEET figures will increase unless all learners are effectively engaged.

3.7 The outcomes of the National Curriculum review will need to accommodate the needs of a cohort of learners who otherwise will continue to become more de-motivated and more disengaged as they move through the Key Stages and eventually contribute to the NEET figures.

3.8 The withdrawal of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) will no doubt impact on engagement post 16. The EMA is now viewed as a maintenance rather than motivating factor and the negative consequences of its removal are yet to be quantified. The degree to which the more targeted replacement for EMA will mitigate these consequences is as yet unknown. It remains that there will be a cadre of learners who will have had an allowance removed without a replacement. Given the budget for targeted support is greatly reduced going forward, there will exist a group of learners who will not meet access criteria. The consequences of the removal of the EMA on this group are also unknown.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by London Councils

DISCRETIONARY LEARNER SUPPORT FUND

What impact has the Education Maintenance Allowance had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will the Discretionary Learner Support Fund be in replacing it?

1. London Councils has serious concerns about the impact that ending the education maintenance allowance will have on young Londoners' aspirations. Young people are far more reliant on the EMA in London than in any other part of the country because of higher living costs, and it plays a key role in helping disadvantaged young people remain in education.

2. London Councils is concerned that the Discretionary Learner Support Fund (LSF) will be insufficient to support the significant needs of the capital's most disadvantaged young people to access their post-16 choices. We broadly agree with targeting support for young learners and for providers¹² to have more discretion over this and welcome the trebling of the LSF pot, but we are worried about the impact that the overall reduction in funding available will have on participation and attainment in the capital.

3. At present 54% of young Londoners receive Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) with 89% of these receiving the full £30 a week entitlement (nearly half the young people in learning in London). This means they come from families with a household income of less than £21,817 per year—equating to over 70 hours of work a week paid at the minimum wage, and a particularly low threshold given the increased cost of living in the capital. Many of these students would find it difficult to continue to afford to stay in learning without the support that EMA provides. If a significant proportion of this cohort opts to leave learning, this will inevitably affect London's currently high post-16 participation rate of over 90%. This would in turn have a considerably longer term impact on both individual life chances and the capital's economy. Therefore, we are urging government to increase the LSF pot so that all students living in families with a household income of less than £21,817 per annum have access to it.

4. The high take-up of EMA reflects the profusion of child poverty in London—over 630,000 (two out of five) children in the capital live in families where the household income is below the poverty line.¹³ As referred to earlier, the cost of living in London is also substantially higher than in all other parts of the country—housing costs in particular are extremely high. Young people from poor families can often be under significant pressure from their parents to start contributing to the family income, meaning committing to learning and gaining new skills may become a secondary priority to looking for work and earning money.

5. These young people will most often end up in low skill/low pay employment or NEET, substantially reducing both their future opportunities and the city's. Even during the boom times of the last decade nearly a third of Londoners were unemployed—whilst London's employers have been forced to import highly skilled

¹² Academies, apprenticeships training agencies, colleges, employers, group training associations, independent private providers, schools, voluntary and community sector organisations

¹³ GLA Intelligence Update 10–2010, Poverty figures for London: 2008–09, Summary data from the Households Below Average Income series. May 2010, using the standard definition of a household income of less than 60% of the median national income, after housing costs (AHC)

professionals from elsewhere in the country or the wider world. Addressing this perverse situation is a key reason why London Councils is committed to improving the skills of the present generation of young people who can help grow the capital's economy in the coming years. Employment can be a powerful agent to help combat poverty—not just for young people but also their families, some of whom may have experienced generations who have never worked.

6. Post-16 learning is critical in ensuring young people are able to secure sustainable employment. London Councils believes that the support EMA has offered has been a significant factor in not only helping many poorer students stay in learning post-16, but also in increasing the attainment of these students within learning.¹⁴ We would therefore urge the committee to closely monitor the effects of the switch to LSF and urge the government to act should participation or achievement begin to slide.

7. London Councils supports the notion that individual learning institutions should have discretion on how to distribute LSF fairly. However, we nevertheless would wish to encourage London providers to sign up to a set of regional criteria determining which students are most in need. This would help ensure that young people in the capital are able to choose the education and training best suited to their needs, not on the basis of which provider makes them the “best offer” of LSF. London Councils would be in a position to help facilitate this through its strategic 14–19 group: Young People Education and Skills, which embraces representation from local authorities, providers, employers and other key stakeholders.

8. However, there also needs to be equitable access for poorer students to other sources of support across all forms of provision. At present disadvantaged students in school 6th forms are eligible for Free School Meals whereas those on courses at other further education providers, such as General Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges, are not. It is important that this imbalance is addressed at the same time as introducing LSF to ensure students do not restrict their post-16 choices on this basis, particularly given students ill-suited to their provision are far more likely to drop out without completing their course. Providing poorer students in colleges with the same benefits, such as Free School Meals, as their counterparts in schools, would help provide some way of militating against the loss of EMA for these students.

RAISING OF PARTICIPATION AGE TO 18 YEARS

What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness?

9. Although significant steps towards full participation have been taken in London, there are features of the education and training system that militate against it. We have identified the following four areas where we feel that change is needed:

Funding opportunities for diverse and innovative provision

10. London's councils and providers have worked hard to achieve the highest participation rates in the country (93% of 16 year-olds and 89% of 17 year olds), but are far from complacent about this comparative success as full participation has long been our goal. The *right* participation is however crucial; young Londoners need to choose their options from the best provision that will help them, their families and the community as a whole to move ahead. Those who do not currently participate post-16 are frequently at the outer margins of society, encounter multiple barriers to participation and are not attracted by what is regarded as mainstream education.

11. It is the statutory duty of local authorities to ensure suitable provision for young people and in preparing for the raising of the participation age councils are already enabling the right learning offer to attract and engage all young people through developing the market. It is therefore essential that the processes for the introduction of new providers into the market are sufficiently nimble to respond to demand swiftly and appropriately.

12. There is the potential opportunity for increasing the range of provision through the establishment of free schools and academies. However, current interest in establishing these types of institutions appears academically focused and the process itself does not encourage the diversification needed in post-16 opportunities for more employers and independent providers to access funding to engage in work-based and Apprenticeship delivery. As central government is promoting a responsive market approach to education, then it needs to ensure that the opportunities for making that market—the responsibility of local government—allow for diversification and innovation and do not simply encourage more of the same.

13. Greater innovation and diversification in the supply of post-16 learning opportunities is critical to achieving full participation. London Councils is committed to ensuring that all young people achieve skills levels to continue further education and have the means to enter higher education and fulfilling and sustainable employment, but suggests that the shape of post-16 education needs to change to be attractive and accessible to *all* young people.

¹⁴ Based on the findings of research by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) which can be found online at www.ifs.org.uk/publications/5370

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Government policy

14. Government policy must ensure and support parity of esteem for variety and diversity in post-16 learning eg part time academic and vocational training provision that sits alongside work in an increasingly casual labour market should be supported along with more established routes (Apprenticeships) so that there as many options as possible into learning, work and work with learning. The recent Employment Select Committee report on behaviour and discipline in schools¹⁵ highlights the importance of a differentiated curriculum in meeting the needs of children with different strengths; different and varied delivery is needed to support and enable this differentiation.

Capital funding

15. The delivery of a richer, more varied curriculum will put extreme pressure on the present learning infrastructure. There are many parts of London where learning accommodation is no longer fit for purpose and cannot guarantee the provision of an education that equips students with the skills necessary for living and working in 21st century society. In particular, the standard and resourcing of vocational learning has to be relevant to the needs of London's modern labour market and to the challenges of post-recession growth. A long-term capital investment programme is needed to deliver a modern educational infrastructure.

Careers advice, information and guidance

16. London continues to contribute to the important work of the local raising the participation age trials. Work undertaken by colleagues in the London Borough of Ealing has already fed into many of the key findings from the first phase of the trials, particularly the critical importance of securing a full information, advice and guidance offer for young people and promoting the understanding of the choices available post-16.

17. There does not appear to have been sufficient thought into the future delivery of careers education, information, advice and guidance to inform young people and their parents/carers on the choices available to them and the best route to pursue their learning goals post-16. With the duty to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance passing to schools from September (subject to legislation), there are significant risks to the standards and consistency of delivery without some form of regulation in the new integrated (all-age) careers advice service. Further, legislating impartiality will not guard entirely against the partial self interest of some organisations that themselves deliver post-16 provision.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

What impact will raising the participation age have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision?

18. For many young people, the curriculum they experience up to the age of 16 shapes their perception of the value of post-16 learning. Participation at 17 falls each year, with national evaluations signifying that the greatest drop-out is in the transition from AS to A2. This suggests that an important element of the preparations for full participation lie in developing alternative provision and increased vocational provision prior to 16 year-olds as well as increasing the breadth and range of opportunities post-16. If the emphasis is on attendance rather than achievement, full participation could result in only very minor increases in rates of achievement at either level 2 or level 3 at the age of 19. Unless the curriculum offer is engaging, there could be an increase in disaffection and therefore adverse behaviour.

19. There are currently over 11,000 young Londoners (16–18) not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET). Evidence shows¹⁶ that young people persistently over-represented in the NEET population (young people with special educational needs and/or mental health challenges, looked after children, teenage mothers, young carers, the young homeless, those with substance misuse problems, young offenders) face multiple issues, not simply barriers to participation.

20. Supporting young people to participate and achieve is a matter for more than just an education provider, but providers need skilled staff to coordinate necessary support. There needs to be recognition that supporting some young people can be expensive—but certainly not as expensive as the life-time costs of NEET. In London, where we already have high participation, activities and learning that engages those young people that we have so far failed to reach, will require good resourcing.

21. There are some signs that the increased number of young people who are NEET is the result of the recession, meaning that fewer young people are gaining employment at the same time as rising numbers in both education and training. Current and forecast labour market demand seems to indicate a switch of demand for well-qualified young people to young entrants into part-time jobs (whilst studying) and fewer jobs for less qualified young people seeking full-time employment. The need for more provision that is delivered alternatively—eg to take account of working patterns—and an Apprenticeship programme that is far more portable will provide young people with learning opportunities that do not force them to choose between education *or* work.

¹⁵ Education Committee—First Report: Behaviour and Discipline in Schools—HMSO 2011

¹⁶ Estimating the life-time cost of NEET: 16–18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training Research Undertaken for the Audit Commission—University of York 2010

22. Young people who currently leave school at 16 have lower achievement at GCSE than those who choose to stay on. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills establishes that the basic employability standard in high-growth industries will be technician standard (level 3). Currently, just over half of young people in London reach this standard by the age of 19¹⁷ and increasing the participation age will improve access to level 3 opportunities to young people who presently do not consider this to be a realistic option for them. This can be expected to result in an increase in achievement at level 3.

23. More work focused learning will be essential in ensuring that the raising of the participation age is about raising participation in employment and training, as well as education. Entrepreneurship programmes, careers education and education business partnerships will be crucial components in increasing participation and, through presenting a positive view of vocational learning, particularly for young people who wish to move on from the “classroom”, raising attainment.

24. Even with high participation, the high volumes of young people not participating in education or training mean the relevance of the post-16 curriculum offer will need to be considered carefully in the drive towards full participation. Schools and academies will need to work in closer collaboration with employers, colleges and vocational learning providers to provide non-academic learning routes from the age of 14, fully integrated with coherent 16–18 learning pathways that help young people enter higher education, Apprenticeships and other forms of professional development.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by University and College Union (UCU)

The University and College Union (UCU) is the largest trade union and professional association for academics, lecturers, trainers, researchers and academic-related staff working in further and higher education throughout the UK.

What impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people

Participation in education

1. UCU and the AoC conducted a survey of a number of areas missed out in the often cited National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) research into EMA. UCU and the Association of Colleges conducted a survey of 1,537 students at the thirty colleges and sixth forms with the highest proportion of EMA recipients. These institutions are more likely to be based in areas with higher levels of deprivation and larger numbers of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

2. The survey found that EMA is not deadweight to a vast majority of students, it is a lifeline that helps them to stay in post-16 education.

3. Results showed that:

- (a) 39% of young people surveyed would not have started a course if EMA had not been available.
- (b) 71% of young people surveyed said that they would think about dropping out of their course halfway through if their EMA was stopped.
- (c) 60% of young people received no financial help from their parents to stay in education.

4. Students were also asked what they would have to do without if EMA was removed. A number different responses were recorded but common answers were:

- (a) Transport to and from college.
- (b) Lunch/food while at college.
- (c) Equipment for courses.

5. A number of respondents said they would not be able to continue their course because of financial considerations. 89% of those who responded were in receipt of the higher EMA payment of £30 per week.

6. UCU firmly believes that EMA has an impact on participation and on the ability of young people to stay in post-16 education. That so many young people say they would not continue their course if EMA were to be cut is an indictment of the policy to scrap the allowance.

Participation—the “deadweight” argument

7. The University and College Union (UCU) refute the argument made by the Department for Education that 90% of EMA costs are “deadweight”.

8. The study used by the government to justify this figure is wholly unrepresentative of young people who receive EMA at further education colleges. The National Foundation for Education Research report survey overrepresented high achievers, massively underrepresented BAME learners and failed to fully take into

¹⁷ 14–19 and London: An evidence base—Young People’s Learning Agency and London Councils 2010

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account the 69% of learners who study at further education colleges. For example, 91% of the survey sample self defined as “white” where as 84% of all Bangladeshi and 70% of Pakistani students receive EMA.

9. If research mostly takes into account young people in sixth form colleges who have unrepresentatively higher qualifications than most students in FE, then the result will obviously be skewed.

10. However, even if we accepted the deadweight argument, the economic benefits of EMA far outweigh the expenditure. The Institute for Fiscal Studies report “An efficient education maintenance allowance?”¹⁸ in December 2010 “concluded that the costs of providing EMA were likely to be exceeded in the long run by the higher wages that its recipients would go on to enjoy in future”. The report stated that a cost-benefit analysis shows “that even taking into account the level of deadweight that was found, the costs of EMA are completely offset”.

11. Overall, England’s position in OECD post-16 staying on rates has remained stubbornly near the bottom for over 30 years. The EMA has which one of the few initiatives that has improved that performance. Internationally, EMA compares very well on a cost effectiveness basis with other “conditional cost transfer schemes”, evidence which was clearly available in the (above) IFS studies but which has been largely ignored by those making the decisions.

12. EMA not only makes sense for individuals and for society—it makes sense for the economy as well.

EMA—attendance and achievement

13. Reports from colleges show that EMA not only aids initial participation in education, it helps to ensure attendance (which is a condition for receiving EMA) and achievement.

14. Recent research from the 157 Group of colleges (a membership group of 28 colleges) shows that those on EMA, despite coming from the poorest families and in some cases having low prior qualifications, miss fewer classes and are more likely to stay in education than even wealthier students.¹⁹

15. Research from colleges in the 157 Group showed that:

- (a) At City and Islington College in London, 2,900 students received the EMA in 2009–10, up 12% from the previous year; 95% of them completed their courses, compared with only 90% who were not eligible.
- (b) At Lambeth College students receiving the EMA were more likely to stay the course (90% compared with 75% of other students) and more likely to pass (94% compared with 81%).
- (c) At The Manchester College, in 2002 almost one in five students who dropped out cited financial reasons, but by 2009 it was just one in 20.

16. It also found attendance was 4% higher among EMA recipients on A- level equivalent courses, and 8% higher on lower level courses.

17. The Learning and Skills Council put together Learner Journey Research earlier this year. They said that:

*The success rate (estimated by the survey) for learners supported by EMA is 81%. Nearly all those completing their original course (95%) achieved a qualification. A large majority agrees that EMA funding helped them to achieve a qualification.*²⁰

How effective will the Discretionary Learner Support Fund be in replacing EMA?

18. At this point there is no way to know how effective an enhanced DLSF would be. There are too many questions left to be answered about the practicalities of the scheme and the funding it will be allocated. Based purely on the funding allocated to the DLSF, UCU does not believe that sufficient support will be available to the 80% of current EMA recipients who receive £30 per week. Those who receive the top band payment are from families who earn less than £20,800 per year. Current EMA funding is around £570 million. The enhanced DLSF funding is estimated to be around £80 million.

19. There are three main principles that UCU believes must be part of an effective student support system:

A National System

20. A local system means a postcode lottery for funding and an administrative burden on the college. It could lead to students choosing a specific course or institution because of the financial support on offer, not because of ability or wanting to take a course. A national system gives stability, equity across regions and a firm expectation for young people and their families about what help they will receive.

¹⁸ “An efficient education maintenance allowance?”, Institute for Fiscal Studies, Haroon Chowdry and Carl Emmerson, December, 2010, <http://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/5370>

¹⁹ 157 Group research features in TES FE Focus—EMA keeps recipients in education for longer, December 2010 <http://www.157group.co.uk/news/news/157-group-research-features-in-tes-fe-focus-ema-keeps-recipients-in-education-for-longer>

²⁰ Learner Journeys Research—Discretionary Learner support (hardship), Learning and Skills Council, March 2010

Regular payments

21. Regular payments provide stability and put all students on an equal footing. UCU would be concerned if such a system were changed to simply a “hardship” mode of funding where lump sums were handed out, after an application process, that prove the student is in need. This would stigmatise some students and leave those with modest family incomes without any form of support. UCU would also be concerned that students would have to find money up front to pay for course expenses and claim that back at a later date—many young people and families would be unable to do this.

22. Students sign a learner agreement to get EMA, they are responsible for their own attendance and behaviour in order to receive it. This is to be applauded. It requires the student to be responsible for their actions and allows them a level of financial independence. EMA is not a “gift” to students, they must work hard in order to receive their allowance—this is also very important.

23. As with the above (national system) the stability of a regular payment that students know they will receive helps them to make responsible choices and to plan ahead.

Aid physical access—travel costs/lunch

24. Note: Before detailing the ideas here, it is important to state that local authorities do not have to provide transport for young people in post-16 education. Local authorities have a duty to produce policy on travel for young people in post-16 education—there is no statutory entitlement to any support if the local authority chooses not to make that its policy. This has been a common misconception.

25. At the moment, the Discretionary Learner Support Fund does not cover travel. The government do not have an estimate of how much it costs to travel to a post-16 course, the latest figures they have are from 2003. In many areas, especially rural ones, EMA is crucial in meeting travel costs. With local authority cuts impacting on young people’s travel subsidies, this will increasingly be important.

26. Any financial support system must take into account the cost of physically attending college. It should also take into account other daily costs such as paying for meals while at college. A number of young people in the UCU/AoC survey said that without EMA, they would have to skip meals in order to attend college.

27. It is almost impossible to comment on the effectiveness of the replacement to EMA when so few details are known but there are a number of questions and issues that must be considered.

What will replace EMA?

28.

- (a) Will the enhanced DLSF be a hardship fund?

One of main aspects of EMA is that is a payment received for attending, being punctual and doing work that is expected. A hardship fund would remove this requirement for young people. It could also mean that young people have to parade their poverty in order to get funding or be expected to pay course costs up front and reclaim later.

- (b) Will EMA be a regular weekly/termly/monthly payment to young people?

UCU believes that the stability and transparency provided by this national system allows young people and their families to plan ahead. It means that young people know what they can expect if they attend college, are punctual and do their coursework. A hardship fund will not offer this stability.

- (c) How will colleges allocate money?

Ministers insist that EMA will be administered on a local level by colleges. There has been no reference to national guidelines. It is not clear whether allocation will be on a “first come, first served” basis, what time period payments will cover and what happens when a college runs out of money if they still have learners in need of financial help.

The issue of the bureaucracy around any new smaller pot is relevant as it will probably be more difficult to implement. College will need to collect more information and more of that information will be on confidential issues. Much of the information will have to be confidential in order to avoid the generation of stigma as we move from a broader benefit to one targeted to those who can prove their poverty. All of this requires a different system than is currently in place. The more student support staff time that is put into servicing this new system, the more the new system will impact the ability of support staff to undertake other, much needed support roles. This will certainly impact institutions with high numbers of students from low income families the most.

- (d) Will the new DLSF cover adult learners as well as young people?

Will colleges have to choose between funding young people or adults who need a second chance?

- (e) Will travel costs be taken into account?

The government have been consulting on including travel costs in the DLSF and while UCU agrees that many young people need financial help to travel to college, making a small pot of money go

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further will only lead to more people missing out. If travel is to be considered as part of the DLSEF then there must be adequate funding for it.

- (f) How will the changes be explained to students?

UCU members who work in further education do not believe that the full impact of the cut in EMA has hit home to many students yet. At the moment there is a transparent system that is easily understood by young people and their families. If each college has a different system, how will young people know what to expect?

- (g) What measures will be put in place for young people who will be halfway through their courses by the end of the academic year and need funding to complete their courses?

The AoC estimate that 300,000 young people are halfway through their courses. The UCU/AoC survey suggested a number of those young people would either drop out of struggle to stay in education.

What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision

29. UCU does not believe that simply increasing the participation age for education will yield better results, especially when removing financial support from young people in education.

30. With more young people expected to stay on in education it does not make sense to slash the further education budget by £1.1 billion (25% over the CSR period). In order to equip young people with the skills they need, there must be a skilled, motivated workforce in appropriate numbers. Current cuts to FE budgets mean that institutions are already looking to cut courses and staff while expecting increased class sizes. UCU does not believe that our already overstretched staff can time and again be asked to deliver more for less.

31. On the subjects of cuts and how they are impacting the provision of higher education, it should be noted that the Connexions service had a firm role to play in the increase of the participation age. Now Connexions has been scrapped, the new system that will be put in place for information, advice and guidance must be ready to adopt these responsibilities.

32. We believe that there will be an increase in competition for the number of places available in education and training as the participation age increases—we are unsure as to whether the sector and employers can meet the demand that will be placed on them.

33. We are concerned that with the removal of EMA, removal of entitlements to NVQs and an economy that is not generating the number of apprenticeships that are needed, it will be increasingly difficult for those who are mandated to stay in education and training to a) afford to do so and b) find the education or training that is right for them.

34. UCU would like to see the expansion of vocational education to provide clear routes of progression for young people. All too often apprentices cannot move to the next level of study. Higher level apprenticeships are degree level qualifications but the route to accessing such a qualification is not always straight forward. There is an opportunity with such developments as new technology, green technology, broadband and fibre optic expansion and high speed rail to train a new generation of people with skills that will create a sustainable economy. This requires investment but would provide much needed training opportunities and long term economic benefits.

What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness

35. Local authorities will need to:

- (a) Strategically plan what provision will be needed (based on cohort size, labour market demands etc. This will need to include academic, vocational and work based learning in appropriate numbers for their populations.
- (b) Take into account that further education colleges recruit from a wider area than their immediate local surroundings—sometimes crossing LA and/or regional boundaries.
- (c) Consider the impact of national policy on the demand for different course types. For example, will an increase in tuition fees lead to an increase in demand for apprenticeships; will scrapping EMA lead to an increase in demand for any type of learning where a wage is collected?
- (d) Consider the possible impact of skills conditionality and Work Programme placements on demands for training and education placements.
- (e) Take into account the overall cut in funding per student and the 25% cut in FE budgets when planning provision.
- (f) Consider if cuts in transport subsidies will impact what education and training young people will physically be able to access.

36. We do not believe that the duties placed on local authorities are strong enough and doubt the ability of local authorities, given the scale of cuts to their budgets, in being able to enforce their duties. Many authorities

are issuing redundancies in the very department that are needed here or simply not replacing staff when they leave. This will severely impact on local authority's readiness.

37. There are also areas that may be missed if pure labour market demand and profitability of courses for an institution drives provision. Gaps in provision may arise as well as possible over supply in what may be seen as relatively "easy" provision in terms of both student numbers and delivery.

38. It is also worth noting that with the axing of Connexions, there must be adequate provision for information, advice and guidance (IAG) for all young people, especially with the requirement for them to participate in education or training with the increase in the participation age.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by City of York Council

INTRODUCTION

1. We are pleased to submit this response to the Select Committee's call for evidence. Working with our partnership of providers, we feel that we have collectively made good progress in raising participation, reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and improving opportunities for progression. However, at this time we feel that confidence among our providers is fragile given the significant cuts in funding rates they face, the reduction in direct funding to learners to support them in their participation and uncertainty over the qualification frameworks which will underpin provision for new participants.

What impact has the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it?

2. Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) data (October 2010) shows that 1847 16–19 year olds in learning in York were in receipt of EMA. This number has increased since then because of concerted efforts on the part of York College and local training providers to respond to the priority set out in successive Local Area Statements of Need around the establishment of new provision (with flexible start dates) aimed at reducing NEET (At York College, 43% of learners were in receipt of EMA by January 2011). Of the learners receiving EMA in October 2010, 82% were receiving the highest rate and 70% were York residents. Many providers have expressed concerns that travel costs (which young people commonly use EMA to pay) will deter young people from accessing appropriate provision and over 550 young people on EMA in learning in York travel from outside the LA area.

3. There are higher proportions of EMA recipients in certain types of provision reflecting higher levels of disadvantage, lower prior attainment on entry and greater vulnerability. In our five school sixth forms the average proportion is 21%, at Applefields (Secondary Special School) 37%, at York College 38% and at the two most significant local training providers 73% and 78%. Clearly, a high proportion of new participants under Raising the Participation Age (RPA) arrangements would be eligible for EMA and its removal takes away a key incentive to participate.

4. Indications to date of the scale of the Discretionary Local Support Fund (DLSF) are that it will be increased threefold compared to its current level. We have no information about the methodology which will underpin its distribution. However, on the basis of available information, the new DLSF seems likely to be worth only about 14% of the previous total funding delivered by DLSF and EMA combined. In the case of our School Sixth Forms for example, a threefold increase would take the total funding available to £34k p.a. If 80% of current EMA claimants receive the highest rate by virtue of low family income, this would leave our schools with approximately £160 p.a (or £4 per week) to address hardship issues for each young person currently receiving £30 per week.

5. 16–19 Participation in York has been rising in recent years. This is in the context of cohort decline and rates of participation and attainment already above regional and national averages. In York, young people ready to undertake Level 3 programmes (especially A Levels) were generally already participating. The new participants have been starting provision at lower levels or on vocational and work based paths. Learners on these programmes are far more likely to be in receipt of EMA suggesting that it has had a significant positive impact. YPLA data shows that participation of 16 year olds in York increased from 88% (2005) to 92% (2007). For 17 year olds the increase was 73% to 77%. The drop in participation levels between the ages of 16 and 17 will need to be eliminated during the phased introduction of RPA. The annual NEET figure for York has reduced from 5.1% (Nov '04–Jan '05) to 3.7% (Nov '10–Jan '11). Overall 16–18 year old participation at York College has been increasing at over 2% a year with a rise of 7% from 2006–07 to 2009–10.

6. With particular vulnerable groups the evidence is more striking. The "school leaver" cohort of Traveller young people supported by Connexions Personal Advisers in York is small (around 10–12 per year) but startling improvements in their participation have been achieved, from 0% in 2005 to 58% (2008), 50% (2009) and 72% (2010). Previously, they would have been either NEET or sporadically employed in low grade jobs. All these young people receive the highest level of EMA and our Traveller and Ethnic Minority Support Service

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(TEMSS) reports that reaction to the withdrawal of EMA in the Traveller Community has been negative with families saying that they will be unable to support their children attending college without it. The young people involved view EMA as their earnings and earning money brings respect in the community.

7. On the basis of the evidence available to us we believe that EMA has had positive impacts on participation, attendance and welfare. In particular we believe that it has provided a significant incentive for disadvantaged young people to access higher level qualifications thus contributing to social mobility and more socially equitable outcomes. The impact of the withdrawal of EMA cannot yet fully be understood. However, we are very concerned that significant numbers of young people reaching the end of the first year of a two year programme this summer, and who embarked on those programmes in the expectation that they would receive EMA throughout, will now “drop out”. Our Schools and Connexions Service report a significant increase in the number of young people in Year 11 enquiring about apprenticeships this year because they will not receive EMA at school or college. This is putting pressure on the supply of apprenticeship places. The ending of Programme Led Apprenticeships means that there will probably be a significant number of young people aspiring to start apprenticeships in September 2011 for whom places will not be available.

What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness?

8. The Statutory Guidance (Funding Arrangements for 16–19 education and Training) published by YPLA (December 2010) sets out the framework for Local Authorities (LAs) to work with providers in their areas to ensure that the LA's statutory duties regarding the supply of appropriate provision for 16–19 year olds (and 19–25 year olds with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities) are met. This document, whilst it is consistent with the government's stated intention to avoid prescription, strongly emphasises the need for a coherent and transparent cycle of strategic analysis and needs identification conducted by the LA on a partnership basis. We believe that such an approach is appropriate. In nearly three years since the last government instigated the machinery of government changes covering 16–19 education we have used it with our partner providers to develop an annual Local Area Statement of Need (LASN). We have, as the statutory guidance also suggests, worked with neighbouring authorities on this analysis because we are keenly aware that we need to take into account the interests and needs of young people who travel to learn in York.

9. However, there is an inherent tension between the statutory guidance and other policy strands (such as the expansion of Academies and the introduction of Free Schools) which emphasise the primacy and autonomy of individual institutions. A coordinated approach to RPA is advocated on the one hand, on the other providers are encouraged to exercise freedoms and autonomy.

10. Our strategic analysis and resulting LASN have become more sophisticated during each iteration, but we have made two key assumption in terms of our identification of priorities and gaps in provision to be filled. These are firstly that the phased requirements of RPA will have to be met and secondly that what is needed to meet them is not simply “more of the same”. In the case of disengaged young people, for example, something different is needed because the existing provision has already failed. With young people who opt for employment with training we need to work with employers and providers to link jobs to training and also to expand the quantity and range of apprenticeship places available. We have made a good start and providers have acted to deliver on the priorities set out in the LASN.

11. We also believe that a key element of an RPA strategy has to involve provision in secondary schools for young people up to the age of 16 years. We have worked with our schools to develop a broader curriculum for York's young people so that more of them have access to courses which suit them as individuals, allowing them to achieve and progress. This has included supporting the development of Diplomas, vocational provision and Foundation Learning. Working on a partnership basis we have brought providers together so that they can ensure that clear progression routes are available post 16, particularly at York College which is the mainstream setting for the majority of provision below Level 3.

12. Finally, if virtually all 16–19 year olds are to participate, we believe that young people and parents/carers need access to comprehensive and impartial Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG). Again, working on a partnership basis we have supported a range of developments by, and with, providers to improve the IAG available. These include the development of a web based prospectus of all learning opportunities in the area, an annual city-wide progression event with supporting literature, partnership standards around provision of IAG within schools and colleges and easy access to advice through a Connexions Centre.

13. The fragile confidence referenced in para 1 is possibly most relevant with regard to RPA preparation. The significant cuts in funding for 16–19 learner responsive provision are central to this. Firstly, the innovative and flexible provision needed to bring many young people into participation is more costly than “traditional” academic provision at Level 3. Next, the chosen mechanism to achieve those cuts has been the reduction (by 74%) of the funded hours for “entitlement” provision. This includes the holistic learner support which underpins progression and achievement such as IAG, tutorial time, opportunities for personal development such as volunteering and support for applications to HE and employment. To improve retention from 16 to 17 and 17 to 18 these support mechanisms are vital; it is also likely that those who will have to be brought into participation will have greater need of such support than the majority of those currently participating. The changes in the role of Connexions and the proposals to create an all age careers service add to the uncertainty.

Finally, the grant funding to support coordinated activity related to RPA requirements (Local Delivery Support Grant, 14–19 Flexible Fund, Area Web Prospectus grant, Foundation Learning grant) has either ceased or been significantly reduced and transferred to non ring fenced funding streams such as the Early Intervention Grant.

What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision?

14. There is every reason, on the basis of past experience, to expect that academic achievement will continue to rise as participation post 16 increases. This has been the case in York in recent years with improved outcomes at 16 and 19 years old accompanying the increases in participation set out in para 5. To ensure that this is the case, provision needs to meet the needs of learners, to be of high quality and to be engaging and motivating for young people. It will also be necessary to make sure that young people are guided and supported along appropriate pathways for them. There is already a significant issue of young people “dropping out” of provision in year or part way through a two year course. This contributes to the reduction in participation between the ages of 16 and 17 (see para 5) and we know that there is work to be done here. For example, the Year 12 cohort in our A Level based school sixth forms in January 2009 significantly reduced (by 17%) to become a smaller Year 13 cohort a year later. In national terms this is not a high figure. For various reasons, there will always be some young people who “drop out” from courses. Providers will need to be responsive in such cases, “picking up” and re-engaging young people. This will call for increased flexibility, not least over start dates—under RPA arrangements it will not be acceptable for a young person to have to wait until the following September to start a new course.

15. As stated in para 11, participation post 16 is linked to achievement and engagement pre 16 supported by clear progression routes. Throughout this response we strongly advocate the development of a curriculum offer aligned to learners’ needs and underpinned by a sophisticated analysis of the cohort. With the support of providers we are raising participation and achievement and improving access to vocational and applied learning pre 16. We do not believe in the division of learners between academic and vocational pathways at an early stage (age 14 years, for example) and strongly support the right of young people to access “mixed programmes” in Key Stage 4. This work, and the further development of Foundation Learning is also affected by fragile confidence.

16. We are currently awaiting the outcomes of the Wolf Review of vocational qualifications which the recent White Paper (“The Importance of Teaching”, November 2010) states will advise “on how to ensure all young people are in valuable education or training, that supports progression to employment or further and higher education”. The outcomes of this review are clearly critical to further development of an RPA strategy, but schools in particular lack the confidence and incentive to take a measured way forward given the White Paper’s emphasis on academic qualifications and the retrospective introduction of the English Baccalaureate measure.

17. Attendance and behaviour are heavily influenced by the quality of provision and its suitability for learners. Engaging and motivating provision which promotes achievement and progression improves attendance and behaviour. Collaborative development of Diplomas and vocational provision in York is underpinned by timetabling arrangements (“common days”) which facilitate city wide access to specialist courses and facilities. This has led, in many schools, to a concentration of optional subjects, including broader, non GCSE options on those “common days”. Schools which make extensive use of management information systems to track behaviour and attendance report that the “common days” have higher attendance and significantly fewer referrals of poor behaviour by young people. We should expect the same effects post 16. Indeed York College reports that the behaviour and attendance of some of our city’s most challenging young people has surpassed all expectations on their “Step Up to Progress” programme (part of their response to the LASN priority to develop innovative and flexible provision to address NEET). As stated in para 10, this provision is not simply “more of the same”.

18. Clearly, much of the provision described above would fit into the category of “alternative provision”, but there is a place for more. With post 16 learners smaller training providers, including third sector organisations, have made significant contributions in York. These organisations too are affected by fragile confidence rooted in uncertainty, principally over funding.

19. RPA requires new strands of provision which are delivered very effectively. As discussed above, we have embraced our role in shaping provision by working with and influencing providers. However, we have no real ability to facilitate immediate changes in the pattern of provision because of the total reliance on lagged numbers as a basis for allocating funded places to providers. A school or college can “smooth out” the budgetary implications of offering new provision which attracts new learners (it will receive the funding the following year) when funding rates at per learner level are consistent. However, a small voluntary organisation or new training provider able to offer small scale but valuable provision in an RPA context cannot. We would support some flexibility at the margins of the 16–19 funding systems to allow us, in our role as champions for all young people, to seed some of the new and innovative provision RPA demands.

Written evidence submitted by Leeds 11–19 Learning and Support Partnership

1.0 *What impact the EMA has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it*

1.1 In Leeds, during 2009–10 9,305 young people received an EMA payment, of which 7,924 receive the full £30 per week payment. This is in excess of a third of the 16–18 year old cohort. Evidence from the scheme has shown EMAs have had a positive impact by increasing the numbers of young people participating in post-16 education, reducing the numbers who drop out of education and by providing incentives that contribute to higher attainment. There is a significant risk that low income students will be forced to drop out of sixth form or college because the additional costs attached to their course will be too high. We also believe that the changes to post 16 financial support will deter young people from making applications, and that this will begin to adversely impact on current year 11 students who are making applications to go to sixth form or college in September at the moment.

1.2 We welcome the arrangements to increase the hardship funds available by tripling the Discretionary Learner Support Fund. However, the proposed level of increase in this funding compared to the loss in EMA funding means we still very concerned about the potential impact on young people's participation in learning. In 2009–10 Leeds residents received £8,315,000 in EMA payments and as a city we received a total of £507,624 in Discretionary Learner Support Funds. We feel that the increased level of hardship funding will still not be sufficient to provide the necessary support to ensure our most vulnerable young people are able to participate and remain in post 16 learning.

1.3 We are faced with an immediate difficulty in the work taking place to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). One of the key developments in Leeds has been the provision in place to support young people to re-engage in learning at any point throughout the academic year, both through training provision and flexible start courses in FE College. From January onwards we will be hit with an immediate reduction to funding for young people to engage in these courses, as they will not be able to apply for EMA and new finance support arrangements will not be put in place until September 2011. This will lead to an immediate fall in the number of young people accessing training courses, funded through Foundation Learning and YPLA / ESF NEET funds.

1.4 We are particularly concerned about young people who are on programmes funded through ESF NEET funds as the vast majority of these young people would normally be eligible for EMA payments. As there is no specific Discretionary Learner Support Fund to support these young people and the money available through the ESF funding is not sufficient to provide alternative payments, it will be a major challenge to attract young people to these programmes and even more difficult to ensure they remain engaged.

1.5 The impact on vulnerable groups of young people, including looked after young people and care leavers, young people in low income families, young people living independently of their family and teenage parents will be significant. Current funding that is available to these groups of young people to engage in learning assumes the ability to access EMA payments. For example, the funding provided by Children's Services to looked after young people age 16–19 will have to be reformed to compensate for the lack of EMA. This will place an additional budget pressure on Local Authority resources.

1.6 The impact of the discretionary learner support fund will depend on the arrangements put in place by providers to manage the funding. The approach of providers could mean that young people in the same circumstances are offered different levels of financial support by different providers, depending on the criteria they set for access to the funding. There will also be a significant increase in the administrative costs to distribute the funding. The national EMA model allowed a national approach to assessing eligibility. Individual providers needing to establish auditable systems for allocation with no national indicator, such as access to EMA, will have to put in place systems to assess family income.

2.0 *What preparations are necessary for providers and local authorities for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness*

2.1 There is further work required by the partnership to develop provision to meet the needs of young people who are NEET. The learning offer to young people has increased over the past few years but there are still a number of young people who do not engage with the current learning offer for whom further developments are required.

2.2 Part of the development work required is with employers, putting in place through strong links to develop programmes with clear progression in to real employment opportunities in the local area.

2.3 The development of flexible start provision has focused on young people who require lower level courses. The next stage is to develop the offer for young people at level 2 and level 3, putting in place opportunities for young people who start a course and then decide that they have made a wrong choice and wish to look at other learning programmes.

2.4 Expansion of apprenticeship places, particularly in popular areas such as construction that have a large numbers of small employers.

2.5 Clarity is required on arrangements for teenage parents who currently choose to care full time for their children. Systems will need to be developed further to plan for childcare arrangements, good working arrangements exist at present but the expected increase in demand for childcare places for teenage parents age 16–18 will need to be planned for.

2.6 The lack of clarity on monitoring arrangements and enforcement duties is preventing the local authority from planning fully to meet their duties. Clarity is requested on how local authorities will be required to monitor participation. The local authority is particularly concerned by the potentially enormous cost of implementing the enforcement duties as set out in the Education and Skills Act 2008. The government will have to give careful thought to enforcement options to ensure they are affordable.

2.7 Previous planning has been based on the responsibility for IAG delivery to young people being with the local authority. Recent announcements on the establishment of an all-age careers guidance service and the duty on schools to ensure provision of IAG to young people have led to uncertainty about ensuring young people get appropriate support to identify a suitable learning pathway. The planning around this area of work is changing significantly and clarity is required on the role and remit of the all age careers guidance service.

2.8 It is essential that a local, comprehensive, accurate and live online prospectus of the post 16 offer (including apprenticeships) is easily accessible to ensure young people and parents re aware of all the options.

3.0 *What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour and alternative provision*

3.1 The anticipated result of raising the participation age is that academic achievement at age 18 for young people will increase, thus increasing the number of young people with Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications at 19.

3.2 Planning to ensure all young people have a suitable learning route post-16 has already increased the offer to young people, access to vocational education and training may expand further but this is reliant on suitable funding systems in place to allow providers to offer well resourced provision for young people.

3.3 The VCFS sector could play a much greater role in providing education and training for young people who are NEET, and organisations in the sector have already developed effective ways of doing this, for example through delivery of ESF-funded provision. However although many in the sector are keen to develop this further, the current funding system often makes it very difficult for them to become involved. The solution would be for a grant to be made available to local authorities to support this type of provision.

3.4 It is unclear of the impact of raising the participation age on student attendance and behaviour. The concern from learning providers is that young people who are only engaged in learning provision through compulsion will not have the commitment to their learning that is required for young people to attend and achieve; moreover, unless appropriate provision is made available for this group, their reluctant presence would be likely to be disruptive and detrimental to other learners. Ensuring that young people and families understand the benefits of learning and have realistic choices to identify a learning route that meets their needs will be required to ensure that raising the participation age does not have a negative impact on student attendance and behaviour within learning provision. Support to young people is required to ensure that young people receive the support and guidance they require to make appropriate choices. Support systems are also required to support young people with barriers to learning to sustain their engagement in learning. This is a key issue that needs to be addressed, as many young people who are currently NEET are in that position because of significant barriers that they face outside the education system, ie in their personal and family situations; raising the participation age will not in itself remove or even reduce those barriers.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Merseyside Colleges Association of Principals

INTRODUCTION

The Merseyside Colleges' Association (MCA) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry. The association represents all seven further education and three sixth-form colleges in Greater Merseyside. The ten colleges involved in the association are Birkenhead Sixth Form College, Carmel College, Hugh Baird College, King George V College, Knowsley Community College, Liverpool Community College, Riverside College, St Helens College, Southport College and Wirral Metropolitan College.

PROMPT 1

What impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it

1. In the experience of all (10) Merseyside Colleges the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) has made a significant contribution to the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people.

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For example, in the only general Further Education on the Wirral over 90% of (some 2000) 16–18 learners are in receipt of the full EMA allowance. Many of this cohort group come from families experiencing second and third generation worklessness where routines, responsibility and a “work ethic” are largely absent and there are few family role models or incentives to break this cycle. In the same College attendance of this cohort group averages 92% within a range of 87% and 96%. This is above the collegiate average for all learners. Retention and achievement of the same cohort group, for courses of all durations, are 90% and 91% respectively which place them 1pp short of the national 90th percentile. There has been improvement year-on-year for the past four years. This is typical of all MCA colleges.

At Liverpool Community College alone, 2,300 students are in receipt of the full allowance. Attendance and retention for this cohort is 5–7% above the average for all students.

2. The EMA provides an incentive and positive pressure for both the family and individual learner in taking forward Government policy and targets and their translation ultimately into a positive economic contribution and reduction in benefits dependency. The EMAs conditionality on attendance and punctuality is a key component of its success. That it is a transparent allowance, where there are clear “rules”, provides both “felt-fairness” and equity that helps counter stigma and possible unease/pride in young people seeking financial support.

3. The proposed replacement of the EMA with a Discretionary Learner Support Fund will not be effective for a number of reasons. Most obviously, the replacement of a c.£574 million EMA resource with a “supplement” of c.£75 million by definition will drastically reduce the number of learners from low income families that could benefit. In trying to counter this, the criteria that Colleges must devise and the per learner amounts administered will likely be grossly diluted and create a tipping point in the implicit “effort/reward” bargain. In the view of Merseyside College Principals, the proposal will not return the same level of impact as the EMA. The argument posited by some that the EMA allowance merely contributes to “household budgets” is answered convincingly by participation and performance outcomes and the facts that learners in receipt do incur costs of travel, meals and course-related expenditures. The expediency of the proposed approach promotes a retrograde shift from one of “independence” (EMA) to one of “dependence” (discretionary support) and as such will not provide the dual incentive to learner and family to promote/stimulate participation in education and/or training. This will be further reinforced in that colleges will be unlikely to conduct means testing of parental income (resource requirements) and because of audit requirements will be minded, where appropriate, to pay third parties directly rather than administer cash payments to individuals.

4. On Merseyside specifically, EMAs have supported the increase and widening of participation, raising of aspiration and growth in higher attainment levels amongst young people. Their removal is likely to disadvantage seriously young people in lower socio-economic groups, from minority backgrounds and from deprived areas in continuing their education and falling into NEET. This will be to the short, medium and long-term detriment of the economy, social cohesion and individual well-being.

5. It is also worth noting that even in relatively affluent areas such as Southport, there are still areas of significant deprivation in the town and the loss of EMA will have considerable impact, for example, students who currently travel to the College from towns such as Skelmersdale.

PROMPT 2

What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness

6. The current cap on participation in higher education exerts a renewed and critical importance on the role of vocational education and training in contributing to economic recovery. There is an imperative to improve the organisation and preparation for vocational education and training underpinned by a small number of principles:

- 14–19 vocational education should be what is best for the individual learner;
- Individual learners have an entitlement to vocational education should they choose it;
- Choice should be guided by impartial information, advice and guidance not only about courses but on the range of occupations; future career pathways and earnings potential;
- Resources should follow the learner;
- Providers of vocational education for 14–19s should have vocational education at the heart of their mission;
- Providers of vocational education should have the experience, expertise and resources to deliver a high quality experience.

The YPLA and Local Authorities should be clear in their recognition of this and exert due and positive influence in their commissioning role—against the above principles. In so doing there should be visible and due regard for value-for-money; reducing duplication of provision; ensuring choice and access for young people; stimulating progression routes from schools and the place of commissioning in reducing “drop out” at 17 and 18 and reducing NEET by strategies of prevention. Tensions should be reduced by the harmonisation of post-16 funding currently underway.

7. The FE college sector in general and Merseyside colleges in particular already have in place a broad and mature offer of vocational education and training, understood by employers and HEIs, from Level 1 through to HE; underpinned by literacy/English/numeracy/Maths/Language support; in each of fifteen sector skills areas; that perform well to national standards and addresses the needs of employers.

8. Government is urged to re-think its strategy for the Young Apprenticeship Programme (YAP) as this provides a well-developed, successful model, now understood, as part of promoting vocational education, training and as a feeder route to full apprenticeships with exposure to employers and the workplace. Experience suggests that 16 year olds require further time at Level 2. In a similar vein the current (poor) development of the Learner Aims Database (LAD), which is crucial to determining College funded provision, is proving to be a barrier to choice and progression for learners, particularly from Foundation Learning into Level 2 provision in all vocational areas. Major developments with such significant impact do need realistic lead and development times.

9. A significant factor continues to be the capacity/readiness of employers to support work-placements and generate apprenticeship places/jobs. This could be exacerbated with a potentially larger learner population to support.

10. On Merseyside the general state of readiness is good. For example, in each Borough an infrastructure of partnership working exists; there is a record of collaboration and joint developments; and there are a range of common post-16 processes. However, this situation is now at risk due to funding reduction requirements and the loss of staff experience and expertise at both provider and local authority level. Lack of funded “transitional arrangements” could threaten the sustainability of the work and investment already made.

11. It is important to note that schools will have a greater responsibility for ensuring that the pre-16 curriculum is geared towards post 16 progression and doesn't just chase the highest points scores. Similarly the pre-16 advice and guidance will need to be more robust than ever, which may be problematical given the changes in procurement of these services within schools and the downsizing of Connexions without any clear alternative in place.

PROMPT 3

What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour and alternative provision.

12. The FE sector has demonstrated consistently that increases in participation, academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour all have the potential to improve significantly. The raising of the participation age will in principle therefore offer even greater potential; and FE colleges have the capacity to deliver this.

13. The incentive for participation potentially lost through EMA needs somehow to be built-back. There is also an opportunity for the raising of the participation age to signal “opportunity”. For example, one enabler that could be supported nationally is by giving more visible coverage and emphasis to vocational skills. Successful examples in recent years include the LSC and Apprenticeship television promotion campaigns; and there are further opportunities through themes of employability and enterprise.

14. There are opportunities to further stimulate improvements, by design, provided by other collaborative ventures, for example by defined progression pathways through new Academies and University Technical Colleges and compacts with employers and HEIs. These would benefit from a structured approach.

15. Success will be judged by impact on the economy and economic well-being and to this end the role to be played by employers eg as job creators, apprenticeship providers, advisors, mentors/enablers for enterprise, “experience” providers etc is crucial. Commitment by employers should somehow be stimulated and the capacity of individual providers in individual employer relationships may be limited.

16. Colleges get frustrated by the use of labels such as “alternative provision” often used as a euphemism for “provision for troublesome students” often as a pretext for partnerships with colleges. The view of Merseyside colleges is that learners respond to provision that is appropriate for them and in which they have a personal stake/incentive. In this respect two factors are important. Firstly the incentive provided by EMA (comments above) and secondly choice of provision/provider which should not be constrained by funding arrangements. The Select Committee is also respectfully recommended to scrutinise responses by FE colleges made to the “Woolf Review of 14–19 Vocational Education” (October 2010) which cover similar points embodied in this inquiry.

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Written evidence submitted by City of York Council's Labour Group

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) payments may seem insignificant to some but, as an EMA Satisfaction Survey found, 65% of participants on the highest EMA rate of £30 could not continue to study without the allowance. The maintenance allowance removes some of the barriers to participation in education, particularly in covering costs towards transport. This is of particular interest in York as the main provider, York College is at the very edge of the City and many young people need to take two buses to get there. There is no concessionary bus travel for those in full time education over the age of 16.

Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) data (October 2010) shows that 1,847 16–19 year olds in learning in York were in receipt of EMA. At York College, 43% of learners were in receipt of EMA by January 2011. Of the learners receiving EMA in October 2010, 82% were receiving the highest rate and 70% were York residents. Many providers have expressed concerns that travel costs will deter young people from accessing appropriate provision and over 550 young people on EMA in learning in York travel from outside the LA area. In York's five school sixth forms the average proportion is 21%, at Applefields (Secondary Special School) 37% and at the two most significant local training providers 73% and 78%.

The abolition of EMA threatens to deter teenagers from learning new skills and gaining qualifications and experience which will lead to a job. Now more than ever we need to encourage teenagers to stay on after 16, to gain new skills and experience which will enable them to work and fulfill their potential. The abolition of the education maintenance allowance has been met by students in with anger, frustration and anxiety, particularly for those who signed on to courses in the expectation of receiving EMA for the duration of the course.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies has shown that EMA has a strong impact on participation. Some 91% of young people who are entitled to free school meals at year 11 receive EMA, 83% of young people from single-parent households receive it, as do 76% of the lowest-achieving 16-year-olds who continue in education.

The FE sector has a proud record of improving lives and is often the engine behind social mobility. Not only has the EMA been successful in achieving higher participation retention and achievement (including 7.3% higher participation for females, according to the IFS), but it has created an empowered generation who are equipped to progress in FE, then later into higher education, and it has instilled a desire for lifelong learning in all its forms.

For young people in low-income families, the EMA offers the knowledge that your family will not have to make sacrifices to support you through college. It gives you independence and treats you like an adult. This is not simply about having less money in your pocket. This is about a fundamental shift in culture towards staying on in post-16 education.

EMA worked right away as an incentive to improve attendance, as a good reason to study among those most likely to drop out. Pupils who miss a class, are late or don't do homework lose EMA for the whole week. This has transformed attendance and results with the majority now with 100% attendance.

The government's proposed alternative, the Discretionary Local Support Fund (DLSF), is impractical. It is essentially a topping-up of the money schools and colleges receive to distribute in discretionary hardship grants. The amount of money will be tiny compared to the budget for EMAs, and with institutions left to choose who and what they fund, a postcode lottery could emerge.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership

CSWP is a provider of Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) services to young people in Coventry and Warwickshire as well as holding the Next Step contract to deliver IAG to adults in the West Midlands Region. Additionally CSWP holds several other local contracts including a recent ESF contract to co-ordinate training to NEET young people in Coventry and Warwickshire in partnership with 14 providers of education and training.

1. There has been considerable progress in the Coventry and Warwickshire area in increasing the rate of young people entering education, training or employment at age 16. In Coventry between 2006 and 2010 the percentage in education, training or employment has increased from 94.2% to 97.3% and in Warwickshire from 93.5% to 96.2%. During the same period the 16 to 18 NEET rate in Coventry has fallen from 8.7% to 5.7% and in Warwickshire from 6.7% to 5.2 %.

2. One of the key factors in increasing participation rates and reducing NEETs has undoubtedly been the effect of EMA which has given encouragement to young people and their parents for them to remain in education and training post 16. In Coventry in November 2010 4234 young people were in receipt of EMA. 49.6% of learners in school sixth forms are in receipt of EMA. In one inner city school this rate is 80% and in a local college for people with disabilities it is 95%.

Almost 200 young people in Coventry receive EMA for attendance at Foundation Learning with a Training Provider (formerly E2E) or other work based learning.

3. Foundation Learning with a vocational Training Provider is a particularly crucial area as some of the most disadvantaged young people and young people who have not engaged with academic forms of learning are attracted to this provision. Prior to EMA this form of learning was traditionally paid an allowance originally based on Youth Training Scheme and Youth Opportunity Programme. The practically based vocational learning in effect paid an allowance in lieu of a wage. Because it is based on a hands on vocational model which is attractive to many young people who have not succeeded at school it is viewed by young people and their parents as “work” which should attract some form of allowance.

4. One of the benefits of EMA has been that the mechanism of payment incentivises young people to put in full attendance and attain milestones. This has contributed to improved attendance and attainment with many providers and thus cost effectiveness of provision. This should be an essential element in balancing the cost effectiveness of a modest payment to young people.

5. Research evidence shows clearly that young people who are long term NEET are more likely to be unemployed or otherwise economically dependent in later life, to experience poor health, to be involved in substance misuse or offending behaviour, to become teenage parents and to have reduced life expectancy. There are both economic and social effects which emanate from failure to continue to reduce NEET levels.

6. Through Total Place Price Waters Cooper estimated the cost of NEETs in Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull. Between February 1989 and 2010 there has been an average of 1986 young people aged 16–18 who are NEET across the three local authority areas. The cost of direct services to these groups was £14.8 million per annum and the total cost to the community is estimated at between £56 million and £65 million per annum. These costs need to be taken into account as the costs of rising NEETs may easily outweigh any savings made through withdrawal of EMA.

7. Information from IAG Advisers currently working in schools and colleges in Coventry and Warwickshire is that many parents and young people are seriously considering whether to continue in education and training if EMA is withdrawn. In particular this will affect disadvantaged young people including those from low income families or with poor family support, young people with disabilities, young people from rural areas or who need to travel to train in specialist areas e.g. agriculture. Even if we assume that Ministerial statements that 90% of young people would continue in learning without EMA the inference is that we could see a rise of 10% in NEET levels which would undo the progress made over the last five or more years. In some areas of Coventry and Warwickshire where EMA take up is over 50% these figures would be even greater.

8. It is of particular concern that some young people may not progress to the second year of a two year course which they commenced in September 2010 if EMA is withdrawn. This would be a tragic loss of the investment already made both in economic and human terms.

9. There are currently insufficient apprenticeships to meet the potential demand of young people especially if young people are deterred by EMA withdrawal as well as the future changes to Higher Education fees. Cessation of Future Jobs Fund which has been very successful in re engaging young people in the local area is also of concern when the numbers of JSA claimants aged 18–24 have increased more than any other age group. It is evident that many young people and their parents feel they are unfairly targeted by the cumulative effect of these measures.

10. Our evidence is that the benefits of EMA greatly outweigh the costs in terms of the economic and human potential costs of young people who are NEET. EMA encourages young people and their parents to view education and training as positive options. It will be much more difficult to attain the reality of raising the participation age if there is no EMA. Of particular concern is the future of vocationally based foundation learning which will be severely impacted. Young people at a disadvantage socially and economically will be more adversely affected and this will further impair equality of opportunity and the possibility of upward social mobility of future generations.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Hertfordshire Strategic Area Partnership Group

1. Hertfordshire’s 14–19 Partnership comprises all schools including academies, special schools, education support centres, Further Education colleges, Work Based Learning Providers, Hertfordshire’s Youth Connexions, University of Hertfordshire and LA representatives.

2. To facilitate the delivery of the 14–19 Strategy, Hertfordshire has seven local established Strategic Partnership Groups (SAPGs) comprising schools, FE colleges and work based learning providers who work together to increase participation, retention and achievement of learners in their area.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3. This paper sets out Hertfordshire’s 14–19 Partnership’s response to the call for evidence. It provides evidence of the impact of EMAs and highlights, as an RPA pilot authority, what preparations have been put in place in readiness for RPA. It makes a number of recommendations for the Committee to consider.

Ev w54 Education Committee: Evidence*1(a) Impact of Education Maintenance Allowance?*

4. In Hertfordshire, the current EMA take up is 9,225 young people, nearly 200% higher than the figure of 3,164 in 2004–05. There has been a clear correlation between the percentage of young people staying on in education and young people's awareness of EMA over the last six years. Although the increase in participation has been affected by the provision of a more appropriate curriculum and better targeting of young people at risk of not continuing in learning by the Connexions Service, feedback from Connexions Personal Advisers is that EMA has made a significant difference to young people's decisions. This is supported by the fact that in 2008, when there was a large delay in the processing of EMA applications, the increase in the participation rate slowed and there was a sharp rise in the 16–18 NEET rate.

<i>Year</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2005</i>
Number of NEET young people	270	360	556	535	518	618
Percentage of NEET	2.01	2.70	4.04	3.93	3.84	4.49
Participation rate	95.98	95.69	91.71	90.96%	88.54	84.90
Total yr 11 cohort	13430	13317	13762	13607	13491	13761

5. Feedback from one FE provider is that 41% of their learners claim EMA with 85% claiming the highest amount.

6. Data for EMA learners at another college for 09/10 and 10/11 show the impact of EMA on attendance, retention and success rates:

<i>Academic year</i>	<i>EMA Learner numbers</i>	<i>Attendance</i>	<i>Retention</i>	<i>Success</i>	<i>Achievement</i>
2009–10	1,784	90%	93%	88%	94%
2010–11	2,124	90%	97%		

7. There is early evidence from colleges and Post-16 Learner FL Providers that because EMA has not been available from 1 January, vulnerable young people are now unable to access money to start and remain in training. The concern is that the most vulnerable young people especially those with LDD will be harder to engage and retain in learning without EMA.

1(b) How effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund?

8. There are currently no hard facts about the Discretionary Learner Support Funds. It is suggested that total funding will be £150 million whereas EMA funding was £560 million. Hertfordshire providers already receive Discretionary funding of £317,659. EMA support to individuals was in addition to this. Providers would welcome flexibility in distributing funding and would urge reduced administrative procedures and auditing. The fund should be flexible to respond to young people's needs.

*2(a) What preparations are necessary for the gradual RPA to 18 years?***RPA strategy**

9. Local authorities will need to work with all partners to determine the RPA strategy for learners across an area and ensure that the needs of learners are served with appropriate high quality provision and a range of progression pathways from entry/level 1 to level 3 and beyond.

Partnership working

10. Collaboration is essential to ensure that a diverse range of learning programmes, activities and opportunities are available. This is achieved by understanding the local context and cohort, identifying gaps and duplication in provision and by establishing transport arrangements, common admission procedures and joint timetabling.

11. Hertfordshire's 14–19 Partnerships (SAPGs) are required to produce annual plans setting out actions and targets to raise participation, attendance, retention, progression and achievement.

12. In the Eastern Region there is a significant demand from employers for recruitment of high quality L3 & 4 students. There is a need for all young people to have opportunities to mix academic, practical and work-based courses and to learn in a range of different settings.

13. Examples of partnership working to increase vocational and applied provision include:

- Dacorum SAPG provides vocational learning for KS4 students through a mixed programme of Diplomas (250 Yr 10 & 11), Foundation Learning (184) and Practical Learning Opportunities (92 Yr 11) and Young Apprenticeship Programme construction (28 Yr 10 & 11).

- SE Herts SAPG offers great breadth of courses 14–19. For 14–16, 540 learners studying vocational courses including Diplomas, Young Apprenticeships in Construction and Motor Vehicles, Practical Learning Opportunities, Junior Chefs Academy. The achievement (88%), retention (82%) and success (72%) for learners completing in June 2009 have shown year on year improvement.

14. Hertfordshire has a strong record on building facilities that are shared with 10 vocational skill centres/facilities in existence across the county (situated in school sites):

- A jointly FE college and school owned hairdressing salon located at a school and run by tutors with vocational competence.
- An FE college opened a Skills Centre (May 2008) delivering Construction and Motor Vehicle Engineering.

15. The danger of the English Baccalaureate and funding cuts is that curriculum developments in schools will only focus on this. Paragraphs 15–25 set out factors that need to be considered as part of RPA.

Foundation Learning

16. The Foundation Learning framework provides an excellent model for facilitating progression for all learners “not secure at level 2”. Its design enables learning to be in bite-sized chunks, assessed in varied ways and with a focus on destinations. Awarding organisations are working together to develop units and qualifications covering personal and social development, vocational/subject learning and functional skills.

LDD provision

17. LDD learners need a flexible approach to provision on offer varying with the type of learning difficulty and/or disability; some need help to learn with a personal and social development element, others need vocational tasters to engage.

18. Hertfordshire has accessed European Social Funding to develop provision through a brokerage service and by piloting of the Learning for Living and Work Framework to engage 16–18 year old learners with LDD—the hardest to engage and retain.

19. Third sector providers and independent work based providers have a pivotal role in supporting academic and vocational education. LDD young people, for example, need to be prepared for adult life not adult care so meaningful progression opportunities must be in place with a greater focus on work experience and modern apprenticeships.

20. LAs, are working in partnership, to engage with and support these sectors. This central point of reference prevents these providers having to contact and be contacted by schools and FE colleges separately. A co-ordinated approach enables better transition support for young people from study to employment.

Personalised learning

21. The LA is enhancing its KS4 Directory of Alternative Provision (introduced in 2007) to create a Directory of Personalised Learning Opportunities 14–19 (25 for LDD) to incorporate the provision offered by all independent providers, social enterprises and employers. The schools’ offer will be incorporated also to ensure consistency with quality of provision, that programmes are accredited and that the legal requirements e.g. health and safety are met through LA auditing and monitoring.

22. The alternative provision was set up for learners who were unlikely to successfully complete a full-time education in school eg vulnerable young people, school refusers etc. Facilitated by the LA, providers offering pre- and post-16 opportunities are working together to plan transition programmes to ensure that the young people remain in education, employment or training.

23. 577 KS4 learners completed alternative provision education in either 2009 or 2010. The majority of those on alternative curriculum courses were level 1 and entry level i.e. those most likely to have dropped out of learning. The in learning rate for this group was 83.5%, which is not far behind the rate for the whole Hertfordshire cohort.

Apprenticeships

24. In addition we are actively promoting Apprenticeships to both learners in school (age 13 upwards) and working with employer organisations to increase opportunities linked to the county’s economic strategy.

25. The Young Apprenticeship Programme needs to be fully recognised as a valued and extensive experience of a vocational sector. YA programmes have provided young people with the opportunity to experience practical learning as a pathway and enable them to have a wide choice of post-16 options or routes after its completion. Set out below is information about the success of one of these programmes with regard to progression:

The Bishops Stortford and Sawbridgeworth SAPG is a high achieving area with strong post-16 uptake that is predominantly academic in its delivery. The SAPG recognised the need to expand vocational opportunities offered to students.

Ev w56 Education Committee: Evidence

Skillnet (an independent WBL provider) offered to work with the SAPG with a bid to LSC to jointly run a YA Programme in Motor Vehicles.

The YA programme started in September 2008 with a cohort of 16 students. The two year young apprenticeship programme includes work experience and students work towards the IMI Young Apprenticeship award which is equivalent to five GCSEs.

Of these 16 students who finished the course this academic year, 14 of them have achieved full award. One has a disability which means that he will not be able to complete full award and the other student has completed part of the award. Student feedback has been very positive and the SAPG was delighted that one of the students reached the national finals of the YA.

Of the 16 students:

- two are undertaking an apprenticeship in motor vehicles;
- four stayed on into sixth form to study a L3 LMI course (motor vehicles);
- seven have transferred to FE Colleges to undertake L3 provision; and
- two have jobs with training.

The programme has grown each year and motor vehicle courses are now offered at L1, 2 & 3.

Every year the programme has been oversubscribed.

Recently, Skillnet had an Ofsted inspection and the YA programme was deemed to be “exemplary practice”.

26. If there were closer links between KS4/5 qualifications and the Apprenticeship framework this would provide better progression opportunities.

Data

27. Access and availability of key data sources eg Data Dashboard and destinations are pivotal. The partnerships have effective joint agreements to share data and inform and support future planning and commissioning of services and provision:

- Destination data for all 16, 17 and 18 year olds is collected and collated by SAPG, consortia and individual school and has been used to support planning processes.
- NEETs data is analysed frequently and detailed reports produced.
- SAPGs have agreed protocols on student tracking, assessment and reporting arrangements for students accessing collaborative courses.
- SAPGs have curriculum implementation groups (deputy head level) to share information on students and they use data (eg destination data, Data Dashboard by individual school, SAPG and consortia within SAPG, KS4 data by individual school, SAPG and consortia) to help inform curriculum planning.

28. Labour Market Information and future trends information with an audit of curriculum provision should be used to address both the needs of young people and the employer sector and ensure that progression opportunities lead to positive destinations.

IAG

29. All young people should have access to high-quality impartial Careers Education and Information, Advice and Guidance. They need to know about all the possible pathways and routes on offer and understand what qualifications are most appropriate and what choices to make. It is essential that young people are provided with accurate and up-to-date information about progression opportunities and positive destinations. The LA Area Wide Prospectuses and the National Apprenticeship Service should be seen as integral elements of CEIAG.

30. It is important that there is continuity of Connexions Personal Advisers’ (PA) support for young people with LDD. Currently, the PAs provide this through:

- Attending all Year 9 reviews (part of the SEN Code of Practice) and completing a Transition report.
- Completing a Section 139A learning Difficulty Assessment.
- Providing access to Ideas 4 Life Information Pack and Ideas 4 Life DVD.

Communication on RPA

31. Linked to IAG is the importance of a clear communication strategy owned by all providers. The messages need to be the same at national, regional and local level with development of promotional and marketing materials that can be accessed and understood by all stakeholders especially parents and young people.

2(b) *Current state of readiness?*

32. Hertfordshire was one of 11 authorities selected by DCSF to take part in phase 1 RPA pathfinder with a focus on the “local solutions model” strand. This work covered apprenticeships and the development of Foundation Learning and the Directory of Personalised Learning Opportunities. Hertfordshire was selected by the DCSF (now DfE) for the phase 2 RPA pathfinder work. RPA activities have been developed under the existing county Strategic Partnership Group Structure. RPA underpins the strategy and all policies with plans supported by the county SPG.

33. Hertfordshire has a RPA Project Board and project plan for delivery and implementation of agreed objectives and actions. The trial work has helped to galvanise partners such as Connexions, WBL providers and the LA. This means we are well placed to implement and deliver RPA.

34. All SAPG 1-year plans address the needs of vulnerable young people and NEETs as key targets and priorities and the underlying context for the 2011–12 plans will be RPA.

35. A priority has been to focus on the need to develop the number of apprenticeships. Future 565 programme—565 openings (apprenticeships and employment with training) to help young people to develop their skills and increase their “employability”. 200 Future Jobs Fund places have been secured and Hertfordshire CC is funding 365 Apprenticeship places for young people.

36. Hertfordshire is the only LA working with City and Guilds allow schools free access to their suite of Employability and Personal Development and Functional Skills qualifications. With the LA, as the contract holder, schools will not have to pay centre registration fees and qualification fees. This initiative has enabled LA teams to accredit activities previously non-accredited. Partners are seeing the importance of working together to ensure that post-16 funding and progression is protected and that learners are not repeating units when they move from pre- to post-16 providers.

37. There are concerns about the fate of young people in the labour market particularly 18-year olds. The number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) has risen from their record low point at the end of 2009. The biggest increase has been among 18-year olds, of whom over 6% are now NEET (compared with below 3% of 16-year olds). It is therefore very important to look at the 18–24 group as part of the RPA strategy.

3. *What impact RPA will have?*

38. In the light of the already high post 16 participation rate in Hertfordshire and the nature of young people not currently engaged in education or training, it is likely that it will be colleges and independent training providers that will expand to accommodate additional learners as the participation age is raised. Providing the funding follows the learners, these sectors will be prepared for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years. This requires colleges and training providers to evaluate their existing staffing and accommodation. There will need to be a clear focus on future collaboration; widening participation generally and recognition that learner expectations of progression routes will need to be managed with an increasing focus towards Apprenticeships.

39. There is a strong view from the FE and independent training provider sectors that the provision of fully independent information, advice and guidance is crucial to ensure that students are given the full range of options available to them on leaving school with vocational pathways receiving the same attention as academic ones.

40. Although the government has removed plans for enforcing RPA, there is concern that if it is compulsory this may impact on behaviour as students will not be attending college on a “voluntary” basis. It is a concern that attendance will be affected by the effectiveness and availability of the new Discretionary Learner Support Fund. Both of these factors could have a negative impact on achievement. As many of these “new” learners will be from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or will not have achieved at school, providers will need to develop their workforce to cope with the high demands.

41. Conversely, schools in Hertfordshire are not currently expecting RPA to have an impact on academic achievement in the sixth form as students who are currently not participating at all in post-16 education or training are more likely to choose to participate at a college or independent training provider.

42. There is uncertainty about the future arrangements for vocational learning being reviewed by Professor Alison Wolf. Whether future arrangements result in this provision only being available in places other than schools, such as UTCs and studio schools, is an important factor in planning for RPA.

RECOMMENDATIONS

43. Set out below are the key recommendations which the Partnership would wish the committee to consider.
- The provision of fully impartial information, advice and guidance so students are given the full range of options available to them. Vocational pathways should receive the same attention as academic ones.

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- There is a need to balance between the English Baccalaureate and Foundation Learning to recognise not all learners are able to reach Level 2 threshold.
 - Young apprenticeship programme to be fully recognised as a valued experience of a vocational sector.
 - Qualifications that allow effective transition from Key Stage 4/5 to the Apprenticeship framework.
 - Providers would like flexibility in distributing the Discretionary Learner Support funds with reduced administrative procedures and auditing.
 - LAs should be required to develop a longer-term RPA strategy across partners.
 - All stakeholders need CPD opportunities to implement RPA successfully.
 - A national communication strategy for RPA.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Action for Children

1. *What impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it*

1.1 *Action for Children's position on EMA*

Action for Children does support some reform of the system. As one of the largest providers of children's services in the UK, we understand the need for a robust evidence base in the sustainability and success of programmes such as EMA, and the need to make the most of the investment through effective targeting. We are however concerned that the Government has underestimated the value of the allowance, particularly for vulnerable young people such as young carers and children in care.

Furthermore, the Government has so far given no assurances that these vulnerable groups of young people will continue to receive financial support to continue in education from 16–19. We believe that scrapping EMA has the potential to damage the educational and future prospects of some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged young people in the UK.

Removing the EMA from September this year is also unfair to those young people who have committed to a course and who will not now receive EMA during their second year. Many disadvantaged young people are likely to have to drop out of their courses next September as a result. We would welcome a move to restore provision, for those learners who have already embarked on a course of study, of EMA support to the end of their course.

It is essential that vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people receive the financial support they need to stay on in education from 16–19. Children in care and young carers must have an automatic (and not discretionary) entitlement to this support.

1.2 *Why EMA is particularly important to young people in care and young carers*

Young people in care often experience poorer educational outcomes than their peers.

Care leavers are over represented amongst those who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). For example, in Scotland 80% of those eligible for "aftercare services" in 2010 were NEET.²¹

By removing the support provided by EMA the Government is unfairly penalising young people in care— an already marginalised and disadvantaged group. All young people in the care of a Local Authority were automatically entitled to receive EMA at the £30 rate. It is not clear whether they will continue to receive it in future and we are concerned that they will no longer receive support through the discretionary support funds administered by colleges.

Young Carers also experience significant levels of educational disadvantage and are less likely to go on to further education because of their caring responsibilities. The Government's young carers strategy emphasizes the importance of supporting their educational needs. Many young carers live in, or on the margins of poverty and allowances such as EMA can prove invaluable to families where disability and ill health reduce the family income, making it difficult for children to remain in education beyond the age of 16.

1.3 *Case studies and survey evidence*

CASE STUDY: ANNA'S STORY

Anna lives in foster care and is involved in a Children in Care service run by Action for Children. Anna is 16 and wants to become a barrister so she is working hard to pass the four A-levels she needs to go to University. Anna currently gets £30 a week EMA which helps her travel, buy books and materials, and to eat.

²¹ The Scottish Government (Feb 2011) Statistical Release: Children Looked After Statistics. (Scottish Government) Table 1.6. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/342028/0113799.xls>

In her final year of college, Anna will lose her EMA and will have to get a job. She is very worried that there are no jobs available, and that even if she gets one, she will find it impossible to juggle a full-time education with work.

She said that many of her friends will have to drop out of college if they lose their EMA. 30% of young people at the Sixth Form College where Anna studies get EMA at the full £30 a week rate.

SURVEY OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO RECEIVE EMA

Action for Children recently spoke to a small group of young people, almost 80% of whom currently live in care or are care leavers, to inform our knowledge of the financial support they receive and need. These results are from 34 respondents who currently receive EMA.

Do you currently receive EMA? If yes, which of the following do you spend it on?

Lunch	26
Travel	20
Equipment	20
Stationery	18
Books or study guides	17
Toiletries	12
Interview Clothes	5

Respondents were asked what difference EMA has made to them, and what difference would be made to them personally if the Government got rid of EMA. Their responses indicated EMA has a positive impact in five key areas of these young people's lives.

EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL CHOICES

One respondent who lives in care said EMA has "enabled me to go to college to help better my future."

Other respondents said EMA "Kept me in school"/ means they "can afford to get to college."

One care leaver said without EMA: "I couldn't get a better career and I would have a rubbish job and have less money than I have now as I wouldn't get housing benefit."

QUALITY OF LIFE/ EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

"[EMA] has taken a lot of stress off me as I have the extra money coming in for educational purposes."

"[EMA] gives me freedom so I can get away from home. I'm more independent—I work hard for it doing my joinery work!"

Conversely, one young person in care said, [if the Government got rid of EMA] "I'd be gutted; I'd struggle; I'd be bored, have nothing to do."

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

"[Receiving EMA] means I can eat lunch and buy the books and things everyone else has (apart from laptops and things)."

Almost 60% of respondents said that, if the Government got rid of EMA, they would have to drop out of school/college.

A young person in care said: "I'd have to drop out of school/college (education). I won't be able to afford lunch, I won't have enough money for equipment for my course, I won't have enough money for stationery, I won't have enough money for books or study guides."

PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

One young care leaver said "[EMA] made me want to go to college".

Another said EMA has meant they "get more money to afford to stay in college, and to continue to take on the follow on courses."

Other young people said that without EMA:

"I won't go to college because of the bus costs."

"Won't be able to get to college to finish my course next year."

"Really struggle and possible not go on to the second year of my course."

Ev w60 Education Committee: Evidence**REMOVAL OF FINANCIAL BURDEN/ BARRIERS TO EDUCATION**

One young person in care said: "I've only received it three times due to technical errors, but it makes a massive difference as I know I have money set aside if I need it."

One young care leaver said that without EMA, "I would have £55 pound a week to live on, with £17 a week service charge in my social care house. £55-17 = £38. My bus fare is £13 a week = £25. So I have £25 to feed myself, wash myself, dress myself, and if I have some left over which is rare, get something nice for myself like a chocolate bar."

Another young person said they "wouldn't be able to buy essential stuff."

1.4 Discretionary Learner Support Fund

The new support arrangements will be administered by colleges, but it is not yet clear what, if any, guidance will be given to colleges about how to distribute the money or what will happen to disadvantaged students when this fund runs out.

It is essential that vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people receive the financial support they need to stay on in education from 16-19, and to work with experts in the field to identify those groups most in need.

Children in care and young carers must have an automatic (and not discretionary) entitlement to financial support in further education.

2. Financial support for the futures of looked after children

Children in care are among the most marginalised and disadvantaged people in the UK. The majority have left care by the time they are 18 to face an adult life without work, education or training, and over a third of care leavers say they have been homeless in the first year after they left care²².

The abolition of Child Trust Funds for children in care has removed a vital savings platform for young people and taken away much needed money that is used to help people make a successful transition out of care.

We are calling on HM Treasury to provide an estimated £6.6 million to establish savings accounts for looked after children and make payments into those accounts. These savings accounts would provide a financial asset available to the young person on leaving care, additional to existing leaving care support. As the "corporate parent" of these children, we believe the state must provide some savings in an asset-based account in the same way that other parents save for their children to enable them to have the best possible start to their adult life.

An asset-based savings account scheme will provide practical help to looked after children and care leavers, offering an opportunity for financial education and responsibility. It will help young people to make positive choices about their future and to succeed in education and training. Vitality, it will provide a much-needed financial safety net for those facing the "cliff edge" of leaving care.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by BSix, Brooke House Sixth Form College
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Students, teachers, support staff, parents, governors, managers and the principal of BSix, Brooke House Sixth Form College are united in their opposition to the abolition of Educational Maintenance Allowance. They have serious concerns about the impact its abolition will have on the college's ability to continue to raise educational achievement and student aspiration in a socially deprived area. This statement, through the voices of students and staff, summarises these concerns and argues that the abolition of EMA will seriously impede the work of the college. It argues that the abolition of EMA will make it more difficult for students to succeed academically and outlines the positive impact the allowance has had on students, their families, the local area and society in general.

- 1.1 We submit that the abolition of EMA will: 1) decrease significantly the household income of poor families; 2) have negative impact on student achievement; 3) cause teachers to find it more difficult to ensure students attend and are punctual; 4) have a negative impact on student retention; 5) discourage students from enrolling. We also submit that: 6) students primarily spend the allowance on food, travel, books and other items necessary for studying; 7) students will be unable to find paid work as an alternative to EMA; 8) the number of young people not in education, employment or training in Hackney will increase with consequent social problems and increased benefit

²² Social Exclusion Unit (2003) A Better Education for Children in Care, London: HMSO

expenditure; 9) the proposed replacement will be costly, bureaucratic and difficult to administer fairly.

- 1.2 We ask the Inquiry to recommend that EMA be retained in its current form and the money for the scheme increased to ensure more students receive the grant.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

BSix was set up in 2002 to raise the aspirations and achievements of young people in the East End of London. It is comprehensive in that it offers courses from entry through to advanced, educating young people who have no prior qualifications as well as those aspiring to study at Oxbridge. It also offers a wide range of courses and subjects including Business, Health and Social Care, Public Services, ESOL, Hair and Beauty as well as a wide range of A Levels. The college is located in Hackney, one of the most deprived boroughs in the country. About half the students come from Hackney and the rest from all over London. The student body is extremely diverse. The two biggest groups are young people of African heritage (33%) and African Caribbean heritage (16%). The gender balance is 56% female and 44% male. The majority come from families with no history of higher education. **72% of students are in receipt of EMA payments** and 97% of students engender disadvantage uplift in funding, the second highest in the sixth form sector. The aim of the college is to break the link between social deprivation and underachievement. The basic premise is that everyone is educable. The college has been in the top 10 of the 46 London colleges in the post-16 performance tables, being outperformed only by selective institutions, and its value added performance regularly places it in the top 5% of all schools and colleges in the country. In 2009 it had the best contextual value added in the whole state school and college sector. Together students, teachers and support staff from BSix have campaigned to oppose the abolition of EMA and raise awareness of the importance of the scheme. The contributions in this submission are from the principal, teachers, managers, governors and parents but the most powerful voices in defence of EMA are those of the students who receive the allowance.

3. IMPORTANCE OF EMA TO LOW INCOME FAMILY BUDGETS

Many students report that EMA is an essential part of the broader family budget. The abolition of EMA must be understood in the context of cuts to other benefits and services and its abolition will result in a significant reduction in household incomes for families in poverty. In some instances EMA is used for paying bills, supporting siblings and for funding carer duties. Families are also more likely to encourage students to attend college if the students are able to support themselves financially. The abolition of EMA will place a significant financial burden on low income families.

- 3.1 “With the new cuts that have happened money in my household is very tight. It is a big benefit when I can help out as much as possible. By losing my EMA I would not be able to come to do this which would place a really big burden on my mother. EMA has also proved useful in terms of basic needs with regards to my family. If my mother needs assistance with the things such as electricity from time to time or getting something for my younger siblings, she is able to rely on me and this makes life so much easier, so even though EMA may seem like such a small amount it really does make a difference. I find it bizarre that MPs seem to think EMA is just pocket money to people like me. It makes a huge difference to my household. It’s not just me relying on it, but my family as well, especially as the payment of around £50 we used to receive every two weeks for my autistic brother has been cut completely, and now the buses that take him to and from his special school are under threat.” **Vivien Kintu, student**
- 3.2 “My family’s weekly income is roughly £80 a week so EMA to me and my family makes a big difference, it’s almost a third of our weekly income. It means me not asking my mum for money that she doesn’t have, it means me being able to make a contribution and help her out. I know of many people who share their EMA out between their families, this isn’t rare. We’re going through a recession where educated, experienced adults can’t get a job, so the chances of me finding one are scarce”. **Clea Cal, student**
- 3.3 “The government don’t realise that EMA is essential support for families. What about the families, the Mums and Dads, the lone parents who rely on the fact their sons and daughters get EMA? The result will be a lost generation.” **Daze Osuide, student**
- 3.4 “I am worried about the economic consequences of scrapping EMA. Over 70% of students at the college receive the allowance. Its loss will prove a huge problem for many families. The threat is massive and it will be a significant blow to household income. If you have one son or daughter on EMA, that’s £120 a month, if you’ve got two, then it’s £240 a month.” **Ken Warman, Principal**
- 3.5 “Even if the EMA had no impact on educational outcomes, it would still represent a transfer of resources to low-income households with children, which may in its own right represent a valuable policy objective.” **Institute For Fiscal Studies report**²³

²³ Education Maintenance Allowance: Evaluation with Administrative Data—*The impact of the EMA pilots on participation and attainment in post-compulsory education*, Chowdry, Dearden, Emmerson, Institute for Fiscal Studies—Nov 2007 quoted at <http://www.leftfootforward.org/2010/12/the-real-nature-of-the-educational-maintenance-allowance-debate/>

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4. THE ABOLITION OF EMA WILL INCREASE THE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING (NEET)

The number of 16 to 24 year olds NEETs has reached a record high. Department of Education statistics report there are 938,000 not in work, education or training.²⁴ The abolition of EMA will increase this number. In Hackney NEET rates for 16 to 18 year olds are 70% above the national average.²⁵ Students and teachers report that the abolition of EMA will have a negative impact on student retention and discourage students from enrolling in the first instance. A survey commissioned jointly by the Association of Colleges and the University and Colleges Union reports that 70% of students would drop out if EMA was withdrawn and 38% of those who get the college grant would not have started their course without it.²⁶ One in five 16 to 24 year olds—965,000 are unemployed.²⁷ The thinktank Demos warns that youth unemployment is likely to grow to 1.2 million over the next five years.²⁸ Students are finding it increasingly difficult to find work to support their studies.

- 4.1 “I fear the abolition will result in many students simply not enrolling in the first place—or dropping out as they find they cannot afford to study. This presumably will swell the number of NEETS nationally with all the problems associated with that cohort”. **Dave Hampton, Head of English and Humanities**
- 4.2 “I am born and bred in Hackney, I get £10 from EMA. My friends who were on EMA simply were motivated to come into college due to the financial support they were given. Now as EMA has gone they are looking for alternative ways to gain financial support; however there are no jobs so unfortunately this is leading to crime. So I ask you if we are spending billions waging war in other countries why can't we spend that money in this country? Please take the opinion of the working class into consideration as we are the majority in society”. **Zakariya Ahmed, Student**
- 4.3 “EMA has encouraged many students to go to college; if that option was not there many young people will have no other choice but to head for a dead-end career, committing crimes or joining gangs. They will have no legitimate means left available to them. And are these really the opportunities you want to leave for our generation? I know this sounds harsh but it's true, there are no other options for the working classes.” **Clea Cal, Student**
- 4.4 “When looking for jobs I'm competing against people in their thirties, it's doesn't seem fair. It feels as if my generation has always been the guinea pigs of new government initiatives. I don't believe that ministers have to scrap the EMA. They could find the money”. **Vivien Kintu, student**
- 4.5 “There will definitely be less students going to college if they abolish EMA. How are we going to afford to come to college? A lot of people rely on it. It is hard to get jobs; I have been trying for ages—it is not easy”. **Yildiz Esmer, Student**

5. IMPROVEMENT IN PUNCTUALITY AND ATTENDANCE

Students only receive their EMA if they are on time, attend every lesson and produce an adequate amount of work. Teachers report that punctuality and attendance and work levels have improved since the introduction of EMA. The consequence of the improvement in attendance and punctuality is an increased amount of time students spend in the classroom and this has contributed significantly to improved educational attainment.

- 5.1 “The introduction of EMA had an immediate impact. It worked right away as an incentive to stay on. The money worked as a good street-cred reason to study particularly among boys most likely to drop out. I remember when they first piloted it here in Hackney—students were rushing in to make sure they got in on time and attendance improved massively. Most are now 100%. Parents turn them out of bed to make sure they don't lose the money.” **Louis Lovell, teacher**
- 5.2 “EMA is only available to those who have 100% attendance and punctuality records for a given week. The limited evidence we have available shows the major positive effect that EMA has had on attendance and punctuality, and this is very much supported by my experience. I think the broader positive effects in terms of contributing to a culture where learning is an appealing option for students at risk of disengagement will be difficult to quantify, but nevertheless considerable. I feel, with our students, that EMA is a deserved support, financial and symbolic, for them 'doing the right thing' when there are significant forces encouraging them to do otherwise; and a significant way of promoting greater equality of opportunity when this is a goal seemingly universally desired but increasingly elusive”. **Rick Brown, teacher**
- 5.3 “EMA is also not easy to obtain, for me to get my EMA I must have 100% attendance and punctuality, being five minutes late to one of my 17 lessons I have a week, means no money. This shows I have to be an active and focused student for me to even get my EMA.” **Clea Cal, student**

²⁴ Department for Education Report cited in Guardian, NEETs hit new high as youth unemployment keeps rising, 25 February 2011

²⁵ <http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/default.asp?pageRef=242>

²⁶ The survey was conducted by UCU with the assistance of the Association of Colleges (AoC). Over 700 students who received EMA were polled at the 30 colleges and sixth-forms with the highest proportion of students receiving the EMA.

²⁷ Office for National Statistics <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=12>

²⁸ Report currently unpublished cited in Guardian 25 February 2011

6. USAGE OF EMA

It has been frequently reported in the media that students spend their EMA on non essentials and items unrelated to education.²⁹ These accusations are based on unsubstantiated assertions by those with no experience of sixth form or further education and are an attempt to discredit and undermine the scheme. The receipt of the allowance is not dependent on students spending the money on any prescribed items. Our experience at BSix is that students spend the money to support their education on travel, lunch, books pens, notepads etc. In addition our students are required to pay for their exam re-sits which cost £18 per unit. Students re-sit multiple units.

- 6.1 “To be honest with you EMA will not affect my travel to college, however it will affect the extra curriculum activities I do. I am part of the Hackney Volunteer Police Cadets and a Project called Bikes2Gambia, and with this project I have to go all across London on the tubes, with the EMA I was able to pay up for my travel, however now I am struggling.” **Zakariyah Ahmed, student**
- 6.2 “EMA is a source of income for students that need it most—without it people will struggle. Over 70% of students here at B6 get EMA. It ensures teenagers have the fundamental things, such as school books and lunch money. Many use it for transport. It creates a fairer economic environment and brings up those less well off in society.” **Nkiruka Ochei, Student**
- 6.3 “It goes on everything for the whole week—your lunch, travel, living costs it supports us to get by”. **Yildiz Esmer, student**
- 6.4 “EMA also enables me and other students to eat a good lunch, as for some family’s lunch money isn’t always there. And also food is not cheap, especially good healthy food, and me going to my lessons having eaten a good lunch means I can concentrate, stay focused and work harder. Furthermore I have read articles from politicians arguing they have spoken to students who have said they’ve brought £100 trainers with EMA, if anyone wants to look at my shoes they are £4 and from Primark. They’ve also said the amount of money we claim to spend on transport must be spent on taxis, and their solution to this problem is removing my EMA, raising oyster card prices and the removal of free bus travel for students.” **Clea Cal, student**
- 6.5 “So many of our students depend on the EMA for essentials such as travel costs to get to College—in London, especially, transport is very expensive. I have had many students inform me that they missed three days of college in succession simply because they had no money for transport. Many students live alone and have no family in this country and are dependent on every penny of EMA even for basics such as food in some cases”. **Dave Hampton, Head of Humanities**

7. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE CAMPAIGN TO DEFEND EMA

We request that the education committee note that our students are the first in a generation to become actively engaged with the political process. This is a direct consequence of the government’s decision to abolish EMA. **We ask the committee to consider why students have been so actively involved in the campaign to defend EMA.** Below are some examples of their participation in the democratic process.

- **19/12/10** BSix Students organised a rally and demonstration at lunchtime. A delegation of students and teachers marched to Hackney Town Hall where they presented Jules Pipe, the Mayor of Hackney, with a joint letter from staff and students and a petition opposing the abolition of EMA.
 - **19/01/11** Students participated in a “teach-in” in parliament to coincide with the parliamentary vote on EMA. The “teach-in” was attended by a number of MPs. Students then attended and spoke at a lobby organised jointly by the NUS/UCU/NUT.
 - **26/01/11** Students addressed a full meeting of Hackney Council. They spoke in support of a motion to oppose the abolition of EMA.
 - **14/02/11** Students participated in a debate with MPs and Lords about education in parliament organised by “Bite the Ballot”.
 - Students have made frequent appearances in the media including on BBC News, Newsnight, Radio 4, Radio Five Live, Sky News, Press TV. They also appear in a documentary on the campaign made by VBS TV.
- 7.1 “I have been involved with the campaign to save EMA. We had a rally at our college organised by the students and the NUT and UNISON. We have been trying to publicise the issues around EMA letting people know the student side of the argument.” **Daze Osuide, student**
 - 7.2 “We went on the protests to save EMA and oppose the fees—a lot of people are upset about what is happening.” **Yildiz Esmer, student**
 - 7.3 “One way of assessing the impact of the EMA on student life and learning is to consider the energy, commitment and time students have given to defending it. Both events I attended increased the inclusion, sense of community and active participation of our students in the classroom and the wider democratic process. Our students’ commitment to defending the allowance demonstrates unequivocally the importance it has had on their participation, achievement and overall welfare.” **Lucy Capes, Trainee Teacher**

²⁹ One example is Andrew Gilligan, <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/andrewgilligan/100068929/ema-time-to-stop-whingeing-kids>

Ev w64 Education Committee: Evidence**8. PROBLEMS WITH THE PROPOSED REPLACEMENT—THE LEARNER SUPPORT FUND**

The government proposes to replace EMA with a Learner Support Fund which will be distributed to students at the discretion of the college. Funding for EMA currently stands at £500 million. The proposed fund for the replacement has been reported as being between £50 and £150 million. This significant reduction will result in many students not receiving the financial support they have had previously. With no central guidelines for the allocation of the money competing colleges may use the money to attract students with financial incentives instead of distributing it according to need. The decision about how to allocate the funds will be time consuming, costly and inefficient and may leave the college open to appeals.

- 8.1 The decision to abolish the Education Maintenance Allowance was taken before any interim or replacement arrangement had been put in place. The proposed enhanced Learner Support Fund is a serious cause for concern not only because it will be a radically reduced budget but also because the distribution of such a fund is fraught with difficulties. First, it is clear that there will be “guidelines”, not rules, so there will be inconsistencies between colleges (and a temptation to use the fund as a marketing and recruitment tool). Second, the argument for devolved distribution is that we know our local circumstances. This is an unhelpful justification. For example, 50% of our students come from outside the borough of Hackney, many travelling considerable distances in search of the right course and a sixth form college experience. We could well decide to fund travel for students in low income households. If we don’t, then the implication is that only the relatively well-off can gain access to a free market in education (travelling to the best college for you rather than the most convenient). However, if the fund is drained by the 50% from out of borough, what about the many of our students who live in Hackney and are in low-income households? Third, these difficult decisions will probably lead to appeals, tying up time and resources, and complaints of inconsistency. Fourth, as these decisions will be made in-house, it will inevitably increase (local) bureaucracy and our administrative costs. The EMA had the advantage of being a national scheme with clear rules and the distribution of funds direct to a student’s bank account. Once you consider the practical implications of a devolved Learner Support Fund, you realise the fallacy of the “dead weight” argument that only 10% of young people stayed on at 16 because of the EMA. The crucial question is: how do you identify the 10%? Do we give priority funding to those who can persuade us that they will drop out if they do not receive financial support? **Ken Warman, Principal**

9. CONCLUSION

The aim of our college is to raise the educational achievement of young people in Hackney. We have been succeeding in doing this since 2002 and it is our view that EMA has been an essential part of this process. The allowance offers material support, an incentive to participate in education, ensures students do not have to undertake excessive part-time work. It supports families on low incomes, it encourages students to enrol and then stay in college. It improves results. It sends a clear signal to often disillusioned and marginalised young people that they are valued by society and that education is important. It has a broader positive impact on society by keeping young people in education and providing support to low income families. According to the IFS cost analysis it more than pays for itself. **We urge the Education Committee to recommend that EMA be retained in its current form and expanded to ensure more students receive the allowance.**

“It’s as if they are removing all chances of me passing or even being able to go to college. This is supposed to be a meritocratic society, yet I’m not even given the opportunity to work my way to the top. Shouldn’t education be a key to better and civilized society? They are clearly removing any prospect for me and many others to pursue a successful career. We’re almost born into failure and should my fate and the fate of many others just be based on what class we’re born into?” **Clea Cal, student**

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by National Association of Student Money Advisers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. We welcome the opportunity to comment on this consultation. We have taken feedback from NASMA members working with FE students in Further and Higher Education Institutions across the UK. The main comments we wish to make are as follows:

- There is a concern from some advisers about the impact on student retention of removing EMA.
- Uncertainty around the discretionary learner support fund criteria mean it is difficult to identify at this stage how effective they will be.

INTRODUCTION TO NASMA

2. The National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA) acts as a focus for information exchange between practitioners in the field of student funding, bringing together professionals from across the sector and encouraging the free exchange of ideas. We work closely with national decision makers and their influencers

on student finance policy. In addition we work with other relevant sector organisations to promote the needs of students and our members.

3. NASMA has over 500 members in all four countries in the UK and collectively members are recognised as the leading authority on all matters relating to student advice and funding.

IMPACT OF EDUCATIONAL MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

4. NASMA members working directly with students receiving EMA highlight that for many young people there is now a concern about how they will travel for their studies in future years. This is of particular concern in rural locations where travel arrangements are more costly.

5. Previously many young people may well have been able to secure part time work to subsidise their incomes. However, in the current economic situation part time and casual work is getting more difficult to secure. This is also of particular concern in rural areas.

6. Students from very low household income backgrounds have been offered an opportunity to engage with further studies that many would not otherwise have had without the assistance of EMA. The costs for materials for students taking art and design or sports courses can often be prohibitive. This would in turn lead to young people choosing less expensive courses due to possible financial burdens on their families.

7. Low income families are currently facing income cuts in real terms without the additional financial pressure.

8. Although there are examples of some students receiving EMA and not using the funds for study purposes, NASMA members presented many more examples of students that do use their EMA to "maintain" themselves. They are not yet ready or equipped for employment, and are fully engaging with education and developing new skills. The assistance for attending courses has improved attendance rates, which in turn leads to students passing their courses and progressing with their education or entering employment.

9. Advisers are concerned about the removal of EMA support, particularly for those that entered their studies on the understanding of receiving funding for two years and now find the support will not continue next year.

10. Members have reported examples of students dropping out of their courses due to financial pressure on the family and a concern about how subsequent years of the course will be funded.

11. A number of services have seen cuts to their departmental finances as a result of the EMA changes. This has not only led to staff redundancies, but also to a reduced service of supporting the welfare of students. As the UK funding situation becomes more complicated for students the staffing support offered needs to be increased rather than decreased.

DISCRETIONARY LEARNER SUPPORT FUNDS

12. The view from many NASMA members is that the administration of learner support funds needs to be as flexible as possible, within set guidelines, to allow colleges to manage the funds based on awareness of local demographics.

13. How effective the learner support funds will be in replacing EMA will be dependent on how much local flexibility is allowed, and will also be dependent on effective marketing of the support available and the size of the budget. It will be important to address the view from many young people that there is now no financial support to help them beyond their school education.

14. It is clear that the level of support available via the discretionary learner support funds will be much less than what is currently available. However, the fund will be expected to support students forced into hardship due to removal of the EMA. Some NASMA members feel this is putting unrealistic expectations and pressures on such a small fund.

15. The cost of the administration of such a fund needs to be factored into any changes.

16. Many students will not seek help from a fund that requires an excessive amount of administration. Any assessment needs to have a "light touch" approach if it is to benefit the students and not be too burdensome for administrators.

PREPARATIONS NECESSARY FOR GRADUAL RAISING OF PARTICIPATION AGE

17. Emphasis is needed on Information Advice and Guidance for post 16 learners in terms of opportunities for further learning (including HE) and other vocational opportunities. This IAG needs to be provided from both providers and local authorities.

18. There should be emphasis placed on developing financial capability as a skill set as a preparation for adult life. This is something that many NASMA members are now engaged with as part of their work.

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IMPACT OF RAISING THE PARTICIPATION AGE

19. There is a concern about the potential impact on the academic achievement, particularly of students from vulnerable groups, if there is an increase in the number of students. It may be necessary to increase targeted resources particularly for these groups.

20. Appropriate support networks (for example, personal tutorials and counseling) to support learners must be in place. In many cases there will also need to be strengthening of cross-service communication to ensure the level of support required.

21. It is expected that there may be an increased focus on independent approaches to learning (such as responsibility for time management etc) to link with the development of professional/academic skills.

22. It may be necessary to review approaches to “statementing” and formalise diagnosis for support to ensure disabled learners receive appropriate support as early as possible in their education. This is likely to place a duty on educational establishments, in a similar way to HEIs.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Stoke-on-Trent Children and Young People’s Services**1. IMPACT OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE (EMA) FOR STOKE-ON-TRENT RESIDENT LEARNERS**

1.1 Stoke-on-Trent was one of the original EMA pilot areas in the 1998–99 academic year. EMA was introduced nationally in 04/05 for all 16 year old school leavers and for 17 and 18 year olds in former pilot areas, of which the City was one. In 2006–07 EMA became available to all 16, 17 and 18 year olds nationally.

1.2 EMA take-up among Stoke resident 16, 17 and 18 year olds has risen from 2,759 in 2004–05 to 4169 in 2009–10. 4,169 represents around 50% of the 16–18 population.

1.3 Over 50% of the 16–18 cohort at the two colleges in the City claims EMA. This percentage has been increasing and will conceal much higher rates among particular groups of students on particular kinds of courses. One of the three City school 6th forms has a similar rate. Responses from four of the six major training providers in the City indicates that there are even higher percentages of young people claiming EMA (although much smaller numbers) who are on Foundation Learning (formerly E2E) programmes—between 62% and 81%.

1.4 Post 16 education and training providers also comment that EMA is a significant incentive for young people from low income families, of which there are many in the City. EMA also acts as a sanction for providers to apply where there are instances of poor attendance, timekeeping or behaviour. EMA also supports travel costs, making it easier for young people to travel to the college or training centre of their choice. There is a possibility that the new discretionary learner support funding will not cover travel costs.

2. PARTICIPATION RATES

2.1 City 16 year old “staying-on” rates (ie full time further education in a 6th form or college) stood at 56.3% in 1998. In 1999 (the year EMA was introduced in a number of pilot areas including Stoke-on Trent) “staying-on” in full time education rose to 65% and has gone on rising. In 2009 it stood at 80.5%. The percentage of 17 year olds (who are also able to claim EMA) who remain in full time further education now stands at 63.2% (up from 53.5% in 2007). The figure for 18 year olds is unclear at this stage.

3. IMPACT OF WITHDRAWAL OF EMA

3.1 In the absence of detail about the replacement for EMA—discretionary learner support—FSM is one well-known indicator that might be akin to the narrower and more targeted criteria likely to be used in determining eligibility for discretionary learner support. On this basis between **20%** and **30%** of 16-to-18 year olds in the next ten years would lose access to funding for participation in FE, work-based Foundation Learning and ESF programmes.

3.2 More immediately, taking 2011–12 as the first full academic year for which EMA ceases to be available, and using their FSM take-up as a guide, this would mean that around **20% (1,600)** of 16–18 year olds would be able to claim for discretionary learner support (dependent on the size of the budget) with **30% (2,400)** of 16–18 year olds unable to claim financial support.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by National Association of Head Teachers

What impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will the Discretionary Learner Support Fund be in replacing it?

1. Evidence has been presented by the DfE to the effect that 90% of young people qualifying for EMA would have continued with their education irrespective of its availability. The relevance of the cited research to school sixth forms has been called into question. NAHT's position is that Education Maintenance Allowance's role in informing decisions whether or not to remain in education is but one factor in the debate.

2. NAHT members have provided much anecdotal evidence about the benefits that the Educational Maintenance Allowance has conferred on young people in their schools from which one can envisage how much harder their school lives would have been without such support. The overwhelming conclusion is that it has acted positively in strengthening the "pull" factors that lead young people to recognise the advantages of continuing with education and have at the same time offset the "push" factors that make alternatives attractive.

3. We seek further clarification as to how the government arrived at a figure of 10% of young people who really require additional support and whether the Discretionary Learner Support Fund budget has been calculated on this basis.

4. Much is made in the wider context of the need for an appropriate work-life balance. It could be argued that this concept applies equally to young people. Post 16 study ought to be a rigorous and arduous process and as such there need to be adequate opportunities for recreation and relaxation. One need only look at provision in the independent sector to see how this point is acknowledged in provision made.

5. Some supporting the abolition of the Education Maintenance Allowance implied that the money was in some way wasted. Little or no evidence was produced to substantiate such assertions. NAHT is concerned about the undertones of the deserving and undeserving poor that this carries.

6. Were the largely anecdotal evidence that some young people "wasted" their Educational Maintenance Allowance proved to be true, this would not be an argument in itself against the principle of supporting those from disadvantaged backgrounds. NAHT would have welcomed, for example, some form of voucher system being explored.

7. The impact of the removal of the Education Maintenance Allowance will have an impact beyond those losing their entitlement. Families will, if they have the resources, attempt to compensate for the shortfall. Spreading scarce family resources more thinly in this way will have a negative impact on the welfare of younger siblings, an impact that could include a detrimental effect upon their educational attainment and achievement. The notion of the cycle of poverty is strengthened if this proves to be the case.

8. It is very difficult at this stage to evaluate the potential impact of the extension of the Discretionary Learner Support Fund. NAHT members have, to date, little knowledge and even less experience of this measure given that is has, hitherto, been the preserve of Further Education. This means that, certainly in the short term, schools are operating in something of a void in terms of being able to offer appropriate information and guidance to prospective post 16 students. Thus is exacerbated by the impact of the contraction of the Connexions service in increasing parts of the country.

9. NAHT advocates, as a matter of urgency, that schools are provided with the appropriate information about the Discretionary Learner Support Fund.

10. It is easy to take the cynical interpretation and consider this matter in the context of the Raising of the Participation Age. Such a position would suggest that the change replaces the "carrot" of the Educational Maintenance Allowance with the "stick" of Raising of the Participation Age.

11. In considering the likely effectiveness of implementing the Discretionary Learner Support Fund, it is probably useful to re-visit the three objectives that underpinned the introduction of the Educational Maintenance Allowance. These were to raise participation rates in post-compulsory education, particularly among pupils from deprived social backgrounds; to improve retention rates in the post-16 age category and to raise attainment levels in further education. The question then becomes one of whether the new approach will be more effective in achieving these ends.

12. In theory, the Raising of the Participation Age will address the first issue. However, the impact on motivation and attitude is one that requires urgent consideration. Will it be a case of "unwillingly to school"? The extreme, "worst case scenario" would see schools having to deal with the manifestations of disaffection to a greater extent at post 16 level than has been the experience in the past.

13. Related to this is the question of provision. There are two aspects to this; one is the courses that will be available and the recommendations contained in the Wolf Review will be crucial in this respect. The second is the extent to which schools will be able to afford to provide a suitably broad and balanced curriculum in their sixth forms. This point pertains to the possible impact of the significant changes in the funding regime for school sixth forms. NAHT secondary members have expressed grave concerns about the viability of smaller and medium sized sixth forms. The obvious answer is for greater collaboration between schools and other

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institutions but two stumbling blocks appear. One is the removal of the obligation to engage in partnerships by the Coalition and the other is related to student support. Collaboration implies greater travel and one of the purposes of the Educational Maintenance Allowance was to provide assistance to students in this area.

14. The previous paragraph could be construed as digressing from the focus of the enquiry. However, the counter argument would be that much current government policy is not “joined up”.

15. A further factor making it difficult to evaluate the impact of the introduction of the Discretionary Learner Support Fund is the lack of information about how it will operate. NAHT would welcome further clarification of the statement that decisions regarding the new discretionary fund will be made locally, enabling schools, colleges and training providers to target support at those young people in greatest need. Our concerns are that different criteria will develop in different parts of the country making support and enhanced prospects of educational success somewhat of a lottery.

What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness?

16. NAHT is concerned about the fact that Raising of the Participation Age is not being given sufficient prominence given the fact that the first stage implementation is but two years away. This point was stressed in the evaluation of Phase 1 of the first stage of the trials. This, in retrospect, was probably a major reason why Diplomas failed to meet take up targets. The compulsory nature of the raising of the participation age should not be seen as justification for a lack of action in this respect.

17. We would welcome clarity on the enforcement process. The Coalition’s commitment to the initiative expressed in “The Importance of Teaching” is welcomed but the ambiguity of legislating to allow the enforcement process to be introduced at a later stage is disturbing. Does this mean that the legislation will follow at a later stage in the implementation process and following implementation?

18. There are key issues surrounding the enforcement process. A fair assumption would be that local authority attendance officers would be involved in this process. However, this raises questions about principle and capacity. The former relates to the fact that local authorities have limited powers and responsibilities for post-16 provision. The latter is a more practical concern. NAHT members report a diminution of attendance officer support as budgets come under increasing pressure and fear that this situation will worsen.

19. This worry is exacerbated by the fact that the attendance officer service’s remit will be extended to include Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges to a far greater extent than is the case currently, exacerbating fears about capacity.

20. The Raising of the Participation Age is a whole school issue in the sense that Information, Advice and Guidance practice need to reflect these important changes. This is one of the reasons why NAHT urges that consideration be given to allowing schools to have an additional training day, the timing to be appropriate to ensuring that there is adequate time to plan implementation.

21. NAHT welcomed the content of the evaluation of the Phase 1 trial published in July 2010. However, we note the significant changes that have occurred since that time and are concerned that the infrastructure that formerly existed has been and continues to be eroded. Two pressing examples of this may be cited.

22. The first is that of Connexions. The Phase 1 Trails evaluation stressed the important and valuable role played by the organisation. However, NAHT members inform us that the service has been, to use a term employed by a member, “decimated”. Information, Advice and Guidance is in a different place and this vital plank of support needs to be readily available throughout the country but in particular in the more disadvantaged areas where the tradition of “staying on” is less well embedded.

23. Allied to the above point is a similar story of cut backs to Youth Services in general. When the previous government published its Information, Advice and Guidance strategy document, “Quality, Choice and Aspiration” the Youth Service was identified as being an important component in the mix of provision.

24. The second example relates to the changing status of 14–19 Partnerships. The removal of the obligation to engage, again something that was in place during the life span of the Phase 1 Trials, further weakens the foundation upon which Raising of the Participation Age’s smooth implementation relied. NAHT members report significant regional variations. In some local authorities such arrangements have continued but this is not the case universally. The uncertain future of the Diploma will add to counter pressures.

25. Allied to this is the virtual disappearance of “14–19” as a concept on an official level. The great strength of this as an operational entity was the potential to identify pathways and the basis for progression. This is threatened, a trend exacerbated by the uncertainties about the shape and content of the curriculum in the future as we await the recommendations and implementation decisions flowing from the Wolf and Curriculum reviews.

26. The theme underpinning the points raised thus far is that of uncertainty. The shifting landscape makes it increasingly difficult for schools and local authorities to identify the preparations that need to be made. Other constituents of this uncertainty may be identified.

27. NAHT members have expressed concern about the future of such provision, particularly those with small to medium size sixth forms. There are two reasons for this.

28. The first is that the reduction in funding over the course of the current Comprehensive Spending Review period will lead to hard decisions having to be taken about the criteria for course viability. For example, to date a dip in uptake over one or two cohorts in a particular subject could be ridden on the basis of historical, medium term data. Reduced funding might well necessitate working within a shorter time frame.

29. The second, related issue is that reduced funding will make smaller sixth forms unviable. The problem, therefore, is that capacity will not be there to respond to the theoretical demand for increased provision.

30. The solution is for schools to be proactive and seek collaborative arrangements with other institutions. However, the weakening of partnerships and pressures on local authorities add complications to this approach.

What impact will raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour and alternative provision.

31. The somewhat pessimistic points raised in the previous section, were they to come to fruition, would be serious barriers to achieving the intended aims of the policy. NAHT wholeheartedly supports the aims but fears that the threats to many of the prerequisites for their being successfully achieved must be recognised and addressed as a matter of urgency.

32. Our members have particular concerns about the impact on attendance and behaviour. This point is being addressed out of sequence as problems in this area will seriously threaten the identified aims.

33. An observation was made in the first section that the Educational Maintenance Grant could be interpreted in both carrot and stick terms. There is the argument that “what you never had, you won’t miss” might apply in the sense that, unlike the contemporary cohort, the initial RPA cohorts will not have a benchmark. However, compulsion bears the risk of inducing resistance. Those who are disgruntled and on the margins of disgruntlement at the end of year 11 do not tend to radically transform their attitude between July and September.

34. The key to avoiding deepening disillusionment is the availability of courses that are perceived to be relevant and engaging. At this stage, again harking back to an earlier point, the “known unknown” engendered by the Curriculum and Wolf Reviews makes it difficult to state with any degree of confidence that provision will be so perceived and hence inculcating the desire to attend, cooperate and achieve.

35. There is a sentence in the Call for Evidence to the effect that the Education Committee’s brief does not extend to higher education. However, the factors influencing the successful implementation of raising the participation age are not all located within schools and colleges. Young people employ intrinsic and extrinsic criteria in evaluating the value of education and training. One of the inherent challenges of Information, Advice and Guidance provision is to recognise this and within it to appreciate that the balance of the intrinsic and extrinsic differs from student to student.

36. The last but one paragraph touched upon intrinsic values. The extrinsic include perceptions about where further study or training will lead and this will incorporate employment opportunities and progression to further or higher education. Recently released projections about the percentage of young people facing the likelihood of unemployment are gloomy. The related phenomenon of “displacement” has been identified in the following terms by the Prince’s Trust: “As thousands of unemployed graduates flood the jobs market, Britain’s most disadvantaged young people are being pushed to the back of the queue....”

37. NAHT’s “worst case scenario” is that schools will face an increased problem in dealing with poor attendance and the types of behaviour management issues not hitherto associated with post 16 students if the factors identified are not recognised and addressed.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

INTRODUCTION

1. CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) is the professional body for library and information specialists working in the United Kingdom. It has about 18,000 members, many of whom work in school libraries and the education sector and have had direct experience of providing library and information services for the 16–19 age group. They have contributed to this response on behalf of CILIP.

2. CILIP recently published a statement on the role and value of school libraries—*School Libraries: a Right* and so especially welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this new inquiry into raising the participation of 16–19 year olds in education and training. Our statement sets out the core entitlements that every child, school’s teaching team and wider school community should expect from their school library. We are including the statement as an appendix as in responding to this inquiry we have used it as an exemplar of good school library provision.

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3. Our response has also benefited by the report of the School Libraries Commission.³⁰ It concluded that school libraries were a vital but underused resource. If schools are to maximize potential and get value for money then a school library needs to be embedded in the teaching and learning culture of the school. The extended 16–19 provision offers the opportunity for this to happen allowing extra time for collaboration between librarian and teachers on new vocational courses. However, there will be a number of new demands and implications for school libraries following the extended participation of 16–19 year olds in education and training.

What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual rising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness

4. Many of the better school libraries already offer a number of services that can be extended and developed to include this group:

- Homework support clubs after school hours.
- The teaching of information literacy skills across the curriculum, embedded in subject research. Mentoring students with the aim of achieving independent lifelong learners who will become engaged citizens.
- Careers library and information.
- One to one support. One of the surprise findings in the recently published SLG research³¹ highlighted the overwhelming amount of pastoral support that is already happening within school libraries.
- Targeted resource provision including evaluating and selecting online resources such as subscription data bases and electronic (e-book) collections. Many school librarians have full or partial responsibility for the school's VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) and are involved with VLEs helping to provide 24/7 access to information and resources, and in promoting use of the library and its facilities.
- Brokering partnerships with external providers.

We would wish to see school librarians being enabled to do more of this type of work.

5. *Accommodation*—The physical space occupied by a school library within secondary schools varies greatly but this space will need to be large enough to accommodate the increase in footfall and use of resources the rising of the participation age to 18 years will create.

6. *Resources*—Most school libraries focus upon resources which support the academic curriculum. This will include online resources as well as hard copy. The proposed increase in vocational courses and training will have a big impact upon the variety and additional resources required by school libraries and the room to house these new collections.

7. *Learning styles*—The school library offers an alternative place for independent learning to flourish and embed itself within the learning culture of the school. The ability to learn independently should become a growing characteristic of this age group and will need to be accommodated by offering a range of resources, access to the school's IT equipment and a space to use personal mobile technology.

8. Apprenticeships may not coincide with the traditional school term necessitating longer opening hours or opening the school library during the school holidays. Different learning needs should be considered as older students may wish to study later in the evening.

9. *Motivation*—The challenge of having a potentially higher number of reluctant learners who will need to be motivated will be a key consideration for schools which the librarian can help with by providing flexible working arrangements for students, differentiated resources and expert advice. The removal of EMA at the same time as the proposed change could compound this rise in reluctant learners.

10. In providing a safe and secure learning environment which is different from a classroom, the library may help to bring out the best in pupils that lack motivation.

11. *Partnerships*—In our statement on school libraries (see appendix) we focus upon the importance of brokering partnerships between school libraries and other providers within a particular geographical area such as the Public Library sector but also with Further Education institutions. As new collaborations, consortia etc are established, some pupils will move between institutions. It will be vital to ensure a continual flow of information between all concerned to ensure that necessary resources are made available to all who need them. A school librarian has the expertise and knowledge to broker such partnerships.

12. However a one size fits all will not necessarily apply as the proximity and provision of FE institutions varies between areas. For some students easy movement between institutions will be possible but students in a more rural area could be further away from FE providers.

³⁰ School Library Commission, MLA and NLT, 2010. *School libraries: a plan for improvement*

³¹ Streatfield, Shaper, Rae-Scott, 2010. *School libraries in the UK: a worthwhile past—a difficult present, and a worthwhile future?* Information Management Associates

13. Consortium schools will need to ensure that the students have access to relevant library resources at the institution delivering the course.

WHAT THE SCHOOL LIBRARIAN CAN DO TO MAKE THIS INCREASED PARTICIPATION WORK

14. A proportion of students in the 16–19 age group will need continuing help with basic skills education and more one to one support. School libraries can play an important part in preparing students for Higher Education by providing experience of using the physical and online resources they will experience in HE. Basic skills training is something which adequately staffed school libraries already offer and this could be extended.

15. Most important is the role played by the school librarian in the teaching of information literacy skills. This role and the level of teaching will of necessity increase with the rising of the participation age to 19. CILIP defines Information literacy skills as knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner. In today's Web 2 environment information literacy skills are also about using and developing your creative skills. Information literacy skills are crucial if our younger generation are to become truly engaged digital citizens of the future.

16. One to one help with basic skills education and the teaching of information literacy skills could be extended in a cost effective way if school libraries were properly resourced. However, there has been a steady decline in budgets and school libraries are often seen as an expendable resource.

What Impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision

17. School libraries have a lot to offer in this development within the education sector. As already mentioned they are currently an underused resource and they need to become part of the overall development plan of a school to enable them to do the forward planning such a change will necessitate.

18. Research³² has shown that the presence of an effective school library can make a difference to academic achievement across the curriculum.

19. There is the potential of having an increased number of reluctant learners and school librarians will need to develop and employ all their motivational skills if this group of learners are to participate fully. As mentioned above school libraries have been found to have a good degree of success in engaging the more reluctant learner as the library offers a more informal space and personalised learning experience than that delivered in the classroom. On the positive side older students can be role models for younger students and there is therefore the potential of an enhanced learning experience for all. There are examples of mentoring schemes such as partnering older children with younger students who will then read together. Schemes such as these are very suited to a library environment and could be extended.

20. There are opportunities of resource sharing provided through closer partnership working between schools and the Public Library sector but this is dependent upon the level of provision provided by the local public library service. Recent reports of cuts to library resource budgets and the loss of professional posts will have an impact upon the type of resources and support they could potentially offer to this age group and their engagement with partnership working.

CONCLUSION

21. In the best cases school librarians are forward thinking and innovative practitioners with a wide variety of knowledge and skills which they can employ in order to motivate and engage all age groups. They offer the potential of providing for the broader learning needs of their users and if properly resourced the capacity to cater for a more individualised approach which will be even more important for the young adults in the 16–19 age group.

22. We trust these comments will prove useful to the work of the Education Committee. Please refer to the covering letter should you have any enquiries relating to this response.

25 March 2011

³² *School libraries work!* Research Foundation Paper. 3rd edition. Scholastic Library Publishing, 2008.
Barrett, L 2010. *Effective school libraries: evidence of impact on student achievement. The School Librarian*, 58 (3), pp136–139.

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Written evidence submitted by Transition Information Network and Skill

INTRODUCTION

The Transition Information Network (TIN) is an alliance of organisations and individuals who work together with a common aim: to improve the experience of disabled young people's transition to adulthood. TIN is a source of information and good practice for disabled young people, families and professionals. TIN is based at the Council for Disabled Children.

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities is a national charity that promotes opportunities to empower young people and adults with any kind of disability to realise their potential in further, continuing and higher education, training and employment throughout the UK.

Skill works by providing information and advice to individuals, promoting good practice and influencing policy in partnership with disabled people, service providers and policy makers. Skill is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

Our submission covers the following issues:

- The need to pay particular attention to participation of disabled young people.
- How the way in which needs of disabled learners are met differs between schools and college.
- Barriers to the development of local provision that meets the needs of disabled young people.
- Ensuring the national framework of qualifications is accessible to disabled young people.
- Educational Maintenance Allowance and threats other financial support crucial to the participation of disabled young people.

WHY THE NEEDS OF DISABLED YOUNG PEOPLE NEED PARTICULAR ATTENTION WITH REGARDS TO RAISING THE PARTICIPATION AGE

Evidence shows that disabled young people are around twice as likely to be Not in Education, Employment or Training as their non-disabled peers. The latest comparative figures for 16 to 18 year olds with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLD) is 12% compared to 6% for those without LLD.³³ These figures are drawn from local Connexions services' administrative data so will only take into account young people who are in contact with these services. Recent national estimates of the NEET rate are around 15% for 16–24 year olds so we could expect the actual rate of disabled young people who are NEET to be as high as 30%.

Disabled young people also experience poor outcomes compared to their peers beyond the age of 18. For example they are less likely to have experience of higher education by age 19³⁴ and aged 16 to 64 are less than half as likely to be employed.³⁵ If the raising of the participation age is implemented in a way that takes into account the needs of disabled young people and increases their participation rates there is significant potential for these longer term outcomes to be improved.

MEETING DISABLED YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING OUTSIDE SCHOOL

Adjustments and personalised support can be much harder to secure in an FE college than in a school, which presents significant barriers to the participation of disabled young people in education and training. Statements of Special Educational Needs, which are legal documents designed to secure the adjustments and support for children with learning difficulties to participate in learning at school, do not apply in the setting of local FE colleges or other providers. Learning Difficulty Assessments under section 139a for the Learning and Skills Act 2000 are carried out for most young people with statements of SEN leaving school, but the resulting report on their needs does not have the same legal force. The significance of this anomaly will only increase with the raising of the participation age, as for disabled young people who do not attend a school sixth form, their statement of special educational needs will cease to have effect before the age of the end of compulsory education and training.

Local authorities duties to secure appropriate education and training provision for young people aged 16–19 are extended up to the age of 25 with regards to young people subject to a learning difficulty assessment. This reflects the fact that it may take disabled young people longer than their peers to completed a similar amount of education or training due to periods of illness, delays in identifying appropriate provision or other barriers they may face.

Reforms need to ensure that disabled young people do not lose entitlements to adjustment and support to meet their education needs when the move into further education at the age of 16 and that provision can continue to be made up to the age of 25.

In addition, pastoral support may not be available to the same extent in FE colleges as in schools, for example, non-attendance is less likely to be followed up and barriers to participation less likely to be identified

³³ Connexions services data 2009 Disability Equality Indicator A13

³⁴ Youth Cohort Study (YCS) Cohort 11, Sweep 4 (19 year olds in England and Wales in 2003/04) Disability Equality Indicator A8

³⁵ Labour Force Survey 2010 Disability Equality Indicator B3

and addressed. **In light of the Raising of the Participation Age, FE colleges and other providers of post 16 education and training may need to be more proactive in supporting and maintaining attendance among disabled young people.**

ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE LOCAL PROVISION

A thorough Learning Difficulty Assessment report will often make the case that the only suitable provision for a young person is a placement with a particular independent specialist provider. The YPLA has finite resources and these placements can cost considerably more than local mainstream provision. Typically, then, only those young people who have parents who are able and willing to “work the system” and access to a Connexions personal advisor able to put together a watertight Learning Difficulty Assessment report will secure access to specialist provision.

Specialist provision can be many (hundreds of) miles away from a young person's home and, while the support they receive during the placement may be of a high quality, the geographical distance can present challenges. The young person may be isolated from their natural support networks and will have reduced opportunity to learn independent living skills in the context of their home town.

The lack of reliable data about participation of disabled young people means that it is hard to establish whether local authorities are fulfilling their duty to have regard to learning difficulties in securing enough suitable education for young people over compulsory school age.³⁶

The current funding mechanism for 16–19 education and training was announced by the secretary of state last summer with no accompanying equality impact assessment or public consultation. We are concerned that the centralised administration and influence of arrangements for previous academic years on learner placement and funding flows may be too restrictive. It does not appear to allow for the innovation and creative commissioning that are needed in order for local provision for disabled young people to be improved.

Statutory guidance issued by the YPLA in December 2010 makes clear that despite having responsibility for securing provision, local authorities do not have control over budgets. Funding for colleges and training providers is administered centrally based on lagged learner numbers ie providers are paid for the current academic year based on the number of learners placed there in the previous academic year.

If a local authority wanted to change the balance of funding across local providers to support better provision for disabled young people from one year to the next, they would only be able to do so with the agreement of all affected providers. This is unlikely to be achievable in most cases as any provider who would lose out, even if it was a result of consistently failing to meet the needs of disabled learners, could veto any plans for change.

If more young people individually chose an education or training provider as a result of improvements that would lead to their needs being better met, the provider would, in the first instance, have less money to spend per learner. Increased funding would be delayed by a year. This would clearly inhibit innovation and act as a barrier to the establishment of lower volume providers to meet low incidence needs as they would not have the financial capacity to provide education and training.

The funding guidance suggests the YPLA has some limited capacity to make additional funds available for new provision where a need can be demonstrated. The process for accessing this is unclear, however, so it will be difficult to encourage new providers into the market.

In preparation for raising of the participation age the funding mechanism for 16 to 19 education and training should be reviewed with regards to the needs of disabled learners. Constructive changes may involve making funding flows respond more quickly to learner choices or empowering local authorities to commission provision more creatively.

ACCESS TO COURSES AND QUALIFICATIONS

There are significant barriers to disabled young people accessing the type of courses that are undertaken by their peers. The latest figures for 16 year olds studying for a level 3 qualification are 39% for disabled young people compared to 50% for their non-disabled peers.³⁷ Attainment of these qualifications is also lower among disabled young people, with 38% attaining them by the age of 18 compared to 46% of non disabled young people.³⁸

The lower number of disabled young people studying for level 3 qualifications may be due to overly restrictive or generic entrance requirements. The figures set out in the paragraph above show that, as the disabled-non disabled gap is wider for 16 year olds studying at level 3 than for 18 year olds achieve the relevant qualification, disabled young people are more likely to succeed once accepted on to a course. Just 6% Young people with statements of SEN and around 15% of those with SEN but no statement achieve five good

³⁶ under Section 15ZA (3) (b) of the Education Act 1996

³⁷ Youth Cohort Study (YCS) Cohort 12, Sweep 1 (16 year olds in England and Wales 2003–04) Disability Equality Indicator A6

³⁸ Youth Cohort Study (YCS) Cohort 12, Sweep 3 (18 year olds in England and Wales in 2005–06) Disability Equality Indicator A7

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GCSEs or equivalent including English and Maths.³⁹ It is important to remember that these lower rates of attainment are likely in part to be due to a lack of appropriate adjustments and support to meet their educational needs up to the age of 16. Unjustified entrance requirements with regards to GCSE passes are liable to challenge under the Equality Act as they may be judged to constitute indirect discrimination. It will be important that FE providers are encouraged and supported to review entrance requirements with a view to meeting their duties under the Equality Act.

Work is currently underway to devise a framework for more flexible access to the apprenticeships offer. **This work should be built on to inform fairer entrance requirements for all post-16 learning options.**

The 14–19 Diploma was developed in part in order to offer a more flexible approach to learning and give more opportunities for experience of the world of work. Such features will be useful for many disabled young people who may have “spikey profiles” of interests and aptitudes and may find a sudden transition from academic to employment settings particularly challenging. It appears, however, that Diplomas do not offer a flexible enough framework for disabled young people to benefit, particularly in terms excessive focus being put on the development of a narrowly defined set of core skills. Furthermore, the Education Bill currently before Parliament will withdraw the requirement for Diplomas to be offered in every area. **In order to maximise the participation of and improve outcomes for disabled young people, the principle of offering more flexibility and work experience should continue to be pursued.**

EDUCATIONAL MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPATION

The decision to abolish Educational Maintenance Allowance without a preceding public consultation or published equality impact assessment. This is of particular concern, as disabled learners are more likely to access EMA than their peers. In 2009 49% of disabled learners were in receipt of EMA, 41% of which received the full £30 per week.⁴⁰

The impact of the withdrawal of EMA is likely to have a disproportionate effect on disabled recipients in terms of participation. Most disabled learners have additional costs to meet such as accessible and longer-distance transport to appropriate provision and courses taking longer to complete due stays in hospital or other barriers. While such costs may in the past have been partly met or mitigated through other funding streams, tightening social care and school transport budgets along with proposed welfare reforms means this will become less common.

The proposed withdrawal of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance for those in residential care will impact on disabled learners in specialist residential provision. The case study below gives an example of this.

JM has a 19 year old son. He has been disabled since birth with the Lesch Nyhan Disease condition. His condition means he is totally wheelchair dependant and relies on carers for all personal care, eating, activities, outings. As a result of the natural aging process her husband and herself are no longer able to care for him at home. He has been assessed as eligible for Continuing Health Care and requires two carers 24/7.

Being in receipt of mobility allowance, they are using this to fund a dedicated vehicle for his personal use, at the care home where he now lives. If this allowance is withdrawn they shall have to sell his vehicle.

He uses his vehicle to attend a F.E. College one day a week, to attend a work experience placement one day a week and his favourite activity—going round the shops. He is fully cognitively able—his vehicle provides his only opportunity to be, in some small way, independent.

In addition to these reforms, the government is proposing to replace DLA with a benefit on which they intend to spend 20% less money. It is unclear who this funding cut will affect, but we are concerned that it will impact on the support disabled young people need in order to participated in education and training.

Reform of financial support for participation and independence that could impact disabled learners should be properly assessed and reviewed. The requisite steps should be taken to ensure that there is not a negative impact on the participation of disabled young people in education and training.

25 March 2011

³⁹ Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2010b. *Statistical First Release, Key Stage 4 Attainment by Pupil Characteristics, in England 2008–09*. Statistical First Release 34/2009. Available at: http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000900/SFR34_2009Revised.pdf Accessed 18/08/10

⁴⁰ (Department for children, schools and families) 2009 Statistical Bulletin—“Youth Cohort Study & Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: The Activities of 17 year olds: England 2008”—B01/2009 http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000850/Bull01_2009textvfinal.pdf

Written evidence submitted by NASUWT

The NASUWT's submission sets out the Union's views on the key issues identified by the Committee in respect of proposals to abolish the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) scheme and arrangements to raise the statutory education and training participation age in England to 18 by 2015.

The NASUWT is the largest teachers' union in the UK, with over 270,000 serving teacher and school leader members.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Historically, rates of non-participation in education or training among 16–19 year olds in England have been well above those observed in comparable industrialised countries.
- Non-participation in education or training has a negative impact on the life chances of individual young people and inhibits their ability to make the fullest possible economic, cultural and civic contribution to the society and communities within which they live.
- The *Raising Expectations* strategy established by the previous administration put in place arrangements to raise the age at which young people would be required to access education and training to 18 by 2015, alongside broader sectoral reforms designed to encourage and sustain active participation in learning by all young people.
- The scope of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) scheme was widened as part of this strategy in order to ensure that no young people would be denied any aspect of their entitlement to full time education and training as a result of financial barriers to access.
- Early outcomes of the *Raising Expectations* strategy indicated that the approach had begun to increase participation rates.
- The abolition by the Coalition Government of EMA will serve to end the clear and nationally-applicable eligibility criteria for access to financial support for learners aged 16–19.
- The replacement Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF) will be significantly less well funded than EMA, reducing access to support for young people while its management by individual institutions will impact negatively on young people at risk of non-participation.
- Reforms to the qualifications framework, reductions in public expenditure in the 16–19 sector and the undermining of the ability of local authorities to support effective collaboration between learning institutions will undermine the capacity of the education and training system to continue to improve participation rates.
- Provisions in the Education Bill currently before Parliament to not implement powers to enforce employers to comply with their legal responsibility to support young people in their employment to access education and training will threaten to deny many young people their right to benefit from accredited learning.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the House of Commons Education Select Committee Inquiry into 16–19 participation in education and training. The Union notes that the principal areas of focus for the Committee's activities in this area centre on the decision of the Coalition Government to abolish the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) scheme and on the arrangements for raising the statutory education and training participation age in England to 18 by 2015 and the potential impact of doing so.

2. It should be recognised at the outset that Coalition Government policy in the 16–19 sector is being impacted upon significantly by unprecedented reductions in public expenditure. The announcement in the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) that the Coalition Government will reduce funding in real terms in the 16–19 sector⁴¹ during the period 2011–12 to 2014–15 will place at significant risk the ability of the post-16 education system to secure the highest possible rates of 16–19 participation in education and training through its ability to offer the widest possible range of engaging and relevant education and training experiences for learners and to support the most disadvantaged young people within the system. Cuts to local authority funding of 28% over the CSR period⁴² are also likely to impact on the availability and quality of support provided to young people at risk of leaving education and training post-16 given the extent to which historically local authorities have augmented levels of support for these activities from their general revenues through, for example, the provision of subsidised transport and childcare for younger parents.

3. The NASUWT's evidence sets out the Union's views on these critical issues and on the implications of key aspects of Coalition Government policy on the nature and extent of 16–19 participation. Initially, however, it is necessary to place examination of current policy into an appropriate context through consideration of the key features of the 16–19 participation strategy, put in place prior to the Coalition Government taking office, thereby permitting the comparative merits of both approaches to be evaluated effectively.

⁴¹ HM Treasury (2010), *Spending Review 2010*. London: TSO.

⁴² *ibid.*

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THE POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR 16–19 PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING INHERITED BY THE COALITION GOVERNMENT

4. The national-level policy framework designed to support and increase 16–19 participation rates in education and training prior to the change in administration in May 2010 was established principally by the provisions set out in the former Government's 2007 Green Paper, *Raising Expectations: staying in education and training post 16*.⁴³

5. A core aim of the *Raising Expectations* strategy was to address enduring concerns about the significantly higher rates of 16–19 non-participation evident in England in comparison with other industrialised countries.⁴⁴ These concerns were illustrated by the fact that in 2000, only three out of four 16–18 year olds in England were in education or training, a level significantly below the average participation rate for member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.⁴⁵ Evidence further suggests that relatively low 16–19 participation rates had been a key feature of the education and training system in England for much of the latter part of the 20th century.⁴⁶

6. The *Raising Expectations* strategy identified correctly the negative impact on the life chances of individual young people of non-participation in education and training, as well as the limitations this placed on their ability to make the fullest possible economic, cultural and civic contribution to the society and communities within which they live. To address these important concerns, the former Government put in place arrangements to raise the age at which young people would be required to access education and training to 18 by 2015. It should be recognised that this was not restricted to attendance at school or college but could involve participation in work-based training, including apprenticeships, or part-time education or training for young people in employment for more than 20 hours per week.

7. It was emphasised in the development of the *Raising Expectations* strategy that, given the intention to make participation mandatory, sufficient enforcement measures would need to be available to relevant authorities in order to secure participation. However, it is important to recognise that substantial provision was also made to avoid the need for enforcement through greater investment in the provision of support and care services for young people for whom meeting the requirements of the raised participation age might prove problematic. Further, the Education and Skills Act 2008, which gave statutory effect to these measures, granted local authorities significant powers of enforcement against employers in circumstances where they might fail to ensure that any young person in their employment had arrangements in place to receive education and training or where they might refuse to allow an employee adequate time off to access such provision.

8. However, it was recognised in the *Raising Expectations* strategy that enforcement provisions would be inadequate in themselves to ensure that all young people to whom the requirement to participate would apply gained access to effective, engaging and relevant learning experiences. To this end, the strategy incorporated a range of measures designed to support a vision of universal participation that met the current and future needs of learners and those of wider society. These strands of policy included progressing development of a 14–19 curriculum and qualifications framework that would ensure that all young people would be able to gain access to a programme of education and training tailored to their individual circumstances, interests and aspirations, a critical element of which was a planned increase in the number of available 16–19 apprenticeships between 2007 and 2013 of 60%.⁴⁷ These elements of the strategy were complemented by enhanced provision for access to independent Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services in order to allow young people to make informed choices based on a clear awareness of the available employment, education and training options open to them.

9. Alongside these provisions, the *Raising Expectations* strategy led to an expansion in the availability of direct financial support through EMA available to young people from families with relatively low incomes following the broader range of learning programmes that would be incorporated within the 16–19 education and training offer. By widening the scope of the EMA scheme, the intention of the strategy was to ensure that no young people would be denied any aspect of their entitlement to full time education and training as result of financial barriers to access.

10. While the key elements of the *Raising Expectations* strategy had been in place for an insufficient period of time to allow for a definitive evaluation of its effectiveness, it is clear that initial indications of progress in increasing 16–19 participation rates were encouraging. Official data confirms that by the end of 2009, 82.7% of 16–18 year olds were in education or training, the highest ever recorded participation rate, representing an increase in the measured 2008 participation rate of 3.1%.⁴⁸ It should be noted that these improvements were secured well in advance of implementation of the planned increase in the statutory participation age.

⁴³ Department for Education and Skills (DfES)(2007), *Raising expectations: staying in education and training post-16*, London: TSO.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ DfES (2002) *14–19: extending opportunities, raising standards*, London: TSO.

⁴⁶ Hayward, G Wilde, S and Williams, R (2008), *Engaging Youth Enquiry*, Oxford: Nuffield

⁴⁷ DfES (2007), *op. cit.*

⁴⁸ Department for Education (2010), "Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16–18 Year Olds in England", *Statistical First Release SFR 18/2010* (www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000938/sfr18-2010v2.pdf), retrieved on 16/2/11.

11. The package of measures described above makes clear that on taking office, the Coalition Government inherited a strategic and appropriately resourced approach to raising the 16–19 participation rate, located within a legislative framework that allowed for an appropriate balance to be struck between enforcement and support for learners, their families, providers and employers.

12. The NASUWT is clear that the decision of the Coalition Government to abolish EMA, its agenda for the organisation and funding of learning in the 14–19 sector and its proposed annulment of the enforcement powers described above, set out in the Education Bill currently before Parliament, will all have profoundly negative impacts on the ability of the education and training system in England to achieve the important objectives articulated in the *Raising Expectations* strategy. The implications of each of these critical policy areas are considered below.

ABOLITION OF THE EMA

13. The Coalition Government's CSR confirmed the abolition of EMA and its replacement by arrangements that will result in an overall reduction of financial support for learners of £574 million to £74 million per year.⁴⁹ As of January 2011, no new applications for EMA will be taken on, leaving approximately 300,000 students without EMA funding for the remainder of their courses beyond the current academic year. The replacement system for EMA, based on the current Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF), will serve to end the clear and nationally-applicable eligibility criteria for access to financial support for learners aged 16–19 and will instead introduce a significantly smaller system, managed by individual institutions with the power to allocate any available resources as they deem fit.

14. It is clear that these proposals will undermine work to raise participation rates across the 16–19 sector and will have profoundly negative consequences for many young people in terms of their ability to access and remain in high quality education and training. Analysis undertaken by researchers from the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) has established that the EMA scheme has increased 16–19 participation rates among recipients by between four and seven percentage points.⁵⁰ This reflects the findings of independent research commissioned by the former Department for Education and Skills (DfES) into the impact of the EMA pilots, which found comparable increases in post-16 participation rates.⁵¹

15. For many young people, it is important to recognise that EMA funding has worked to support their participation in education and training as a result of the financial assistance it has provided in terms of meeting costs associated with transport to learning settings and paying for vital learning materials, as well as encouraging them to take up full-time learning opportunities rather than enter employment through the guarantee of income eligibility for the EMA secured.

16. In justifying its decision to abolish EMA grants, the Coalition Government relied to a considerable extent on the findings of a study that claimed a significant “deadweight effect” on the basis that the majority of recipients of EMA surveyed in the study claimed that they would have remained in education and training if the financial support provided by EMA had not been available.⁵² However, notwithstanding concerns about the extent to which the sample used in this study was representative of the national 16–19 cohort of young people eligible for EMA, work undertaken by the IFS in this respect has demonstrated that the overall costs of EMA grants are more than outweighed by the benefits that would accrue from the higher wages that participants would earn as a result of their enhanced access to education and training.⁵³

17. It is clear that these benefits associated with EMA will not be maintained by its replacement with an enhanced DLSF. Notwithstanding the substantial reduction in funding for learner support confirmed by the Coalition Government, it is apparent that the arbitrary and variable nature and extent of support with which the DLSF will be associated will act to hinder access to learning, as was the case with the system of learner support the EMA scheme replaced⁵⁴ and which the proposed DLSF replicates in many key aspects. That the DLSF will represent an inadequate replacement for EMA is evident, for example, in relation to the risk that learners in need of support may not be able to access assistance if their local source of DLSF funding has allocated all of its currently available financing. The lack of any meaningful equality impact assessment of the decision to reduce overall funding levels and remove national eligibility criteria must also present profound grounds for concern in this regard.

18. In this context, it must be recognised that the loss of income withdrawal of the EMA scheme will generate for young people from families in or at risk of poverty will force many out of education and into paid employment, where this is available. The creation of circumstances within which young people would

⁴⁹ HM Treasury (2010), *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ Dearden, J, Emmerson, C Frayne, C and Meghir, C (2009), “Conditional Cash Payments and School Drop-out Rates”, *Journal of Human Resources*. 44: 827–857.

⁵¹ Middleton, C Perren, K Maguire, S Rennison, J, Battistin, E, Emmerson, C and Fitzsimmons, E (2005), *Evaluation of Education Maintenance Allowances Pilots: Young People Aged 16 to 19 Years Final Report of the Quantitative Evaluation*, London: DfES.

⁵² Spielhofer, T Golden, S Evans, K Marshall, H Mundi, E Pomati, M and Styles, B (2010), *Barriers to Participation in Education and Training*, London: Department for Education (DfE).

⁵³ Chowdry, H and Emmerson, C (2010), “An Efficient Maintenance Allowance?” *Institute for Fiscal Studies* (www.ifs.org.uk/publications/5370), retrieved on 16/2/11

⁵⁴ Social Exclusion Unit (1999), *Bridging the gap: new opportunities for 16–18 year olds not in education, employment or training*, London: HMSO

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experience pressure to act in this way would be wholly inconsistent with the fundamental principle of the *Raising Expectations* strategy that post-16 learning choices should be determined by the needs, interests and abilities of learners rather than their socio-economic circumstances. It should also be recognised that, as a result of provisions in the Education Bill, considered in more detail elsewhere in this evidence, there is a further risk that, even in paid employment, young people will be denied access to their education or training entitlement. Consequently, abolition of the EMA scheme by the Coalition Government will result in an intolerable and unnecessary increase in social segregation in the education and training system with only those young people with adequate financial means being able to access the widest possible range of learning opportunities.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF WIDER COALITION GOVERNMENT EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY FOR 16–19 PARTICIPATION RATES

19. In respect of broader education and training policy, it is clear that the direction of travel established by the Coalition Government will serve to undermine the important framework of support for increasing participation identified in the *Raising Expectations* strategy.

20. In terms of enhancing qualifications options for learners in the post-16 sector, the Union is particularly concerned by the approach to diplomas adopted by the Coalition Government. Among the key objectives of the diploma programme within the context of the former Government's 14–19 qualifications and curriculum strategy was the plan to ensure that meaningful steps were taken to tackle learner disaffection and disengagement from education, to secure greater parity of esteem between academic and vocational learning and to thereby allow the curriculum and qualifications system to contribute to work to raise the post-16 participation rate.

21. Achievement of these important aspirations rested to a significant extent on ensuring that all pupils in the 14–19 sector, regardless of the learning setting they happened to attend, would have access to a wide range of high-quality learning opportunities. The decision taken by the Government to discontinue development of the diplomas in science, humanities and modern foreign languages will therefore hinder the ability of the qualifications system to contribute to enhancing the 16–19 learning offer by reducing the range and variety of learning options available to young people. In addition, the decision to target these diplomas in particular suggests a direction of travel that seeks to vocationalise diplomas and thereby impact negatively on their ability to address the destructive and outmoded difference in relative status commonly ascribed to academic and vocational qualifications. This concerning trend in policy is also reflected in the Coalition Government's terms of reference for the ongoing Wolf Review of vocational education, within which the importance of ensuring greater parity of esteem between different education and training routes for increasing participation rates is given inadequate emphasis.

22. The commitment of the former Government to a universal entitlement for learners in the post-16 sector to access the widest possible range of learning options depended critically on securing effective collaboration between learning settings as it was recognised that no individual institution would be able to deliver all the diploma lines of learning in isolation. The decision by the Coalition Government to end the 14–19 Gateway process and the requirement on schools to form 14–19 partnerships signalled the end of this commitment. The learning needs of young people not in education or training were central to this element of previous strategies to achieve a higher 16–19 participation rate, progress towards which has been compromised fundamentally by this change of policy.

23. The NASUWT is clear that the dismantling of partnership working between schools and other learning institutions is being driven by an underlying ideological perspective that seeks to create a competitive quasi-market in education antithetical to the institutional collaboration upon which effective strategies to raise the 16–19 participation rate depend. These concerns are highlighted by the Coalition Government's abolition of the sub-regional groups of local authorities, established as a key element of the previous administration's 14–19 reform agenda and designed to secure coherence and the efficient use of finite public resources in the development and implementation of local collaborative models of learning provision. The role of local authorities, working together to extend post-16 learning offers, was regarded as central to effective strategies to secure integrated patterns of provision and to monitor the effectiveness of local approaches to raising participation rates.⁵⁵ The deliberate fracturing of the relationship between local authorities and schools, demonstrated particularly clearly by the Coalition Government's promotion of free schools and the expansion of the academies programme, also serves to undermine the ability of local authorities to develop purposeful strategies for engaging all 16–19 year olds in education and training.

PROVISIONS RELATED TO THE STATUTORY PARTICIPATION AGE IN THE EDUCATION BILL

24. The NASUWT notes with concern provisions set out in Clause 69 of the Education Bill currently before Parliament in terms of their potential impact on the enactment of aspects of the Education and Skills Act that relate to statutory arrangements for raising the participation age. While the effect of this clause, if passed into law, would be to make participation in a prescribed form of education or training until the age of 18 mandatory,

⁵⁵ DfES (2007), *op. cit.*

it would also amend the Education and Skills Act in such a way that the Secretary of State could delay indefinitely the introduction of powers to enforce compliance with this legal requirement.⁵⁶

25. Although the DfE has asserted that the purpose of this specific provision is to allow time for the education and training system to “develop ways to implement the change with minimal need for enforcement”,⁵⁷ the attempts made by representatives of the Coalition Government when in opposition to remove all references to enforcement in the Education and Skills Act⁵⁸ offer credible grounds to suggest that Ministers will not be minded to bring the enforcement powers into statutory effect at any stage.

26. This could have particularly significant implications for young people entering into employment at 16. Notwithstanding the ability of young people in these circumstances to secure suitable education or training, employers would be able simply to deny them time away from work to access this education or training, secure in the knowledge that there would be no means by which their statutory responsibilities in this regard might be enforced. This would allow unscrupulous employers to act with effective impunity and would render meaningless young people’s legal rights in this respect.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by The Foyer Federation

ABOUT THE FOYER FEDERATION

1. For over a decade, the Foyer Federation has helped turn young people’s experiences of disadvantage into solutions that support their transition into adult independence. We develop transformational programmes and campaigns that fill gaps in community services and inspire policy and decision makers to make a more effective investment in young people. The direct experience of vulnerable young people and those working with them helps inform our understanding of the barriers facing young people and develop new approaches to overcome them. Until now, our work has largely been channelled through integrated learning and accommodation centres, known as Foyers. Foyers now operate in over 130 urban and rural communities across the UK, providing safe, quality assured environments, where experts reconnect vulnerable young people with personal development opportunities.

1.1 Evidence from across our network shows that the needs of young people are becoming ever more complex; crime and anti-social behaviour, poor health and well-being, low educational achievement, fears of worklessness and declining social mobility are as much a concern for young people now as street homelessness was in the 1990s. The challenge this poses for vulnerable young people is made even more acute by the present recession and, we believe, this demands a broader range of interventions to provide fairer access to the skills, resources, and opportunities that all young people are entitled to. It also requires a fundamental shift in policies and institutions to recognise the different stages of social development that cut across traditional markers of age and identity.

1.2 At the heart of everything we do is a belief that young people will only achieve their full potential when there is a fair exchange between their responsibilities to contribute and engage and society’s obligation to tailor services to their needs. For Foyers, this often means picking up the threads of a young person’s education, developing their skills for independence and encouraging greater resilience, and often includes rebuilding relationships, overcoming mental health issues and developing stronger confidence and self-belief.

RESPONSE

What impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it

2. The essence of the Foyer service does not lie in the range of provisions but in the concept of conditionality. With conditionality, there is a “something for something” deal in which participation is paramount. It is the young person’s full participation in exchange for an integrated support package that helps to ensure a smooth transition from adolescence to independent adulthood. However, the extent to which a young person can fully engage in the “something for something” deal in order to achieve transformational outcomes is heavily dependent upon the enabling resources available, such as the Education Maintenance Allowance [EMA].

2.1 There are a number of factors that must be taken into account as the EMA has frequently proven a critical life line for most vulnerable young people. The most important factor would be that the EMA support provides a financial incentive to attend learning and helps achieve the positive outcomes that are very much needed in order to reduce the social exclusion rate and enhance social mobility.

⁵⁶ House of Commons Library (2011), “Education Bill 2011” *Research Paper 11/14* (www.parliament.uk/briefingpapers/commons/lib/research/rp2011/RP11-014.pdf), retrieved on 16/2/11.

⁵⁷ DfE (2010), *Schools White Paper Economic Impact Assessment* (<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/schools%20white%20paper%202010%20%20an%20economic%20impact%20assessment.pdf>), retrieved on 16/2/11.

⁵⁸ House of Commons Library (2011), *op. cit.*

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2.2 Case study from the UK Foyer Network 1: A young 17 year old residing at a YMCA in the North East is engaged in further education full time course. He is currently in receipt of £30 under the EMA which he is required to pay a weekly rent of £10.19, purchase food, electricity and pay for travelling expenses. Estranged from his family, the young person does not receive any other financial support and because he is under 18 years and studying full time, he is not entitled to claim Jobseekers Allowance nor Income Support.

2.3 Case Study from the UK Foyer Network 2: A 21 bed Foyer in the South East currently has 99% of their young people engaged in education, training and employment. Four current residents and one former resident furthered their aspirations by continuing to learn in higher education by attending university. One resident who had been involved in the criminal justice system since the age of 14 secured a youth volunteer placement through Oxfordshire County Council and is currently employed with the Foyer as a trainee Support Worker and a Project Worker elsewhere. The Foyer firmly believes that these young people would not have been able to achieve these positive outcomes without the support of the EMA provision.

2.4 Case Study from the UK Foyer Network 3: A Foyer in Yorkshire and Humberside provides an integrated support package for 26 young people, 13 of whom are current recipients of the EMA. Generally, young people living in the Foyer have £51 per week of which factors such as £10 rent contribution, £3 electricity, which leaves £38 for basics such as food, clothing, medicines, toiletries, cleaning products and sundries. The £30 EMA would generally cover the weekly £10 bus fare to college, supplies and food whilst in attendance at college. Providing an integrated support package involves Foyer staff focusing their efforts to help young people overcome their anger issues which can also act as a barrier to non participation in learning. So there is a high risk that young people who already lack the emotional resilience and face barriers to learning will not be committed to walk the 6 miles to attend college, should the EMA be withdrawn

2.5 One of our member housing associations who replied to our call for submissions states that it currently provides integrated supported lodgings for 90 young people throughout Hampshire including rural areas, and so the level of dependency on public transport is very high. Thus public transport is key for young people's entry, and ability to sustain, education enabling entry into employment and training thereafter.

2.6 It is important to recognise the impact that the withdrawal of the EMA provision will have on service providers. The housing association who responded to our call for case studies is quite clear that some of their supported lodgings will only provide an integrated support service for those young people who are actively doing something to help themselves. Therefore there is a high risk that this housing association may see a decline in host families offering supported lodgings, and hence have fewer options to offer young people. EMA support also provides a financial incentive to engage and re-engage vulnerable young people as part of a family intervention scheme. Once the young people are engaged, aspirations are increased which in turn helps smooth the transition into independent adulthood. They also expressed concern that the demand for supported lodgings will increase as a result of a rise in the number of young people being evicted from their family home as their living costs become a burden on families.

2.7 The aforementioned points clearly demonstrate the important role of the EMA support in that it provides the basic means for young people to achieve their aspirations. We can only reiterate the simple but crucial argument that the EMA provision does not only provide a financial incentive, but more importantly, young people are often dependent upon this provision to support themselves, particular for those under the age of 18 who are living in supported accommodation and not recipients of other benefit streams.

2.8 There are concerns around the practical implementation of the Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF) in that it may be offered as a loan and the learners living in Foyers already facing financial hardship would not be able to pay back a loan. This also raises the issue, particularly for vulnerable young people in supported accommodation, on whether they would have the confidence to make this application and to disclose their financial business as they may lack confidence to do so. The final point raised about Discretionary Learner Support is that the current application process means that payments are made in a lump sum, at a time some way into a learner's college course. This means that the funds are not available at the crucial time when it is needed (for example, at the start of the course). Young people who are estranged from their families do not tend to have access to the necessary financial credit to make such an arrangement viable.

2.9 In short, the Foyer Federation strongly urges the Government to reconsider the withdrawal of the EMA provision for the following reasons:

- It provides a financial incentive to those marginalised and disaffected learners to engage or re-engage in mainstream learning.
- It has a positive impact on learner self-esteem and motivation to achieve.
- It contributes towards travel costs for those living in rural areas which is a significant factor in improving learner retention and achievement contributes.
- It contributes towards essential living expenses for learners who are estranged from their families and living in supported accommodation.
- There is a risk of youth homelessness increasing as a result of the loss of income for households with 16–18 year old learners, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness

3. It is important for local authorities to take into consideration how the provision of learning for the 5, 10 or 15% of disengaged learners in any given area, for whom neither school nor the workplace will be a suitable environment for learning. Learning providers, particularly from the voluntary and community sector are well placed to provide innovative and personalised learning programmes for those who would otherwise be disengaged with mainstream learning provision. We would encourage local authorities to work in partnership with local providers, identifying both the needs of the local area and the level of resource and capacity building that would be required to ensure the successful delivery of the RPA offer for marginalised 16–18 year olds. It is crucial, therefore, for local authorities to open a dialogue with local providers and develop agreements on how the expertise and innovation of the learning providers is fully utilised in order to ensure transformational outcomes.

3.1 Local authorities must also take into account the existing barriers that face young people in accessing and retaining learning opportunities. Providers must identify what works best for particular groups as the formal setting of a classroom does not always ensure positive outcomes for everyone. Therefore it is important that the relationship between local authority, provider and commissioner is based on joint partnership working.

3.2 The Foyer Federation was a key partner in the Homeless Sector Pilot, a national project managed by the Learning Skills Council. The LSC had developed and delivered a “learning and skills” offer that met the needs of the homelessness sector. The Foyer Federation’s involvement ensured that the qualification, the “Learning Power Award” that was developed was also fit for purpose, for delivery in Foyers. The positive impact of such a programme is that Foyers, to this date continue to use the Award as the conduit for their learning and skills offer.

What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision

4. We would advocate for a “two way deal” between the provider and learner to ensure positive outcomes in that the learner has an opportunity to participate in the shaping of services. It would be extremely valuable for commissioners to take this into consideration when drawing up the specifications for raising the participation age provision which sits outside the mainstream of academic qualifications, diplomas and apprenticeships. The Foyer Federation has developed a large evidence base around what qualities and attributes “alternative provision” should have in order to be successful.

4.1 The following example demonstrates how raising the participation age through informal learning can help ensure positive outcomes.

4.2 The Foyer Federation developed an online informal learning programme, MyNav that helped empower young people with the digital skills to help navigate their transition through shared learning experiences. This initiative brings together new media technology and informal learning opportunities to deliver a personalised package of support to young people. With initial funding from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and expert support from the University of London, the Foyer Federation worked with Foyers across England to develop an online portal offering users tailored learning opportunities, a reflective social networking space, and an online personal learning plan. Among a pilot group of 200 young people, the portal recorded 145 active learners per day, generated 100 learning plans in which individuals tracked and achieved education and employment goals, enabled users to share experiences of disadvantage focused on learning from each other’s solutions, and provided an environment in which over 75% of users improved their emotional wellbeing through the development of positive social networks. One of the project ambassadors started to use MyNav on release from custody. After 9 years spent in and out of the justice system, he identified MyNav as the solution which helped him to “stay out of trouble and out of prison ... by encouraging me to record the good things I’m involved in”.

4.3 Young Person’s Case study: *“In the past I was at boarding school for children with behavioural problems; I was a bit of a rogue when I was younger! I have been in and out of prison from the age of 16. At 17 I was admitted to a mental health unit due to amphetamine and temazepam abuse. I became a parent at 19 and up until six months ago I had only had short periods of time out of prison. Since I have been at the Foyer I’ve received support, I have started to realise that I need to do something better with my life and grow up for my children and myself. My goals for the next year: make sure that I stay out of prison indefinitely, sort things out with my children and regain contact. I intend to do this by sticking to all my appointments, both court and social services, not getting involved in any fights, trouble or drug abuse. I am to do this by sorting out my education at the local college, attending probation, finishing my order and interacting positively.*

Positive activities help me to deal with different challenges, personalities and social situations where before I would have failed due to flying off the handle. By taking part in activities that inspire me I have found that I concentrate more on what I am doing and the activity rather than other people’s behaviour or negative distractions. This is very important to set a good example towards my children, social services and people who have no confidence in me to change my life. By sharing my experiences I hope that I can help other people to make positive steps to change their lives as I am trying to change my own”.

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APPENDIX 1

We have been asked to submit the following letter on behalf of managers of supported housing projects in Oxfordshire

We, the managers of supported housing projects for young people aged 16 to 25 in Oxfordshire, are writing to express our concern about the coalition governments' plans to scrap the EMA in April this year.

Our objective as providers of these services is to equip these young people for independent living. A key part of this is to ensure that the young people we support are able to achieve their potential by accessing relevant training to enable them to gain employment.

These young adults come to us from difficult backgrounds: some are looked after children others are estranged from their parents; many come with a history of drug and alcohol abuse; many suffer from mental health problems; many have been prosecuted for criminal offences; and many have been excluded from school.

We have seen first-hand how important EMA is for these people. Obviously, it helps them to meet the costs of independent living, but it also incentivizes them to take up (and commit to) further education and training—those who miss a class or training session forfeit their EMA for the week. We have found that this has greatly improved the commitment of our young people. Should EMA be cut we would be worried that this would have a negative impact on the number of residents who would be able to commit to further education and training.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies stated that the cost of EMA is “completely offset by its benefits”. This we would argue is especially true of the young people we support. The cost of EMA payment based on full attendance amounts to £960 per year. This seems a small price to pay to keep someone out of prison or out of hospital or off long term benefits.

Employment is already difficult to find in Oxfordshire and our young people are already severely disadvantaged and without further education and training their prospects of full time employment are very low.

Although rent and most of their service charges is met through housing benefit, young people in supported housing projects still have to either pay the ineligible service charge or their own utility bills (which can amount to up to £20 per week). Scrapping EMA would leave the worst off amongst them with just £31.85, giving them under £5.00 a day for food, toiletries, clothes, travel and socialising.

We understand that the government intends to replace EMA with something “better targeted” but they seem to have disregarded the anxiety that their failure to publish the details of these plans is causing the young people who will be badly affected by this change and the people who support them..

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Helen Roper

The response assumes that the requirement remains at a minimum of 280 GLH unless the young person has already achieved the level 3 threshold.

1. *What impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it.*

I am unable to comment.

2. *What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years, and what is their current state of readiness*

2.1 The increase in absolute numbers of young people in education and training will be relatively small as the raising of the participation age coincides in a dip in the population of 14–19 year olds. Providers are therefore well prepared to accommodate the additional students.

2.2 However, there is likely to be a significant change in the profile of young people “staying on”. The young people currently leaving education and training at 16 are generally working below level 2 and/or have become disengaged with school (and often therefore with learning). Providers will need a broad offer of engaging, vocational, level 1 and level 2 courses. They will also need the flexibility to deliver both full and part-time. It is likely that most new students would wish to take up training places rather than full time education. Colleges and private training providers have demonstrated the capacity to respond quickly to market demands.

2.3 In rural areas, school sixth forms provide much of the post-16 offer, the core of which often takes the form of “traditional” A level courses. Young people are faced with long journeys in order to access other types of education and training. Vulnerable and less committed students are less likely to travel to learn. To overcome this barrier to learning, schools will need to broaden their core offer, including the provision of part-time training and there will be a consequent impact on staffing requirements and other resources. (Including new

resources for CEIAG to raise awareness of the offers and progression routes available). Schools, because of their younger age groups, do not have the same flexibilities as other providers. Schools show very different levels of preparedness.

2.4 Local Authorities have an important role in raising awareness of the rise in participation age. There is a need for careers education, information, advice and guidance support in schools, particularly 11–16 schools. It will be vital to build upon the work of the September Guarantee to engage the wider group. There is a role for curriculum support and advice in ensuring that the pre-16 courses available offer the widest possible post-16 progression opportunities.

2.5 Local Authorities need to ensure that the changes are widely publicised to businesses. Local employers should have strong influence on the types and content of training available to 16–19 year olds. It is unclear if employers are fully aware of the proposed changes; some have made passing reference to “raising the school leaving age”.

3. *What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternate provision?*

3.1 It is likely that there will be a small increase in the number of young people achieving level 2 by the age of 19 but the projected profile of the additional young people in education and training suggests there would be little or no impact on level 3 achievement.

3.2 There will need to be a wider access to a vocational offer that recognises the skill sets required by local businesses even though the businesses are not “commissioning” the training

3.3 There is unlikely to be a significant rise in full time attendance but part-time attendance on training courses could rise.

3.4 It is difficult to predict an impact on behaviour; it is possible that it could worsen if disengaged young people were required to attend education or training, particularly if they had been looking to leave at 16. However, at present the Government has indicated that it is not prepared to enforce participation. Unhappy and potentially misbehaving young people could therefore “vote with their feet” so there would be no impact on delivery.

3.5 There will be a greater requirement for alternate provision i.e. more informal settings to accommodate young people who have become or at risk of becoming disengaged with formal education.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Platform 51

What impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it

1. As part of Platform 51’s education offer, we previously provided Entry to Employment (E2E) learning and now provide Foundation learning. We also prepare and support young women into college and work with girls in college to support them to remain in training. Young women we work with tell us that the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is essential to cover their basic expenses associated with staying on in education or training. For many it pays for transport costs to and from college and any placement they may be involved with. For others it covers books and other materials needed for their course. For those who have placements, EMA is used to buy necessary clothing. And for others, it provides money for food. A significant proportion of girls we work with in this age group currently qualify for EMA therefore the removal of this will inevitably negatively impact on other girls we work with.

2. *Platform 51 strongly opposes the removal of the EMA*

3. We know from our work with girls and women that EMA is and has been one of the main reasons why they access Foundation Learning in the first place and without it they would have opted to try and get paid employment rather than staying on in education.

4. Evidence from a survey by the University and College Union (UCU) showed that seven in ten students (70%) who receive EMA would drop out of college if it was withdrawn, and that nearly two-thirds (63%) do not get any help from their families to meet study costs.⁵⁹ Furthermore, evidence from the Institute for Fiscal Studies showed that EMA increases participation and pays for itself in the long run.⁶⁰

5. We recently conducted a survey with twenty young women in one of our centres situated in an area of multiple deprivation, who currently receive EMA. Of these, all 20 stated that they would not have been able

⁵⁹ - <http://www.ucu.org.uk/5208>

⁶⁰ “An efficient education maintenance allowance?”, Institute for Fiscal Studies, Haroon Chowdry and Carl Emmerson, December, 2010, <http://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/5370>

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to attend college without it and that if they did not continue to receive any financial support they would have to drop out.

6. These young women felt strongly that removal of EMA would prevent girls and young women from gaining professional qualifications and negatively impact on women's equality in employment in the longer term. They also felt that supporting girls and young women to stay in education and training contributed to increased self-esteem and would help reduce rates of teenage pregnancy

7. According to evidence from the 157 Group of large colleges, despite coming from the poorest families and in some cases having low level qualifications, EMA students miss fewer classes and are more likely to stay in education than students from higher income families. Retention rates of those on EMA are very high.⁶¹

8. In our view, EMA also encourages skills necessary for the workplace such as punctuality, meeting educational targets and displaying professional behaviour.

9. *Discretionary Learner Support*

10. Platform 51 has concerns about the Discretionary Learner Support. We are particularly concerned that the amount available to young people is likely to be significantly reduced.

11. Platform 51 believes that any enhanced Discretionary Learner Support fund must ensure that all young people have the basic requirements to allow them to learn and stay in education or training.

12. The Discretionary Learner Support fund must ensure that all barriers to learning are taken into account. For example, transport costs (taking into account differences in rural areas and the need for additional transport costs if students are on placements); resources and materials; and adequate clothing.

13. The Government must ensure that information about the Discretionary Learner Support fund reaches all communities. Young people who need support should never miss out due to lack of information or knowledge.

14. The Government must ensure that information about the Discretionary Learner Support fund is available from an early stage. Young people need to know well before enrolling on a course what support is available so they are able to make informed choices.

15. It is essential that the Discretionary Learner Support fund is never used as a way to "cherry-pick" young people into education. This could leave those with more difficult past histories unable to afford to remain in education or training.

16. Allocations of the Discretionary Learner Support fund must be in the hands of the providers well before enrolment day to ensure that young people who will be given financial support do not encounter hardship in any intervening period.

17. The Discretionary Learner Support fund should provide some form of income directly to young people directly as this empowers them and encourages them to learn independent life skills by managing their money.

18. The Discretionary Learner Support fund should ensure that young people facing the biggest barriers to participation are supported, including those living independently, those who have few or no qualifications, those on the lowest incomes, looked after young people and young parents.

19. *What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision*

20. Platform 51 supports the raising of the participation age as it has the potential to support young women to achieve. However, this in itself will not automatically increase achievement. For many girls and women we work with formal education did not work for them and they disengaged at an early age. It is therefore essential that personalised support is available to young people from an early age which recognises the reasons why and how they disengage. Furthermore, our work with girls and young women shows us that girls and boys disengage from formal education for different reasons and we believe that there needs to be an explicit gender analysis of young people's disengagement from formal education.

21. We believe that there needs to be greater investment in alternative provision to mainstream education such as that provided by organisations such as Platform 51 and that this needs to be a core part of the plans to raise the participation age. We provide alternative education and have experience of working with the most disengaged through identifying and addressing barriers to learning.

22. High quality information, advice and guidance is essential to the success of raising the participation age. Girls and women we work with often tell us that they either did not receive any careers advice or that if they did, it was unhelpful or steered them towards traditionally "female" pathways such as childcare or hairdressing. Young people need to be able to make informed choices about the paths they take. If they take a pathway which is not right for them without the support to identify what is right, the likelihood of disengagement will increase.

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⁶¹ <http://www.157group.co.uk/news/news/157-group-research-features-in-tes-fe-focus-ema-keeps-recipients-in-education-for-longer>

Written evidence submitted by Private Equity Foundation

1. The Private Equity Foundation (PEF) is pleased to provide evidence to the Select Committee as part of its inquiry into the participation of 16–19 years olds in education and training. The Private Equity Foundation is a leading venture philanthropy fund that works with carefully selected charities to support disadvantaged children and empower young people to reach their full potential.⁶²

2. The Foundation's mission is to reduce the number of young people who become NEET (not in education, employment or training). In this tough fiscal climate, the role of philanthropy in supporting young people will be all the more important. Over the last four years, the Private Equity Foundation has raised £20 million and supported 17 interventions with time and money donations from the Private Equity Community. To help us effectively understand what works more widely, the Private Equity Foundation also undertakes research with its current partners—the Work Foundation, Demos, and New Philanthropy Capital. Given rising levels of youth unemployment and young people classified as NEET, our commitment is to use philanthropy to create lasting impact so all young people reach their full potential and continue participating in education and training.

3. The Private Equity Foundation will shortly publish two key papers—a publication with Demos entitled the “Forgotten Half” and the “NEET Blueprint”. Detailed information about the latter is given in this submission. Once the published documents are available they will be sent to the Committee.

CONTEXT: A JOINED UP APPROACH ON PARTICIPATION IS VITAL

4. The Private Equity Foundation in partnership with Demos⁶³ recently outlined future youth unemployment projections. Demos estimates a youth unemployment level of 20% becoming the new norm with the number of unemployed youngsters reaching 1.2 million over the next five years. Given these figures, the importance of maximising the opportunity created by the Raising the Participation Age is critical if we are to avoid speaking of this generation one day as the lost generation.⁶⁴

5. To support young people in this tough economic climate, the challenge is to find education and training that creates pathways to sustainable employment. To achieve this, Government must take a joined up approach. Action early on in the school years to prevent young people not participating at 16–19 must be taken and focus maintained on ensuring the education offer at 16–19 is compelling to young people through progression routes into long-term employment. At present, there is a wide variety of provision but funding for youth services, to support participation in particular, is reducing dramatically and previously ring fenced budgets are being removed. Therefore support for the additional services that many disengaged young people require is reducing, just as the need from young people is growing.

6. In addition to blending practical third sector experience through the charities it supports with a rigorous research programme, the Private Equity Foundation has recently undertaken detailed analysis in Shoreditch as well as wider work into the systemic change that is needed across the public, private and voluntary sector to increase participation. This submission focuses in on these two areas in detail as it is of specific interest to the Committee's inquiry.

SHOREDITCH: “THE BIG WIDE WORLD CAN BE TOO BIG A TRANSITION FOR A LOT OF VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE”

7. Sixty providers of services, schools and local authority education leads alongside other youth experts were interviewed in Shoreditch last summer. A number of important lessons were learnt and innovative approaches uncovered, which the Private Equity Foundation is in the process of taking forward.

8. It was evident that creating links to the world of work and creating a strong range of worthwhile education and training opportunities is extremely important. Many young people are entirely disconnected from the world of work. For example, the Place2Be, one of our portfolio charities, surveyed 360 children in a primary school and found that only 12 knew someone who worked. The forthcoming Demos/Private Equity Foundation report emphasises that many training courses (such as NVQ 1 and 2), designed specifically to help young people connect to the world of work, in fact have no wage return and therefore hold limited value. For those at risk of not participating, it is vital that they are advised towards and participate in courses that support them to learn skills recognised and matched to the needs of the labour market.

9. Therefore, to keep these young people on track, continuous support running alongside excellent interventions is critical. In Shoreditch all the sixty interviews highlighted there are numerous courses for young people to undertake, but as young people move through these interventions, many fall into the cracks between these interventions.

⁶² The Private Equity Foundation has developed a model of engaged philanthropy. Since its creation in 2006, PEF has secured the backing of over 70 private equity firms and their advisers, including banks, law firms, accountancy firms, consultants and search firms. The portfolio of charities it supports includes Volunteer Reading Help, Community Links, The Place2Be, NSPCC, Women for Women International, Leap Confronting Conflict, IntoUniversity, Fairbridge, School-Home Support, Skill Force, Tomorrows People, Every Child a Chance Trust, Vital Regeneration, Hamburger Hauptschulmodell, ProjektFabrik, SchlaU and City Year

⁶³ This Demos/Private Equity Foundation publication—“The Forgotten Half” by Julia Margo, Matt Grist and Jonathan Birdwell will be available shortly

⁶⁴ OECD

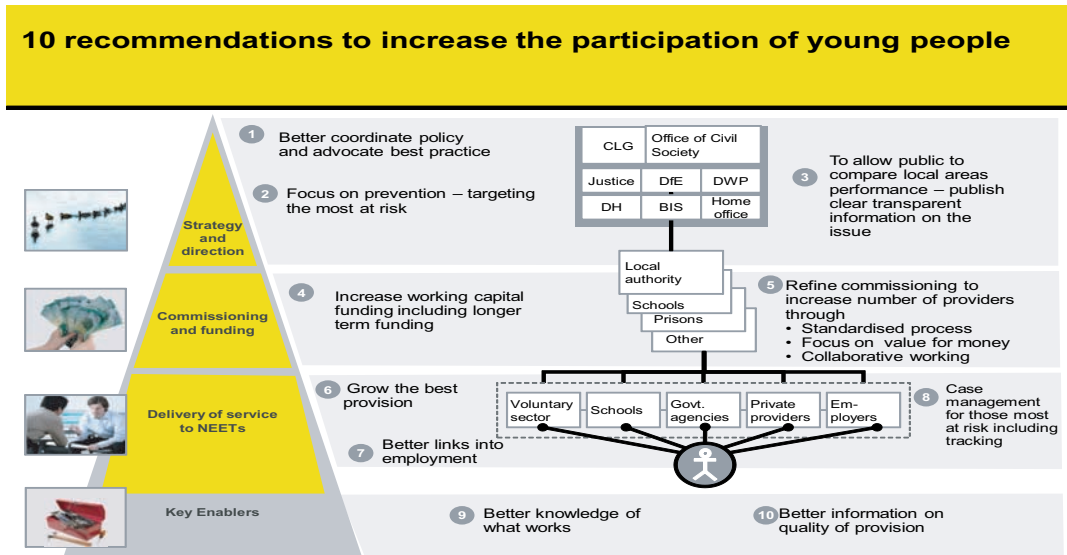
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10. As part of understanding what might work in Shoreditch, PEF considered lessons from its grant making abroad. For example, in Germany, there are a number of highly effective models to help young people participate in education and training that then link to employment. The Hamburger Haupschulmodell is very effective with progression routes from schools to apprenticeships rising from 7% to 19%. This is a result of greater links with employers at school. The Big Brother, Big Sister mentoring provision currently also running in Germany links employers with children early on as well.

11. In Shoreditch, Tower Hamlets have undertaken a pilot focused on introducing Advanced Skills Advisers into schools. Since looking in detail at this intervention and comparing our knowledge from Germany, the Private Equity Foundation believes that this Tower Hamlets’ pilot has huge potential to join up support for young people in Shoreditch. To develop this work further, the Private Equity Foundation has created a working group and steering group, including Sir Alasdair MacDonald, Headteacher of Morpeth School, Islington and Hackney local authorities, schools alongside other stakeholders. The Private Equity Foundation is happy to provide further details if the Committee is interested in our work in this area.

WIDER SYSTEM CHANGE: “ALL TOO OFTEN IT IS NOBODY’S PRIORITY”

Exhibit 1: a framework to coordinate action across the delivery system



12. Given the fiscal constraints, funding cuts and the importance of providing value for money at this time, a fresh cross-departmental approach on participation is needed. The Private Equity Foundation has undertaken detailed consultation, including over fifty interviews and a literature review of thirty recent relevant publications. From this research, the above framework (Exhibit 1) was created to help clarify how greater coordination from the full range of people working to support young people participate can be achieved. It creates actions for policy makers, local authorities, commissioners, voluntary organisations and front line workers. Within the system there are four key levels where actions are needed with recommendations at each level. Exhibit 2 overleaf explains this framework in further detail.

Exhibit 2: Explaining this framework to coordinate action across the delivery system

	<i>Context</i>	<i>Recommendation to</i>
Strategy and Direction	Leadership is vital if we are to prevent youth disengagement. Transparency plays an important role in shining a light on what works. Objective comparison of performance and incentives that encourage each local authority to drive up performance to the level of the best should be a focus.	1. Better coordinate policy and advocate best practice 2. Focus on prevention—targeting most at risk 3. Allow public to compare local performance—publish clear transparent information on the issue

	<i>Context</i>	<i>Recommendation to</i>
I. II. Better commissioning and funding	Commissioning all too often acts as a barrier rather than a gateway. Driven by cost and cumbersome procedures rather than value and a focus on what works, it does not reflect local needs, varies across different local authorities and discourages a wide range of service providers. A broader range of long-term, rather than short term, funding instruments would help address some of these problems. The Private Equity Foundation is working to understand how philanthropy has a strong role to play in securing longer-term finance for the commissioning of proven services (eg social investment bonds).	4. Increase working capital funding including longer term funding 5. Refine commissioning to increase number of provider through — Standardised process — Focus on value for money — Collaborative working
III. IV. Delivery of NEET services	For those at risk of not participating, a case management approach helps young people navigate through the different services and courses and find the coordinated support they need, particularly during the challenging school to work transition Such a pathway would help provide a clear bridge for young people in their final years in school and help them to participate in training and progress into sustainable employment. Tracking the progress of at risk students and supporting them up to 12 months after they have begun a course or employment should be more widespread. Early on in school, it is also important that young people have the support of a qualifications and curriculum framework that better prepares young people for the world of work and links pupils at risk of not participating with employers. For example high quality work experience and more routes into employment, such as, pre—apprenticeships and apprenticeships should be used.	6. Grow the best provision 7. Better links to employment 8. Case management for those most at risk including tracking
Key enablers	V. VI. Information is vital to oil the whole system. There is no widely accepted system of quality assurance transparent measures of performance and no single store of best practice examples on improving participation. VII. VIII. Establishing an anonymous database of local authority interventions (as per NICE in the healthcare sector) and standard guidelines on what data local authorities should track would encourage the analysis and dissemination of best practice.	9. Better knowledge of what works 10. Better information on quality of provision

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Written evidence submitted by Campaign to save the EMA

The campaign to save the education maintenance allowance represents millions of young people, students and education professionals across the country. The campaign includes the National Union of Students (NUS), the University and College Unison (UCU), Unison, the National Union of Teachers (NUT), the GMB, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), NASUWT and the Save EMA campaign.

What impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people

The campaign to save the EMA has spoken to thousands of young people, students, teachers and lecturers over the last few months. Each young person who has taken part in the campaign has been passionate about protecting the EMA. Many of them will have submitted their own evidence to the inquiry.

The welfare aspect of EMA is very important. This campaign's experience is that often EMA is used to help young people eat lunch when out at college, sixth form or training. It is not a healthy situation for young people to skip meals in order to study and this can also impact on achievement.

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Some themes around the EMA and access to education were frequently raised during the campaign:

1. EMA has improved student motivation, punctuality and attendance:
 - (a) Young people who receive EMA do not get it without meeting the conditions of their learner agreement. They must attend, be punctual and behave well in order to receive their payment. EMA in this instance encourages young people to be responsible for their own actions and lets them know that if they work hard and need help, that help will be forthcoming.
 - (b) Students and teachers fear that the abolition of EMA will have a negative impact on student retention and discourage students from enrolling in the first instance.
2. Parents/carers will not be able to replace the lost funding:

Students who depend on the EMA do not have families that can easily replace the lost income. Some families have more than one child in further or higher education and just could not afford to fill the funding gap. On more than one occasion the campaign to save EMA has heard from young people who contribute some of their EMA to the running of their household.
3. Travel costs are a major concern:

A majority of young people spend their EMA on travelling to and from their place of study. This is especially so in rural and semi-rural areas where travel over large distances is required for young people to access education. Local authority cuts mean an end to many young people's transport subsidies; before this cut many young people incurred costs for travel that were greater than the EMA awarded to them on a weekly basis.
4. Course equipment can be expensive:

Young people, often on vocational courses, struggle to pay for essentials for their courses. During the course of the campaign we heard from catering students who need to buy specific clothing and knives just to access their courses; dance and performing arts students who need specific footwear; construction students who need footwear to be allowed on site; maths and science students who need scientific calculators and electrical installation students who need specific tools and clothing, and the list goes on.
5. EMAs give young people a sense of financial independence:
 - (a) Young people enjoy having a level of financial independence and being able to pay their own bus fare without having to rely on their parents/carers. A number of young people we have spoken to would feel guilty asking their parents to support them knowing that family income is tight.
 - (b) For young people who have been in the social care system, this financial independence is often the first chance they have had to manage a budget of their own and to be awarded money for their own actions, not via their carers from social services.
6. Young people are determined to stay in education but would have to make sacrifices and tough choices without EMA:

The current generation of young people have been told time and time again that education is the way to better themselves and society. Even though it would cause many of them serious financial hardship and many would go without food while at college if they didn't have their EMA, they place a high importance on education and would do their best to struggle through. For many young people it feels like that determination is used against them when the fact that many would try to stay on in education despite hardship is described as "deadweight". Despite this determination, we have heard from many young people that without EMA, they would be forced to drop out.
7. Many young people would not have started their course of study without EMA:

Without EMA, the financial pressure on some young people would simply have been too much to overcome. In research conducted by UCU and the Association of College (AoC) around 40% of young people surveyed, in the thirty colleges and sixth forms with the highest proportion of EMA recipients across the country, said they would not have started their course without EMA.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Fern-Chantele Carter

What impact the EMA has had on participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will the DLSF be in replacing it

1. There is a need to ensure the colleges have someone to target the students most in need—not necessarily those in the most disadvantaged, as often there is a lot of help, and finance in place to help these students. There are mid-line students in severe difficulties—due to many issues—who currently do not qualify for the EMA—but do need the help.
2. We have this year been allocating Hardship fund grants of £30 as and when required for students who need the help—these students gave in receipts for what was required—used appropriately, and ensured the students were using the EMA for college issues—trips/books/equipment

3. It was also unbalanced FT was a student doing 12 hours over two or three days in the week, yet some students were doing 25+ hours a week, over five days this is an unfair system.

4. I think that tokens, or a similar arrangement to our hardship fund will be a far more useful, and appropriate arrangement, and offer the students a fairer way to share the funds.

5. The EMA was a good motivator, as they knew if they turned up, they would receive their financial help—however this did not mean they valued the experience or participated when there. Often they can be disruptive to others in the class, as the “free money” was seen as just that, and the classes as a social network, rather than educational experience.

6. If a student misses a class, and as such loses their EMA for that week—this can mean they cannot attend the following week—or find it difficult, and as such lose their EMA again—which perpetuates the problem, and causes drop-out rates, not because of any reason for the student. If the college had the ability to top up, and use the funds in a discretionary way this would cancel out these problems, and ensure those who want to learn can, and there are no travel excuses for attendance.

7. In London 16–18 get free travel anyway, if they are doing a fulltime course—which is 12 hours for 14 weeks (as a minimum)—and can travel by bus—so why the additional £30—simply for equipment?—this is not used for the purposes stated by many students. However there are a number of students who live outside the borough and attend our college—this means expensive travel—but a necessary expense for them to achieve education due to issues within their borough, or at the FE colleges/options in their borough.

8. The issue of £30.810 joint income per year—raises many issues (similar in my days of University and the grant system). This means many students because their parents are divorced—it does not take into account parental contributions from the divorced partner—or any other member within the household. This skews the eligibility criteria for the EMA.

9. Many want to do one or two retakes—and because this did not give them enough hours to be eligible for EMA, so they enrolled for something to make up the hours—had no interest in it, and as such did not put in the effort, messed around—and do not achieve—skewing colleges success rates.

10. Colleges, attendance and participation are different—also these do not count, it is success criteria which count—so, keeping youngsters in education in spurious courses, which hold no interest for them, and as such are not engaged, mean the students do not succeed, or achieve, this in turn perpetuates the NEET mindset of these youngsters. Tutors comment on the disruptive and detrimental mindset of some youngsters who are only on the course for EMA from those who genuinely want to learn—we almost look at segregation.

11. We added a PSD class for the students who needed hours—and they found this rewarding, and enjoyed it, as it meant another achievement for them—indeed over the year—they decided to change from an award to a certificate—making it a bigger amount of work—however they enjoyed achieving it.

12. Colleges need to ensure they have someone to target the students most in need—not simply by paperwork—this could be a Pastoral tutor, who knows all the students and their needs—not a computer system as with EMA.

13. It is very important to have a fund for students to access—however I feel that in the form of vouchers—or top-ups, or by return of receipt/ buying of tickets by the college/buying of equipment by the college, managed by the learning provider is a much more sensible remit—and will work better for those students it is supposed to be there for—the most needy.

14. Each college can measure what each student needs, and what for, it can act as a good motivator where needed, and help students with difficulties where needed.

- What preparations are necessary, for providers and Local Authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years old, and what is their current state of readiness.
- What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision.

This is a good idea—however not necessarily the best idea to keep them in a school situation—the FE colleges could really come into their own and take a vast number of students on to courses much more appropriate than staying in a school environment, and the subjects offered at school. If this occurs—which I do not think it will, as schools once have the students and the students’ budget, will keep as much as possible—even when at the detriment of the student—this is happening now. Unless a school has severe difficulties engaging a young learner, they tend to keep them and not release them or the monies allocate to them to other colleges—for more vocational courses, which may be much more appropriate for the student, and also set them up for their future in a more appropriate way.

Ev w90 Education Committee: Evidence**Written evidence submitted by Peterborough City Council Local Authority 8–19 Service****PETERBOROUGH DATA**

1. Data available from the Young Peoples Learning Agency shows that Peterborough Local Authority residents appear to have a greater need of learner support than other geographical areas. Some of this data demonstrating this is discussed below. Particularly the take up of EMA up to 18 demonstrates removal of EMA will have a more substantial impact on Peterborough RPA than other areas

- (a) EMA take up is higher in Peterborough than the average East of England region and nationally—38% compared to 26%.
- (b) Peterborough had more growth in EMA claimants between 2009–10 to 2010–11 compared to regionally and nationally—12% compared to 9%.
- (c) More growth in EMA take up for young people in full time education—15% compared to 10%.
- (d) Much higher EMA take up at 16, 17 and 18—19% at 18 (421 youths) compared to 11% regionally and 14% nationally. 41% take up (903 youths) at 17 compared to 29% and 33% regionally and nationally. 36% take up at 16 (830 youths) compared to 26% and 30% regionally and nationally.

2. The YPLA Strategic Analysis Report for 2010 shows Peterborough has EMA stoppage rate of 25%, with five of the 17 Providers having a stoppage rate above 15%, indicating that more young people who apply for EMA are prevented from claiming compared to those in other areas, as a result of not meeting the eligibility criteria. This backs up paragraph 11.

3. The YPLA Raising the Participation Age Report for 2010 shows:

- (a) In 2007 16 year old participation was 87%, ranking us seventh out of ten within our closest statistical neighbours
- (b) In 2007, 17 year old participation was 73%, ranking us tenth out of ten within our closest statistical neighbours. LA Maintained schools significantly accounted for the largest 17 year old drop out, the complete opposite to local Colleges. This backs up paragraph 30, 31 and point e below.
- (c) Peterborough is on track to meet the 2010–11 target of 97% participation for 16 year olds
- (d) Peterborough needs to increase participation of 16 year olds by 13% to meet the 2013 participation target for 17 year olds, although due to the population decline, this doesn't equate to an increase in volumes. It is estimated that there will be 200 less 16 year olds in Peterborough in 2013 than there were in 2008.
- (e) Peterborough had a high drop out rate of 13% between 16 and 17 year olds (2006 Y12 and 2007 Y13). For students attending LA maintained schools, the drop out rate was 18%. This is an area of continued focus for us, particularly in regard to A levels in the schools sector where drop out is highest.

Q1: What impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it

What impact has EMA had on participation, achievement, and welfare of young people?

4. As a Local Authority with a very high take up of EMA (paragraphs 1 and 2), we expect the impact of the cessation of EMA on participation to be heavy.

5. Learner Support funding has a big impact on participation for those students who use the funding predominantly for travel to school/college costs that can not or are not provided by any other means.

6. The perception of our providers is that EMA was particularly effective when there was a bonus payment for young people staying on to a second year of education.

7. It is difficult to predict the precise impact of EMA but intelligence from providers who know their cohorts reveals those who will be most affected are those on Foundation Learning (FL) programmes or the sustained not in education, training or employment (NEET) group.

8. When the entitlement for EMA was removed following the demise of the Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes, the predecessor of FL, providers reported changes in young people's patterns of engagement and a great deal more difficulty in recruiting new learners to Foundation Learning programmes.

9. Learners that have been out of learning for some time often require financial support and encouragement to re-enter a place of learning, and EMA certainly provided that opportunity.

10. Due to its high EMA take up levels, this LA expects to see a significant drop in participation when EMA ceases, which could render some post 16 providers and schools unviable. Smaller providers are put more at risk by such changes in learner numbers. In reality many other factors will impact on participation and it is impossible to assess the impact of the loss of EMA as a single factor.

11. However, one positive aspect of the removal of EMA means we are no longer artificially trying to construct provision that meets EMA criteria. Our most vulnerable learners often require flexible, short or small

programmes to entice them in to learning. Only after their confidence grows will they commit to 12 hours a week or a programme spread over a number of weeks. EMA was often a barrier to being truly flexible to meet learner needs, as we had to try to get young people to attend larger programmes that did not meet their needs. EMA in these cases could have been perceived as a barrier to participation, as learners refused to or could not afford to attend programmes that did not qualify them for this support. See paragraph 2.

How effective will the Discretionary Learner Support Fund be in replacing EMA?

12. The shift to Discretionary Learner Support (DLS) means young people must have made the commitment to learning and be registered with a provider. The funds providers receive will enable them to support learners but they will be targeted at removing barriers rather than providing a financial incentive to participate. The main challenge here is that we are unclear how DLS will be allocated and targeted to support the most disadvantaged. We are also unclear what level of DLS individual providers will get, but we know it will be considerably less than has been available via EMA. Our concern would be that if it is distributed on a national methodology we may be disadvantaged as we have been a higher than average user of EMA.

13. If DLS is allocated to LA's based on arbitrary criteria of Free School Meal Eligibility or IMD data, it removes the provider's ability to identify individual learner needs.

14. Also, Providers can only respond to needs that learners vocalise, and for many young people they prefer not to discuss their personal circumstances. Young carers, care leavers, or those with a history of youth offending etc might not divulge their circumstances and needs might go unmet. Young people did not stigmatise learners in receipt of EMA it was considered the norm and take up was encouraged.

15. DLS effectiveness in meeting the huge gap that EMA leaves will depend on the eligibility criteria set (for example currently DLS should only be given for "emergency transport" not daily transport needs), the equity and transparency of the allocation for LAs or providers, and crucially how well providers and schools are set up to sensitively and fairly assess learner needs.

16. If allocations are made to schools they could be used to supplement critically pressured budgets, and the most vulnerable learners will be pushed out as they may be deemed too expensive to support, and in difficult times, the affluent learners not needing such support may be preferred.

17. There is already a large disparity in EMA claimants between our highest and lowest performing schools in our area (ranging from 14% to 65% claimant rates), so it is perceived that untargeted learner support will not narrow the gap for the disadvantaged.

Q2: What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness

There are a number of significant challenges with respect to raising the participation age, and this revolves around education policies that are still emerging, given the change in the political change. These challenges are described below.

18. Increased demand for Apprenticeships: places required in schools and FE are affected by the numbers choosing to go into Apprenticeships. Currently we have approximately one in 20 on apprenticeships and if we were to achieve the desired one in five we would need considerably less places in schools/colleges. It is difficult to predict the future demand for Apprenticeships without clarity about vocational learning (Wolf Report) and progression to HE. In addition we face some challenges around employer engagement and ensuring that Information, Advice and Guidance given to young people is impartial and accurate. Unless there are vacancies for Apprenticeships we can not promote this pathway to young people successfully. We would want to be assured that the highest achievers in schools are not signposted purely to academic pathways.

19. Lack of Capital funds: Peterborough had plans to develop provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD), but is unable to do so because of a lack of capital funding. Most of our LLDD learners travel outside the LA area, but if transport costs covered by that provider cease, we will not be able to meet those needs locally and those learners will drop out.

20. Our city-wide needs for post 16 are predominantly for Level 1, Level 2, and FE provision: it is difficult to maintain a city-wide strategic view if we only have access to data on the LA maintained sector. A successful RPA is not about overall places but takes into account location, learning environment, learner needs and the curriculum on offer. For example, we need to develop more Level 2 provision in order to meet learner needs at 16, due to current lower performance at Key Stage 4.

21. Lack of data or strategic considerations for Academies and their offers: We currently have four Academies out of 11 secondary schools, with one more converting in September 2011 and another with an application outstanding. This would leave five LA maintained schools, making it extremely difficult for the LA to ensure the right type of provision exists in the right place at the right time.

22. Agreed increases in Academies places without regard for local needs: our pressure point is FE places in suitable venues with appropriate programmes for the most vulnerable. However, we have restricted growth because providers are being funded on lagged learner numbers. By exception, Academies have seen growth.

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23. Providers attracting out of area learners: Academy providers can spend their additional growth money on attracting out of area learners, which has no impact on our ability to meet local resident RPA.

24. Market place economy planning: We have a desperate need to grow Level 2 provision. This year we have growth above lagged learners but is funded in three Academies, who almost without exception provide only Level 3 provision. This doesn't meet local needs and simply will displace provision elsewhere. Meanwhile our Level 1 and Level 2 provision can not be funded.

25. The funding squeeze on post 16 might also change the provider landscape as many will not survive the financial challenges. This uncertainty in the provider base makes it hard to engage in medium/longer term planning.

26. The impact of minimum levels of contract values (within work based learning providers) will limit smaller providers offering tailored provision.

27. Changing HE landscape: this will have an impact on the decision young people make at post 16 in terms of whether or not they stay on in school or college or enter the workplace.

28. Wolf report: the outcome of the Wolf report will be critical in planning, and will inevitably significantly alter the offer providers make, and substantially alter the local landscape. We can not predict the demand for vocational provision until we see what the Government vision is around this.

29. Schools ability to meet the demands of RPA for their own cohorts depends greatly on funding availability, and in times of financial hardship where more is demanded from less funding, they will not be incentivised to grow places for young people who fall outside their "comfort zone" or existing resources/staff, such as in Level 1/L2 provision, where it is desperately needed.

30. FE Colleges are in a better position to respond to demand and put on courses that meet local needs, however the FE setting is not always the most appropriate venue for vulnerable learners.

31. There are too many changes currently to be able to predict with confidence the pattern of engagement. We have a high number of New Academies and this in itself changes patterns of engagement and historic data is not necessarily a good indicator of future trends. The outcomes of the Wolf report are significant in that the view of vocational learning by government will impact on learner demand and provider willingness of interest in delivering vocational learning. The financial challenges for post 16 providers will no doubt lead to further changes in the provider base. Equally the ability/willingness of employers to offer Apprenticeships will also be significant and whilst we continue to work hard with NAS and other stakeholders we can not be sure of future volumes with any level of accuracy. Further the access to HE will also have a significant impact on young peoples' decision to stay on in learning.

32. Providers need to be considering their place in the new competitive market place and would think that their progress with this is variable. The tools on the DfE website around supporting schools to tightly embed their financial planning with other curriculum and workforce development planning is welcomed but on its own will not be sufficient, for some of our schools.

Q3: What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision

What impact will RPA have on academic achievement?

33. See Question 2—if the appropriate provision and curriculum is available, RPA will eventually encourage greater participation. If the offer doesn't meet the needs of young people, it will have no impact. The key to increased participation is having the right provision in the right place delivered to a high quality. Local Authorities will have little control over this as Academies and FE Colleges will have the freedom to deliver what they want irrespective of local area need. Providers will be looking to offer provision that they can deliver successfully, there is demand for and attracts funding. It may well be that in an area what is in the interest of providers to offer does not meet the local need. As the market place takes shape there will be gaps that appear and without capital or revenue funds to commission Local Authorities will face significant challenges. If all schools attempt to fair favourably in the delivery of the English baccalaureate for example we might find that the breadth of offer in other areas reduces and some young people disengage that would otherwise have stayed in the system. The balance between vocational and academic provision and Level 1 Level 2 and Level 3 provision will be heavily influenced by government policy. Young people attend where they see a benefit, they feel safe supported and they can clearly identify the benefit to them. Raising the age of participation will not in itself increase engagement. Young people might be persuaded to stay in learning because they are not able to secure a job or unemployment benefits but experience tells us these young people will not achieve as they will not be committed. The single biggest factor to greater participation at post 16 is a positive and enjoyable experience at pre 16. If young people see the benefits of learning and can see how further learning will improve their life then they will engage, provided they can afford to. For some young people their families will be reluctant to support them staying on at school/college for financial reasons.

What impact will RPA have on access to vocational education and training?

34. Vocational education and training is by definition more expensive to run than academic, class-based education. Unless this Government actively supports vocational education through a clear message in the Wolf Report, and backs this up with a funding model that really covers the costs of providing top quality, relevant, and engaging courses, RPA will not have the desired effect.

35. Peterborough City Council 8–19 Service and Connexions have done a great deal of work with local employers, business organisations (eg Chamber of Commerce and Urban Regeneration Companies), and the National Apprenticeship Service to make sure that schools have the right information to be able to competently and impartially advise young people on courses they should take to meet local employer opportunities and entry requirements for Apprenticeships. If young people are able to stay on in full time education and training longer, the increased Learner demand will stimulate the supply of vocational provision. We have found the key is ensuring that provision meets employer needs, as if it does employers are much more likely to work with schools and provide work related learning. More employer involvement will increase access.

What impact will RPA have on student attendance and behaviour?

36. Schools respond to funding and league tables. Unless RPA is backed by funding, there may not be significant incentive or punishment to follow up young people who are at risk of dropping out. Schools must be held accountable for the positive outcomes of all their students.

37. See also below, paragraph 38.

What impact will RPA have on alternative provision?

38. It is vital that there is sufficient and appropriate alternative provision that can engage and maintain interest for young people who do not do well in a mainstream environment, eg young offenders, those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those needing practical tuition or more individual support than that offered in mainstream education. It should not be assumed that those young people described above are a minority in fact the numbers of vulnerable young people in Peterborough are high. Many young people remain in mainstream provision because they are offered a wide curriculum offer including vocational provision. If schools are encouraged down a more academic route then we may see an increase in young people going into alternative provision.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Central London Connexions

Central London Connexions covers the central London seven boroughs. All CLC LAs have a history of strong 14–19 partnerships working together sub/regionally to ensure support, tracking and provision in a context of 49% average mobility from home to EET at ages 16–18. Connexions services in all CLC LAS have remained consistently high performing.

Collaboration and high quality services and provision have led to a dramatic reduction in NEET levels across central London and a consequent increase in EET to above national averages.

There are two RPA pilots in central London to test approaches to IAG and inclusion. The responses below capture much of the learning from those pilots.

1. The impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people; how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it

1.1 Many young people did not qualify for the EMA—or qualified for only for a small element. Those who did qualify for a significant payment told their Connexions PA that the EMA was central to:

- raising their awareness about staying learning after school—it opened up otherwise remote options of studying;
- keeping their attendance high—it drove them to attend fully when otherwise they may have been distracted with other pressures; and
- helping them learn money-management skills—they need to manage the allowance carefully to spread it across various spending needs.

1.2. For some young people the £30 weekly was an important part of their family income. Some needed it for lunch, travel (students get support with bus fares and tube season tickets but not less-frequent tube travel of a partial week), equipment for courses, books, or for clothes to wear to college.

1.3. There is considerable financial hardship in the lives of about 40% of our young people. The loss of this income will affect their access to EET and their retention.

1.4. Part time jobs are usually now taken up by HE students (we have many universities in London). FE students can seldom get part time work now, to stand alone financially.

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1.5. We worry that the extended DLSF will not meet the needs of young people from poorer backgrounds studying post 16 in central London, and will not support access or retention.

2. *The preparations necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and their current state of readiness*

2.1. More flexible post 16 provision, flexible in terms of start dates and of content and more level 2 provision.

2.2. Increased understanding of the cohorts coming through, using combined Connexions data with LA data on prior attainment levels.

2.3 Increased access to additional maths and English tuition at KS4—otherwise the learning routes to 18 will not be accessible to young people.

2.4 Jobs with training, and Connexions brokerage to source them—apprenticeships are often for higher achievers and are highly competitive. Many young people want to access work at 16 and cannot sustain a classroom-based route until 18.

2.5 Training with a training allowance, to help yp access vocational skills areas on accredited programmes relevant to the trades.

2.6 IAG in colleges and other post 16 provision for yp in year 12 on one year courses—their route forward will be harder to source and access. Current cuts are taking these workers out, and there were too few to begin with given the emphasis on progression from KS4.

2.7 IAG at KS 4—under threat currently given reduced budgets.

2.8 Local authorities should have:

- a well communicated strategy are essential along with an Implementation Plan that has broad ownership from the “top” and across all Children’s Services;
- plans to measure the impact and sustainability;
- leadership and governance to ensure full engagement from the wider local authority and other partners;
- engaged employers;
- data tools providing self assessment frameworks to ensure a full understanding of their cohorts, discussed and debated the data locally with providers;
- identified particular young people critical to RPA, with mapped interventions, support and provision;
- a Risk of NEET Indicator (RONI); and
- clear future delivery models within the changing financial climate and developments such as the all age careers service.

3. *The impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision*

3.1 RPA will have a strong long-term effect on skills levels and life chances but access to vocational learning will need to improve, as will financial and learner support and career IAG. We currently see a reduction in these aspects of provision.

3.2 The impact due to financial constraints of reduced IAG services and limited 14–19 strategies would be shown in behaviour, attendance and achievement levels.

3.3 It is expected that RPA will curtail the number of young people leaving EET before they turn 18. Key conclusions from our local data analysis of early leavers at age 17 specify that:

- we will need ongoing work with Year 11s to maintain high levels of EET at transition alongside ongoing support once they are in post 16 opportunities;
- we will need more focus on young people on Entry Level, Level 1 courses, with increase 16–19 provision of these courses; and
- Schools, colleges and 6th forms must be influenced to increase IAG support to improve transition of young people into EET.

Written evidence submitted by Fairbridge and The Prince's Trust

BACKGROUND

The announcement of the merger between The Prince's Trust and Fairbridge was made in February 2011. We are two organisations with the same aim: to help disadvantaged young people in the UK find the motivation, self confidence and skills they need to change their lives. With the numbers of young people not in education, training or employment rising and record youth unemployment figures, we are responding to a growing need by combining our support services so that together we can reach more young people than ever before. Next year we will work with 50,000 young people.

THE PRINCE'S TRUST

The Prince's Trust was founded in 1976 by The Prince of Wales to help disadvantaged young people aged 14 to 30 to find their feet. Our four target groups are educational underachievers, the unemployed, offenders and young people in or leaving care. 73% of the over 42,000 young people we worked with across the UK last year were educational underachievers.⁶⁵ We offer a range of programmes from which last year 81% moved on into a job, training, education or volunteering.

FAIRBRIDGE

Fairbridge works with young people aged 13–25 that other organisations find difficult to engage. Last year, Fairbridge helped more than 3,500 young people take their first step towards returning to employment, education or training. Most were classed as having “multiple needs”, such as homelessness, substance misuse or a history of offending. Yet over the last 12 months, 85% went on to achieve something tangible. They returned to the classroom, started a college course, got a qualification, found a job or chose to remain with Fairbridge or another provider to continue their development.

The Prince's Trust and Fairbridge's combined programmes, whilst focused on the most disadvantaged, reflect the range of need hidden among the statistics about young people and offer a spectrum of support; from skills progression for the very disengaged through to solutions for those who want to set up their own business or are ready for a job. The majority of young people we work with have found it hard to engage with classroom based learning which is why these practical programmes with routes into work are attractive. Both Fairbridge and The Prince's Trust accredit across our programmes which improves the employability of our clients who often have low or no qualifications.

KEY POINTS IN RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED BY THE COMMITTEE

1. *Education Maintenance Allowance*

Many of the young people The Prince's Trust and Fairbridge support need financial assistance to be able to access education or training, for things like travel to childcare. Last year for example at least 30% of the 16–19 year olds on Trust programmes were claiming EMA, rising to nearly 50% on our Team programme. The Trust and Fairbridge welcome the intention of the Government to focus on the most disadvantaged with the replacement Discretionary Learners Fund. The existing criteria of the DLF reflects our target client groups such as those on probation and care leavers, however given the suggested reduction in size of the money that will be available The Prince's Trust and Fairbridge has concerns some young people will fall through the gaps. We would suggest:

- **Clarity around eligibility**—This must be unambiguous so that colleges have to show clear reasons why one case is more justified than the next, this would also prevent a postcode lottery on access to learning for the poorer in society.
- **Eligibility due to circumstances**—The criteria of the DLF should take into account young people's circumstances, not just the group they fall into. For example carers of young children or family members who may seem more financially well off but are directing all their earnings to others and need extra support to access education.
- **Communication on new funding to young people**—Some young people may be put off even applying for a course as they know EMA is being abolished. There must be a communication plan in place targeted at young people. Job Centres, Schools and Youth Sector organisations could be conduits to pass on this information.
- **Monitoring the success of the new funding**—Fairbridge and The Prince's Trust would like the Government to monitor the success of the new funding arrangements to ensure it is reaching the most disadvantaged and that predicted numbers stay in education despite forfeiting EMA.

2. *Raising Participation Age*

The Prince's Trust and Fairbridge consider positive outcomes to be young people staying on in education and training and therefore welcome the Government's intention to raise this to 19. Young people regret

⁶⁵ The Prince's Trust classify educational underachievers as young people who have not yet achieved Level 2—five GCSEs at A*–C

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disengaging, as 66% of NEET young people⁶⁶ (mostly in their 20s) endorsed raising the participation age, largely citing regret they disengaged at 16 or younger. We also welcome the intended repeals around compulsion in the Education Bill. However as research has shown 5.6% of all young people truant during compulsory education so raising participation age is not the whole answer for the more disengaged. Fairbridge and The Trust suggest:

- **Complementary education providers** can reengage young people who are really disenfranchised and have chaotic lives. Their provision should be embedded into education policy for 16–19 year olds.
- **Quality of alternative provision up to 19 should be assured**, with accreditation mapped to the National Qualifications Curriculum Framework.
- **Progression must be demonstrated** to make young people’s engagement meaningful.
- **Vocational options** such as apprenticeships must also be recognised as part of the Educational Framework. More must also be done to communicate their value, both to schools and Colleges who sometimes look down on them as lesser qualifications and to young people who feel they are pitched at a level too high for them.
- **The value of soft and personal skills development needs to be recognised as part of 16–19 policy.** Fairbridge in particular works with young people often below the Foundation learning tier and who are really disenfranchised. Moving the young people on in terms of self discipline and confidence needs to be recognised as inherently valuable work that will help them benefit from education and training.

3. Intervening before 16

The importance of early intervention programmes that support under-16s who are at risk of exclusion or have left education must be recognised, as it is these young people who will be hardest to engage in education or training post-16. Funding of such early intervention programmes must be maintained if 100% participation post-16 is to be achieved.

4. Commissioning

Commissioning offers the potential for ensuring all young people have access to the most appropriate and effective provisions for their needs. It is essential that commissioners priorities do not automatically equate value for money with lowest cost provision, and that contracts recognise the diverse range of soft and hard outcomes achieved by young people in both formal and informal education.

OTHER ISSUES ON 16–19 POLICY

5. Scope of our support

One in five of the under-16s who join Fairbridge programmes are not in any form of education. The Trust worked with over 11,000 young people last year aged 14–16 who were truanting or at risk of exclusion or failing to obtain qualifications. Such young people cannot be expected to transition smoothly into 16–19 education and training as the fact that 5.6% of all young people persistently truant during compulsory education indicates.

It is therefore essential that the Government continues to offer funding and support to early intervention programmes that help disengaged under-16s to remain in education. If there is insufficient funding for these early interventions, raising the participation age is unlikely to be effective in ensuring that the most disengaged and disadvantaged young people remain in education or training from 16–19.

73% of the over 42,000 young people The Prince’s Trust worked with were educational underachievers⁶⁷ and 35% of 16–18 year olds who access Fairbridge are not in any education, employment or training. Many of these young people will need to develop personally and improve their learning skills before they can re-engage with mainstream education or training. 16–19 education policy must set out clearly how these young people will be helped to re-engage and how programmes that support them to return to education or training will be accredited and funded.

6. Young people outside the Foundation Learning Tier

Both The Prince’s Trust and Fairbridge run a range of programmes that develop young people’s personal and social skills, as well as improving their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Our joint client group has varying needs. Many of the young people Fairbridge currently work with are below Foundation Learning. Fairbridge’s research report “Back from the Brink” presents empirical evidence that developing “soft skills” such as self-discipline or communication skills is directly predictive of hard outcomes such as better performance in education. This research endorses the work of Fairbridge with the hardest to reach.

⁶⁶ Focus groups held by the Trust with 231 young people on their Team programme (aimed at long term unemployed)

⁶⁷ The Prince’s Trust classify educational underachievers as young people who have not yet achieved Level 2—five GCSEs at A*–C

The Trust's client group range from being very disengaged to those looking to gain a qualification. The Trust has recently been given permission by the qualifications regulator, Ofqual, to operate in the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF). This means that The Trust will be able to write qualifications to use on our programmes and award them, with the intention to introduce this option to Fairbridge programmes on completion of our merger.

Both The Trust and Fairbridge, believe education policy must extend to those providers working with young people who are not yet ready for Foundation Learning. More clarity is required regarding the recognition and accreditation that will be given to providers such as Fairbridge and The Trust, which also offer holistic support rather than focusing wholly on qualifications. 16–19 policy must make clear whether complementary learning providers working with those outside the Foundation Learning Tier will be classified, accredited and assessed as education and training providers, given that these provisions will be crucial if the widening participation agenda is to include those young people who are hardest to reach.

7. Vocational/informal learning

Work based learning and vocational pathways should be made widely available as a positive option to young people put off by mainstream education. The provision we provide has clear structures, dedicated support and regular recognition of achievement to inspire ongoing motivation.

8. Personalised support/mentoring

The role of relationships, family or community is highlighted again and again as having a major impact on a young person's potential to be NEET. The Prince's Trust and Fairbridge recognise how a role model or individual support given on a voluntary basis can have an invaluable positive impact on young people. Examples include The Prince's Trust's 121 project and Leaving Care Initiative and the one-to-one support offered by Fairbridge to all young people on its programmes.

9. Information, advice and guidance

Up to date, relevant information, advice and guidance is key to accessing employment, education and training. Fairbridge and The Prince's Trust staff and volunteers working with young people provide this on an informal basis, with Progression mentors dedicated to this role.

10. Changing Behaviours

The 16–19 proposals indicate that young people will be able to enter a job without training at 16 if they are also participating in accredited education or training. Fairbridge and The Prince's Trust works with many young people who may have entered semi-skilled or unskilled employment with few or no qualifications, and who may have negative attitudes towards formal learning. These young people may not yet be ready to engage in education and training. Fairbridge and The Prince's Trust can support these young people to change their behaviours and attitudes to learning, enabling them to progress successfully to more formal education and training. 16–19 Education policy must account for those young people who need support to re-engage by recognising and funding the complementary learning providers that prepare them to access education and training that is relevant to their employment.

11. Investing to save

The cost of NEETs to the state has been estimated at £3.65 billion per annum.⁶⁸ By focusing on the harder to reach, The Trust and Fairbridge are working with the most expensive young people in terms of cost to the State. With gifts in kind such as volunteer mentors, the community work the young people do as part of their journey, diversionary activities away from offending behaviour, these programmes are offering huge savings to the exchequer. Funding structures must account for the fact that whilst alternative provisions may have higher initial costs than mainstream education and training, they also offer greater long term savings in return.

12. Commissioning

Commissioning offers the potential to create an inclusive education sector, where the most appropriate provision for each young person can be made available, and held to account. However, it can be a costly model for voluntary sector organisations to operate within, especially if they must engage with multiple prime contractors in order to win sub-contracts. The cost to voluntary organisations of engaging in commissioning should be minimised by encouraging local authorities and prime contractors to adopt standardised tender processes wherever possible and we welcome the move to introduce standardised PPQs.

Those commissioning 16–19 provisions must clearly define the needs of all target groups within this cohort. "Raising the Participation Age" acknowledges that those 16–19 year olds who are not in education, employment or training are not a homogenous group but can be divided into those who are "open to learning", "undecided" or "sustained". Fairbridge and The Trust are focused on the "sustained" group who are likely to have low or no qualifications, and are least likely to participate in education or training at 16–19. It is essential that

⁶⁸ The Cost Exclusion: The Prince's Trust 2007

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commissioners should recognise the unique needs of this group and incentivise providers to work specifically with them.

Informal learning providers working with the “sustained” group will achieve different outcomes than those working with “undecided” or “open to learning” young people, or those who are still in education or training. Commissioners should recognise the importance of achieving “soft” outcomes as young people travel the journey towards “hard” outcomes. The hardest to reach young people may require multiple interventions to achieve “hard” outcomes and these steps along the journey need to be recognised.

Working with the hardest to reach young people can require intensive interventions often delivered outside of traditional educational environments with higher staff to young person ratios than mainstream education. Such provisions are therefore often more expensive, but are vital to supporting the most vulnerable in society to engage and succeed and will reap long term savings to the economy through increased productivity and lower welfare costs. Commissioners must therefore prioritise value over cost when selecting and funding alternative providers.

13. A proven track record

The Prince’s Trust has 35 years of experience and Fairbridge has 25 in supporting young people with multiple needs. We have both developed programmes that have established effective models with sustainable, positive outcomes.

- The Trust’s outcome report for last year found of the over 42,000 young people it worked with in terms of hard outcomes 50% went on to education and training (31% were in a job). Of the softer skills:
 - 62% of young people had improved their speaking skills.
 - 47% their writing skills.
 - 43% their number skills.
 - 42% their computer skills.
 - 79% were better at working with others.
 - 68% felt they were better at working with others.
 - 78% had better confidence.
 - 77% had better motivation.
 - 97% of young people on Trust’s programmes would recommend their programmes to their friends.

The 2010 Fairbridge Young People’s Survey has demonstrated that the success of our approach is based on offering young people a supportive and accessible adult role model

- 96% of young people agreed that there was someone they feel they can speak to at Fairbridge.
- 98% of young people agreed that, at Fairbridge, they can get support when they need it.

Fairbridge programmes not only enable young people to improve their learning skills, but also their life skills and behaviours:

- 36% felt they had improved their numeracy skills.
- 61% felt they had improved their literacy skills.
- 54% felt they had improved their IT skills.
- 51% felt they had got better at managing their money.
- 91% felt they had improved their communication skills.
- 93% felt more confident.
- 85% felt they had got better at managing their feelings.
- 91% felt they had got better at forming positive relationships.

These outcomes from both organisations reflect the range of evidence that proves a holistic approach is essential when helping disengaged young people with multiple needs to re-engage in education, training or employment. Specialist provisions such as those offered by The Trust and Fairbridge must be recognised within 16–19 education policy if it is to lead to truly inclusive policy provision that addresses that needs of the most disadvantaged and disengaged young people in society.

CASE STUDIES*Fairbridge: Keisha, 18, Kennington*

When Keisha joined Fairbridge she was not in any form of education and was finding it hard to enter employment. Keisha was not ready for formal education, but needed the support of dedicated staff who could help her to gain confidence and find a new direction. Using our holistic approach, Fairbridge supported Keisha to overcome the challenges she had faced and access new opportunities.

Kiesha:

When I first heard about Fairbridge I thought same old, same old...but once I did Access I realised it was different to anything I'd tried before. I'd been in trouble quite a bit with the law and was living in a hostel when I heard about Fairbridge. I'd finished school but dropped out of college as it wasn't working for me...

Access took me seriously out of my comfort zone—sleeping in a tent was not something I'd done before!

I've done loads with Fairbridge over the last year...I recently took part in an art project where we were able to make up characters that reflected parts of ourselves...I want to help young people who are going through the same tough times that I was. My lyrics in the performance are about that. I don't want others to go down the same path that I have.

There needs to be more help for young people in situations like mine. I've found it really hard to get a job because of my previous convictions. It gets you down.

Fairbridge works because you can relate to the staff. It's really important to have this. They've helped me stay focused and I'm now looking to do an apprenticeship in Childcare through a local college. It's work-based so I'll still be able to get some proper experience.

The Prince's Trust: Jamie Vyner 17, Wales

(Nominated as Young Achiever of the Year—Prince's Trust award)

Leaving school with very few qualifications and no job had left Jamie with no self-confidence or motivation. Jamie wanted to be a painter and decorator but was finding it hard to find an apprenticeship for someone with no experience.

With very little family support, Jamie was very quickly losing sight of his chosen career path. When Jamie joined the Ceredigion Team programme, he was unemployed, bored and fed up. On the programme, Jamie thrived. He was inspired, dedicated and hardworking. For his work experience, Jamie got a placement with a local painting and decorating firm.

They were so taken with Jamie that they offered him an apprenticeship subject to him successfully obtaining a college place, which, following a very good interview, Jamie did. Jamie is now going from strength to strength. He has completed his apprenticeship and achieved an NVQ 2 and is working full-time. Jamie is very proud of his achievements, and very happy to have a good job.

25 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by London Borough of Newham, Newvic (Newham Sixth Form College) and Newham College of Further Education

1. *What impact has the Education Maintenance Allowance had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will the Discretionary Learner Support Fund be in replacing it?*

1.1 The EMA is massively important for young learners in the London Borough of Newham. Targeted on the poorest students, it has had a significant effect on participation in 16–19 learning, as well as on retention, attendance and ultimately achievement.

1.2 Take-up rate of the EMA is very high in Newham. Around 5000 young people who study here claimed EMA last year—the highest rate in London. This compares to just 900 in Richmond upon Thames.⁶⁹ The vast majority of Newham learners claimed the full £30. A single college in Newham alone has over 2,000 EMA recipients, most of them receiving the full £30.⁷⁰ It is the highest number in any sixth form college in the country. The exceptionally high claimant rate across Newham indicates that there is a high need in the borough for financial support for young people in further education.

1.3 The Government argues that 88% of recipients would have continued to study post-16 irrespective of the money. But Newham's independent research into education, training and employment for 16–19 year olds indicates that 51% of recipients in Newham said the EMA was an important reason for participation in education post-16.

1.4 Overall participation rates among 16–18 year olds in Newham have increased from 81.4% in 2003–04 to 94.6% in 2009–10. This is an increase of 13.2%. Both the London Borough of Newham and 16–19 providers in Newham believe that the EMA has been a significant factor in driving this increase in participation. Our independent research supports this view.

1.5 We believe the trend towards increased participation could reverse if young people from poor families don't get the support they need. This could jeopardise the Government's ambitions of Raising the Participation Age to 18.

⁶⁹ <http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/article-23899732-end-of-college-cash-incentives-to-hit-east-end-pupils-hardest.do>

⁷⁰ Newham Sixth Form College—NewVIC

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1.6 Such a move would also come at a very bad time. Growth in the jobs market remains slow and youth unemployment is particularly high. The labour market is also increasingly demanding a higher level of skills. A reduction in participation in 16–19 education would mean more young people entering the jobs market prematurely, with neither the skills they need to succeed, nor the jobs available for them to go into.

1.7 A study by the NUS found that 61% of EMA participants they surveyed said they could not continue in education without the allowance. This rose to 65% for those receiving the full £30. They also found that 40% of the poorest learners said that EMA was not enough to cover their essential costs and that they were more likely to use commercial debt to cover this shortfall.⁷¹

1.8 This highlights the difficulties of poorer students not just in entering post 16 education but also in staying on to complete their course. The EMA was vital to students from very low income families. It is difficult to quantify all of the EMA's benefits—in Newham the EMA helped students complete post-compulsory education courses, lessened some of the hardships they and their families faced and tackled some of the disadvantages many of them started out with in terms of low household income and debt.

1.9 In addition to increasing participation, The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) found that EMA also increases retention. Their evidence shows that those receiving EMA were far more likely to stay on and complete the whole course.⁷² EMA also helps contribute to improved attendance as recipients have to attend classes and complete work to receive the allowance. Providers believe this has a significant impact on attendance.

1.10 In terms of attainment, IFS researchers found that in areas where EMA was available, students were around two percentage points more likely to reach the thresholds for Levels 2 and 3 of the National Qualifications Framework; they also had A Level grades around four points higher (on the UCAS tariff) on average.⁷³ This is in part because it can also reduce the pressure to get a job whilst studying, which might distract them from their studies, in order to contribute to course costs and household income.

1.11 Newham has had low levels of social mobility in the past. To address a pattern of educational underachievement in the borough and low social mobility, the government must commit to providing young people in Newham a fair chance to succeed post-16 so they can compete with their peers across London.

1.12 EMA can help Newham residents raise their aspirations and exceed expectations despite coming from one of the most deprived boroughs in the country. It is a can help drive social mobility, and support children to get the skills and qualifications they need to succeed in higher education and/or in work.

1.13 The DLSF is available through colleges and school sixth form providers to help with learning costs for those facing financial hardship is a poor substitute for the EMA primarily because of the small amount of money dedicated to it. Support worth £25 million is currently provided through DLSF. In London, the budget for this fund for the current year is £4.8 million—less than 6% of last year's EMA spend of £81.2 million. Despite a government pledge to treble the discretionary learner support budget by 2014, this leaves a national shortfall of £480 million when compared to the national EMA budget last year of £560 million.⁷⁴

1.14 There is a lack of Government guidance on both exactly what funding will be available to replace the EMA and how it will be used. This makes it very difficult for providers and local authorities to plan how they can support learners from poor backgrounds in the coming years. The likelihood is that funding for the new system will fall well below the support now available through EMA.

1.15 The 2010 DLSF guidance for providers and local authorities states that the budget “is finite; learners who are eligible for support are not automatically entitled to it” and that providers should offer it if there is “no alternative”.⁷⁵ Learners should see the fund as a last port of call after exercising their eligibility for other forms of financial support for example housing benefit or tax credits. Eligibility for the fund will have to change significantly if it is to substitute aspects of the EMA.

1.16 Whereas take-up of the EMA was widespread and came without stigma, we are concerned that the tighter restrictions available on support through the DLSF will dissuade some young people from applying.

1.17 Finally, schools and colleges will set their own eligibility criteria for DLSF and manage their own procedures. This means that the amounts available, and the way funds are allocated, may differ between institutions, creating inconsistency, confusion and unfairness.

1.18 This reflects a wider view that with greater control over skills funding, the host boroughs could ensure a coherent skills offer which matches the needs of current and future employers and residents themselves. If funding and administration was controlled regionally or locally rather than through providers, it would also limit the extent to which perverse incentives might occur amongst providers (dependent on how stringently they offer support to students) as they would have to follow a shared criteria for distribution.

⁷¹ EMA satisfaction survey 2008 http://www.nus.org.uk/PageFiles/3605/NUS_EMA_Report_2008_pdf.pdf

⁷² Haroon Chowdry and Carl Emmerson, “An Efficient Maintenance Allowance”, IFS, 2010

⁷³ Chowdry and Emmerson, “An Efficient Maintenance Allowance”

⁷⁴ London Councils, <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/news/current/pressdetail.htm?pk=1245>

⁷⁵ Discretionary Learner Support Funding Guidance, YPLA, <http://lsf.ypla.gov.uk/resources/guidance/>

2. *What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness?*

2.1 Newham is the third most deprived local authority in London, and the sixth most deprived in the country.⁷⁶ The evidence above demonstrates that financial support for the poorest students is necessary to ensure they participate and then stay engaged until the end of the course. For young people from poorer backgrounds to have a more equal chance of succeeding in post compulsory education, greater financial support will need to be available than what is currently being proposed in the DLSF. A consistent approach for distributing this support will need to be agreed by providers.

2.2 Delivering the Raising of the Participation Age requires effective and comprehensive financial support for learners from poor backgrounds. It will be impossible to force 18 year olds to take part in education or training. Instead, there needs to be adequate support and incentives to move towards 100% participation.

2.3 The increased hardship some of the poorest students might face in further education could have an adverse effect on their decisions to enter higher education. This effect will be amplified by the rise in tuition fees as young people from poor backgrounds may be put off by the prospect of higher debt on leaving university. In response, more effort and funding needs to be put into widening participation programmes to ensure that all those who want to can go to university are not deterred by the costs. These must be clearly targeted at the poorest students and the poorest areas.

2.4 There is a need to plan for all young people in the borough, not just those who conventionally continue at school or college. This means devoting equal attention to the needs of those whose aspirations are at foundation level as those who undertake level 3. A wide range of options for education and training for young people will do more to engage young people post compulsory schooling. This includes an engaging curriculum, more choice and variety in course options (including apprenticeships) and more tailored and personalised support for young people NEET and those at risk of becoming NEET. Newham has consistently worked hard to reduce its number of NEET young people and has achieved its target to reduce the percentage of 16–18 year olds who are NEET to 6.4% by 2011, in comparison with an average of 9.2% across the country at the end of 2009.

2.5 In addition to supporting young people who are NEET, there is a need to begin a process of engagement with those young people who are in, or likely to opt for, jobs without training since under the RPA proposals such a choice will not be an option after 2013. It is probable that wholly new forms of provision will be needed to meet their needs including working with employers to increase employment with training opportunities,

2.6 There are high levels of studying out of borough, particularly in areas like Newham. This requires close co-operation between neighbouring local authorities. In the same way it will be important to assess the extent of employment opportunities in the wider travel-to-work area around the Borough and know the views of employers in this wider region concerning skill needs and the preparation of young people.

3. *The impact of raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision*

3.1 We believe that young people would benefit from an array of post-16 provision in schools and elsewhere to help them achieve the higher skills that are increasingly required across the country. The government must ensure that appropriate funding is available not only to incentivise but to enable young people to achieve these skills.

3.2 Young people in Newham have very good rates of participation post 16. The Newham Connexions 2010 Activity Survey (or Destinations Survey) produced headline findings as follows:

- 94.6% of Year 11 leavers entered learning of one type or another, an increase of 0.6% over 2009.
- 94.64% entered FT education or training, an increase from 94.1% in 2009.
- 63% of those remaining in education or training entered a Level 3 Programme.
- 53% of those remaining in education were studying in Newham.
- Only 2.7% (99) were known to be NEET.

3.3 The RPA will impact young people's attitudes to learning. The findings of the Newham Household Panel Survey (Wave 2 Report D) suggest that attitudes to education and training amongst young people and their parents in Newham are remarkably positive, though there is a clear distinction between the attitudes and aspirations of students from different ethnic groups, with young white students markedly less motivated than their counterparts in other ethnic groups. The Government will need to ensure that attitudes and aspirations do not take a negative turn because of a lack of financial support as the research around the importance of the EMA suggests.

3.4 Many of the students who do not currently take part in education or training after 16 will be more challenging than current students. They may have dropped out due to difficulties and bad experiences during compulsory education.

⁷⁶ The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2007)

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3.5 These students will require extra support in order to achieve decent results and maintain good levels of attendance and behaviour. It will also increase the demand for vocational learning and alternative, non-traditional provision.

3.6 Local authorities need to work closely with providers, with other services and with employers, to ensure that the needs of this small but vital group are met.

28 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Association of Teachers and Lecturers**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 Education for all is at the heart of ATL's policy principles. We are dismayed at the regularity with which Government's education policy is not directed by what is best for learners and does not impact positively all 16–19 year olds.

1.2 There are some key features of 16–19 education which are essential: high quality educational provision; an understanding of learners' needs balanced with economic or employers' needs; access to reliable and useful information, advice and guidance; and a broad offer accessible to every young person.

1.3 ATL's members report many benefits of EMA and we are disappointed that the Government has so swiftly abolished the allowance.

1.4 ATL supports the raising of the participation age but believes the continuation of this policy must be backed by full consideration of the needs of all learners, and that supporting learners is never diminished by accountability systems.

1.5 It would be a mistake to consider the impact of the raising of the participation age in isolation from other policies and the disadvantaged backgrounds many young people have. New resources are needed to support the policy's implementation.

2. ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS AND LECTURERS*ATL, the education union*

2.1 ATL, as a leading education union, recognises the link between education policy and our members' conditions of employment. Our evidence-based policy making enables us to campaign and negotiate from a position of strength. We champion good practice and achieve better working lives for our members.

2.2 We help our members, as their careers develop, through first-rate research, advice, information and legal support. Our 160,000 members—teachers, lecturers, headteachers and support staff—are empowered to get active locally and nationally. AMiE is the leadership section of ATL representing leaders and managers in schools and colleges. We are affiliated to the TUC, and work with government and employers through partnership and by lobbying.

ATL policy

2.3 ATL believes that teachers as professionals must be recognised for their knowledge, expertise and judgement, at the level of the individual pupil and in articulating the role of education in increasing social justice. Within tight national parameters, development of the education system should take place at a local level: the curriculum should be developed in partnership with local stakeholders; assessment should be carried out through local professional networks. Schools and colleges should work collaboratively to offer excellent teaching and learning, and to support pupils' well-being, across a local area. Accountability mechanisms should be developed so that there is a proper balance of accountability to national government and the local community, which supports collaboration rather than competition.

3. ESSENTIAL TO 16–19 EDUCATION

3.1 Education for all is at the heart of ATL's policy principles. This Government's education policy should be directed by what is best for learners, for whom the education system primarily exists, and should impact positively on all 16–19 year olds.

3.2 There are some key features of 16–19 education which are essential: high quality educational provision; an understanding of learners' needs balanced with economic or employers' needs; a broad offer accessible to every young person; and access to reliable and useful information, advice and guidance (IAG).

3.3 It is in this context that the raising of the participation age and the abolition of the education maintenance allowance (EMA) should be judged.

What is high quality 16–19 education?

3.4 High quality post-16 education should build upon earlier education and must develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions to enable young people to be responsible citizens and independent thinkers. Students should be prepared for employment, competent to make choices and learn throughout their lives. 19-year-olds should be ready to progress to employment or continue in education, with useful social and learning skills and qualifications that are valuable and understood by both employers and education institutions. 16–19 education should be sufficiently engaging to retain young people at risk of leaving education, employment and training.

Supporting learners' needs

3.5 ATL has communicated concern to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills that the Government skills strategy focuses too intently on Britain's economy and not enough on Britain's learners and their varied needs and desires. We argue that the correct approach to skills development resets the scales that balance economic outcomes and educational benefits, and takes a holistic approach to education rather than concentrating on those that have already left, or are approaching the end of formal education. With the blurring of the end of formal education forthcoming as a result of the raising of the participation age (importantly not "school leaving age"), it becomes increasingly important that policy impacting upon education is coherent, and that young people's needs are neither forgotten nor diminished.

3.6 We are gravely concerned that Government policy on 16–19, particularly the abolition of EMA, its latest Skills Strategy, and using destination data for school accountability, uses young people as a tool for other political or economic ends, rather than treating them as individuals or seeing their needs and rights as learners. This must be addressed immediately.

Broad, flexible and equitable

3.7 Education must be equitable and post-16 education must offer flexibility and meaningful choice of subjects, qualifications and ways of learning to suit diverse cohorts of young people each year. The false dichotomy of vocational and academic study diminishes both. Young people should be engaged in both, and should have access to both, irrespective of whether they are undertaking heavily academic A-Levels or a primarily vocational Apprenticeship. A two-tier system labels young people as successes or failures, and ATL is vehemently against streaming young people into separate institutions prior to 16 in any way that disrupts their ability to undertake a broad education post-16. Functional skills and personal, learning and thinking skills, which cut across both academic and vocational learning, are also vital.

Reliable and useful information, advice and guidance

3.8 Outstanding IAG is vital; the impact is felt before, during, and (often long-) after 16–19 education. ATL believes that careers education should raise aspiration, support participation in learning, help overcome inequality and assist in making goals achievable. Staff must be able to offer the most appropriate advice to meet the needs of the student rather than the needs of the institution and IAG should be impartial in reference to education policy, initiatives, and government's implicit or explicit preferences. The sentiment of the Nuffield Review that young people must be taught to develop the "competence to make decisions about the future in the light of changing economic and social conditions"⁷⁷ is crucial and highlights the importance of decision-making skills alongside knowledge of the 16–19 landscape.

3.9 Before rushing into change, and particularly when unpicking a positive policy such as funding for the EMA, having flexible, reliable and unbiased IAG is even more essential. By dismantling local provision without a new careers service in place, government has failed to ensure this, further damaging the life chances of this generation of teenagers.

4. EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

4.1 ATL believes that the EMA has made a difference to ensure ALL young people can consider education post-16 a viable option. Though not perfect, it has the potential to make both a short-term and long-term impact upon people's lives and we are disappointed that the Government has so swiftly abolished the allowance.

4.2 Our members report many benefits of EMA, including but not limited to: improved attendance, achievement and student motivation; a positive impact on progression for students from level 1 to level 2 programmes; making behaviour management easier; allowing level 3 students the opportunity to study and prepare for university without having the additional pressures of part-time jobs. One member, working in a large regional sixth form college, reports that "students have also been able to save a small proportion of their EMA to put towards giving them equal access to college trips and events which their parents are unable to fund."

4.3 Comments ATL members have received from learners when discussing government policy on EMA include:

⁷⁷ Nuffield Review of 14–19 Education and Training, *Summary, Implications and Recommendations*, 2009, p3

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- “I will struggle to pay for transport, books, internet and paper to attend college.”
- “EMA helps people reach their potential, without it I’ll end up in Tesco.”
- “No EMA = more unemployment, Tesco doesn’t have jobs for all of us!”

4.4 In general, it is known that means-tested support does not reach everyone in need. EMA’s abolition combined with the enormous rise in university fees send a clear message to young people about the government’s direction of travel, its priorities, and the future of education funding. Whilst we recognise the policies are slightly more nuanced than that may sound, unfortunately the negative headlines are perceived in such a way by young people. We are concerned, therefore, that there will be a disproportionate effect on applications for means-tested support from the Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF) and that too many 14, 15, and 16 year olds have already been fatally discouraged from post-16 education.

4.5 A UCU/AoC poll of students⁷⁸ in receipt of EMA showed 70% would drop out of college if the allowance was withdrawn. An ATL member, lecturing in Health and Social Care, reports that already three students from her two-year course have been “lost” this year to employment who “see it as more beneficial to gain any employment in the short term rather than risk unemployment in a years time...never mind university.”

4.6 The DLSF is fundamentally unfair. Politicians regularly complain about a so-called postcode lottery in public services; with flexible “rules” on who is eligible and how much entitlement can be, young people in different areas of the country (or even in the same area but wanting to take up different education courses that require attending different institutions) face differential support. The DLSF will not provide assistance with 16–18 year-olds’ travel costs, opening up a gap for many where LAs also do not provide the support. Travel is significant for young people in education, particularly given the nature of federated institutions and collaborative delivery of 14–19 qualifications. Travel, including cost, is a massive issue for those in rural areas.⁷⁹ Further unfairness can be seen by the discrepancy of financial support for food varying already between learners in school sixth forms, who can receive free school meals, and those in colleges, who do not.

4.7 Furthermore, whilst the Department for Education aims to reduce bureaucracy in educational establishments, BIS has unnecessarily added to it by insisting upon colleges administering this fund. It is hard to see how this will operate without—at the very least—additional funding for colleges to cover the considerable staffing and administration costs of managing and assessing DLSF.

4.8 As one ATL member working in a sixth form, puts it: “EMA has basically broken down the barriers preventing participation of all learners equally in post-16 education and the Discretionary Learner Support Fund will face real challenges in maintaining this level of equal opportunity for young people to achieve to their full ability.”

5. RAISING THE PARTICIPATION AGE: RECOGNISING EVERY YOUNG PERSON’S NEEDS

5.1 ATL is pleased that this government is continuing its predecessor’s policy to raise the age to which young people will continue in education.

5.2 Raising the participation age will also have consequences for those working or learning outside of the 16–19 sector and those considered “NEET”, and data collected in relation to the legislative change will be put to varying uses. Policy must recognise the differing needs of every young person, and not a select few.

5.3 ATL’s members are proud to be entrusted with educating young people and are passionate about impacting positively on their futures. Supporting learners is paramount in their professional lives. It is important then that the Secretary of State’s intention to use destinations data to hold schools to account and to support parental choice of secondary schools does not distract from helping young people themselves. Teachers of younger children should be able to focus on developing them and giving appropriate, and individual, IAG without worrying about sending them down routes that government demands through high-stakes accountability measures—not least because of the variables outside of schools’ control that influence individual (eg health) and collective (eg economic outlook) outcomes.

5.4 We expect NEET figures to change but note that the recent year-on-year rise is driven by those aged 18+.⁸⁰ Bearing in mind the evidence from young people that abolishing EMA is likely to send them into employment (and into a series of part-time jobs), it is important that significant thought is given to those on the cloudy borderline between being in a job with training, and being in a job without training. All young people must be treated as individuals with the right to learn and achieve, not as statistics or labels which may have long-term effects on their lives. The Government’s intention to remove its obligation to enforce the raising of the participation age leads us to question the commitment to ensure all 16–19 year olds are still learning and developing. We know that enforcement will be difficult, and we would not support the criminalising of young people, but are concerned that this indicates government doesn’t even have the desire for an individualised focus on young people.

⁷⁸ www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5208

⁷⁹ *Poverty and social exclusion in rural areas*, ATL position statement (2008)

⁸⁰ DfE Quarter 4 2010 statistics, released February 2011

5.5 We urge the select committee to ask how government will ensure training in employment is of a high enough quality to be able to deem employees as learners still participating in education, and in particular to consider evidence on enriched or “expansive” apprenticeships.⁸¹

5.6 We believe it is important with the raising of the participation age that young people are able to easily re-enter school or college-based education even if they decided to take employment at 16. In 2010, we wrote:

“Young people must not be forced into an unchangeable pathway at, or before, they are age-14.”⁸²

The same applies at age 16 too. FE and HE should not be ruled out by one decision at a young age. Aside from government’s funding decisions across education sectors making this look difficult, we are concerned too that not enough clear thought has been given to how easily learners, or potential learners, can change course.

5.7 It is of great concern to ATL that vocational education and qualifications will suffer diminished status as government pursues an agenda of labels, division and hierarchy in relation to academic study and the institutions in which each could take place.

6. RAISING THE PARTICIPATION AGE: IMPACT AND EQUALITY

6.1 Though we support raising the participation age, we believe it is a mistake to attempt to review the policy in isolation. Significant change will happen concurrently with the advent of 16–19 academies. Changes in teaching training and to the professional support provided by the Institute for Learning should also be considered, as well as funding issues.

6.2 Any impact on academic achievement may prove irrelevant because of wider government policy (ie HE funding). Whilst keeping young people in formal education longer a decade ago probably would have helped boost students in universities, it is hard to see that now because of the cost/benefit analysis government is sadly pushing students into; non-educational factors such as tuition fees and the job markets for graduates and non-graduates are increasingly important in decision-making.

6.3 Young people leaving education at 16 with limited qualifications are disproportionately from disadvantaged backgrounds.⁸³ Poverty is the single most important aspect of early childhood which has the greatest influence on children’s life chances, particularly with regard to education, and the effects of growing up in poverty are often amplified by additional disadvantage, for example, due to ethnic background or disability. For such young people, it is important not just to keep them in education but to ensure pre- and post-16 education is relevant to them. This should include offering tailored support to mitigate some of the effects of poverty (not just early intervention but consistent intervention according to need) and government committing to bring together communities, disadvantaged families, schools, colleges, and trade unions to devise practical strategies for tackling socio-economic disadvantage in relation to education.

6.4 Aside from the resources associated with ensuring employers are providing suitable and sufficient high quality training to benefit the additional young people staying in education, it will be necessary to increase the number of teachers, lecturers and other staff. They will require the resources to develop their students and encourage them to stay in education. Public expenditure must not simply subsidise employers, but must make a significant impact, beyond short-term statistic chasing, in reducing the number of young people classified as NEET.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 We believe that government must do more to ensure high quality education for 16–19 year olds.

7.2 When the Government’s skills strategy is not clear on how it is going to deliver learner-focussed educational outcomes, and when the very concept of 14–19 education is up in the air, we question whether anyone can be fully prepared for the raising of the participation age at this moment in time.

7.3 However, ATL welcomes this select committee inquiry, and advocates that the recommendations include:

- EMA should not be withdrawn without proper consideration of the impact of the DLSF on the most vulnerable.
- The raising of the participation age must now be supported by full consideration of the needs of all learners, especially the most disadvantaged, and a commitment that supporting learners is never diminished by accountability systems.
- New resources, including investment in initial and continuing professional development for staff, will be needed to ensure education for all 16–19 year olds is high quality and that a new system of IAG is effective and useful for young people.

⁸¹ Lorna Unwin and Alison Fuller, *Towards expansive apprenticeships* and Susan James, *Learning Environments: evidence from World Skills*, Skope paper (2010)

⁸² *14–19 curriculum and its assessment*, ATL position statement (2010)

⁸³ Poverty and social exclusion in rural areas, ATL position statement (2008)

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7.4 You can judge a country's government on the education it provides for all. We hope that raising the participation age changes lives, as it has the potential to do, and does not just become politically expedient.

28 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Save EMA Campaign

The Save EMA campaign represents millions of young people, students and education professionals across the country. The campaign includes the Save EMA campaign, the National Union of Students (NUS), the University and College Unison (UCU), Unison, the National Union of Teachers (NUT), the GMB, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), and NASUWT.

What impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people

The Save EMA campaign has spoken to thousands of young people, students, teachers and lecturers over the last few months. Each young person who has taken part in the campaign has been passionate and innovative about protecting the EMA. Many of them will have submitted their own evidence to the inquiry but here is a collection of some of the things many young people have raised with the campaign.

Some themes around the EMA and access to education were frequently raised during the campaign:

1. *EMA has improved student motivation, punctuality and attendance*
 Young people who receive EMA do not get it without meeting the conditions of their learner agreement. They must attend, be punctual and behave well in order to receive their payment. EMA in this instance encourages young people to be responsible for their own actions and lets them know that if they work hard and need help, that help will be forthcoming.
 Students and teachers fear that the abolition of EMA will have a negative impact on student retention and discourage students from enrolling in the first instance.
2. *EMA gives a wider choice to young people in further education system*
 Many young people have said that EMA has played a pivotal role in the personal decision process of what they went on to study and where. For example, in London we have had many young people who have decided to commute to colleges offering courses many miles from where they live that their local college did not offer. This has been matched in more rural areas where again young people have had a choice in apprenticeship courses, where previously they would have been forced to pursue only.
3. *EMA recipient have been increasing with the economic downturn*
 EMA is a means tested payment that requires the applicant to disclose household income. There has been an upsurge in applicants to EMA in the past year, and this has been matched by many young people who have contacted us stating that due to wider economic circumstances affecting their family income they either now receive or would receive EMA.
 There is a growing concern that the government's current funding for the replacement for EMA does not recognise this and we have many young people who are left in limbo about their future as a result.
4. *Parents/carers will not be able to replace the lost funding*
 Students who depend on the EMA do not have families that can easily replace the lost income. Some families have more than one child in further or higher education and just could not afford to fill the funding gap. On more than one occasion the Save EMA campaign has heard from young people who contribute some of their EMA to the running of their household.
5. *Travel costs are a major concern*
 A majority of young people spend their EMA on travelling to and from their place of study. This is especially so in rural and semi-rural areas where travel over large distances is required for young people to access education. Local authority cuts mean an end to many young people's transport subsidies; before this cut many young people incurred costs for travel that were greater than the EMA awarded to them on a weekly basis.
6. *Course equipment can be expensive*
 Young people, often on vocational courses, struggle to pay for essentials for their courses. During the course of the campaign we heard from catering students who need to buy specific clothing and knives just to access their courses; dance and performing arts students who need specific footwear; construction students who need footwear to be allowed on site; maths and science students who need scientific calculators and electrical installation students who need specific tools and clothing.
7. *EMAs give young people a sense of financial independence*
 Young people enjoy having a level of financial independence and being able to pay their own bus fare without having to rely on their parents/carers. A number of young people we have spoken to would feel guilty asking their parents to support them knowing that family income is tight.

For young people who have been in the social care system, this financial independence is often the first chance they have had to manage a budget of their own and to be awarded money for their own actions, not via their carers from social services.

8. *Young people are determined to stay in education but would have had to make sacrifices and tough choices without EMA*

The current generation of young people have been told time and time again that education is the way to better themselves and society. Even though it would cause many of them serious financial hardship and many would go without food while at college if they didn't have their EMA, they place a high importance on education and would do their best to struggle through. For many young people it feels like that determination is used against them when the fact that many would try to stay on in education despite hardship is described as "deadweight".

9. *Past recipients and the families of young people are also scared for their children's prospects*

We have also contacted by many thousands of parents and siblings of young people either in receipt of or could be in receipt of EMA, who are fearful of what the loss of EMA will do to them and their family's lives. It is sometimes forgotten that EMA not only helps those who directly receive EMA but also those who benefit from the scheme indirectly.

We have also been contacted by past recipients who attribute EMA as playing a key role in their personal advancement in the education system and are fearful for the next generation.

10. *The economic case for EMA is one which has constantly been raised in its defence*

Many people have pointed out that cutting funding to further education when the 16–17 youth unemployment rate is rising and the number of Neets is increasing seems irresponsible and sends the wrong message to young people from government. Numerous studies by respected independent bodies such as the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) demonstrate that not only does EMA increase levels of participation in post-16 education, but that any costs are completely offset. In addition, the Audit Commission support this and claim that it saves UK taxpayers about £4 billion a year, by preventing young people becoming Neets (not in education, employment or training). Furthermore, many well respected and impartial economists have also defended the scheme. When a government is seen to be going against not only public opinion (YouGov poll in January 2011 showed almost half of British public oppose abolition of EMA), but also academic advice this breeds negative and harmful views amongst young people.

The welfare aspect of EMA is very important. This campaign's experience is that often EMA is used to help young people eat lunch when out at college, sixth form or training. It is not a healthy situation for young people to skip meals in order to study and this can also impact on achievement.

28 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by the Alliance for Inclusive Education

The Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE) is a national campaigning and information-sharing network led by disabled people. ALLFIE campaigns for disabled people to have the right to access and to be supported in mainstream education.

We believe that education should support the development of physical, vocational and academic abilities through mixed-ability tuition so that all students have the opportunity to build relationships with one another.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) has been ratified by the UK Government (June 2009). In Article 24 of the UNCRPD the Government has agreed to provide general, tertiary and vocational education and training for disabled learners (learners with LLDD) without discrimination.

"States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, States Parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities."

The Coalition Government is now taking forward the implementation phase of the UNCRPD which ALLFIE welcomes. In order to achieve implementation of Article 24 the Government will need to address the barriers that education providers and local authorities currently face in providing mainstream educational and training opportunities for all disabled young people aged between 16 and 19 years of age.

ALLFIE welcomes the Education Select Committee's "Participation of 16–19 year olds in education and training" inquiry, especially at a time when disabled young people are three times more likely than their non-disabled peers not to be in education, employment or training. ALLFIE hopes the Committee will make recommendations on how to remove the barriers in order to improve academic and vocational achievements of young disabled people aged between 16 and 19 years. Without removing the substantial barriers that disabled young people encounter when wanting to participate in mainstream education, raising the education and training participation age is likely to be meaningless for a great many disabled young people.

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What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness?

ALLFIE has evidence that both local authorities and education providers are not ready to cater for the aspirations of a wider range of young disabled people up to the age of 19 years. This is because there are still barriers that local authorities face in fulfilling their duties to provide “choice” of education and training provision for disabled young people aged between 16 and 19 years of age under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (ASCL).

Currently there is a perverse incentive for further education providers to offer segregated courses focusing on independent living preparation for young disabled people.

This is because:

- Mainstream education providers are financially penalised if they enrol disabled young people onto mainstream accredited courses who then fail the qualification.
- Mainstream education providers have financial incentives to enrol disabled young people onto segregated courses because they are guaranteed their 100% funding allocation.
- Having two separate budgets for learners with learning difficulties and one for everyone else will undermine ASCL’s clause 41 requirement to provide a diverse range of mainstream educational and training courses for all learners (without exceptions) to choose from.

ALLFIE’S RECOMMENDATIONS

ALLFIE wants the local authority only to be given one budget for all young people. Further Education providers should be under the same duty as schools to adapt mainstream course syllabuses so that all students can learn together whilst meeting disabled learners’ needs.

ALLFIE does not want local authorities and Further Education providers to be financially penalised if disabled learners do not manage to gain a qualification at the end of a mainstream accredited course.

EVIDENCE

The 2010–11 Young People’s Learning Agency has drafted guidance which allocates an additional 10% funding for education providers who are successful in getting their students to pass their examinations and qualifications. This we believe has restricted the educational and training opportunities available for young disabled people.

ALLFIE recognises that disabled learners like their non-disabled peers want to participate in a wide range of academic, vocational and professional courses covering numerous subject areas. Only 50% of disabled young people are pursuing an educational or training course of their choice. This figure is lower than for their non disabled peers.⁸⁴ The Learning and Skills Council in 2008⁸⁵ reported that learners with LLDD wanted to participate in the same range of courses that are on offer to their non-disabled peers. In practice representation of these young disabled people on a diverse range of courses has been limited. This is because there are no clear expectations on mainstream education providers to adapt the curriculum so that disabled young people are able to learn alongside their non- disabled peers on mainstream course options for disabled young people who are working below level 2. The only explicit educational options mentioned are “Learning for Living and Working”/“Learning Foundation” accredited courses. ALLFIE has found evidence showing a great majority of learners with LLDD are being placed on such courses.

<i>Subject Sector Area</i>	<i>LLDD Numbers</i>	<i>LLDD %</i>
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	1,297	2%
Arts, Media and Publishing	6,528	9%
Business, Administration and Law	2,554	3%
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	1,128	1%
Education and Training	815	1%
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	2,053	3%
Health, Public Services and Care	8,207	11%
History, Philosophy and Theology	923	1%
Information and Communication Technology	7,738	10%
Languages, Literature and Culture	2,809	4%
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	1,847	2%
Preparation for Life and Work	30,923	41%
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	2,983	4%
Science and Mathematics	2,907	4%

⁸⁴ <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/0565.pdf>

⁸⁵ LSC (2008) “Review of provision for Learners with LLDD in West Midlands 2007–08 Page 21
[http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/WestMidlands/LSC_West_Midlands_-_Review_of_provision_for_Learners_with_Learning_Difficulties_and_or_Disabilities_\(LLDD\)_in_the_West_Midlands_2007-08.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/WestMidlands/LSC_West_Midlands_-_Review_of_provision_for_Learners_with_Learning_Difficulties_and_or_Disabilities_(LLDD)_in_the_West_Midlands_2007-08.pdf)

<i>Subject Sector Area</i>	<i>LLDD Numbers</i>	<i>LLDD %</i>
Social Sciences	840	1%
Other/not classified	2,264	3%

The Learning and Skills Council reported in its review of LLDD provision in November 2008 that 41% of learners with LLDD were enrolled onto a Preparation for Living and Work Course. This was four times higher than the largest group of learners with LLDD enrolled on other mainstream courses. The Adult Learning Inspectorate concluded that such courses created a “A key difficulty for many learners at the foundation stage is the poverty of the discrete curriculum...”⁸⁶ Just two weeks ago the Association of Learning Providers expressed concern about the usefulness of young people having learning foundation qualifications when looking for a job.⁸⁷

“Foundation learning funding is distributed solely for the acquisition of qualifications for young people, to give them specific qualifications which are quite low level and questionably of interest to employers.” (Graham Hoyle *Times Educational Supplement*, 11 February 2011)

ALLFIE believes that the Learning Foundation course content can be integrated into any mainstream educational courses. For example travelling independently can be learnt by learning the route from home to college, cooking skills can be developed through taking part in accredited NVQ level 2 cooking or BTEC OND Hospitality courses, which are available for learners without LLDD. This already happens in mainstream schools whereby the teachers are required to adapt the national curriculum to meet individual pupils’ learning needs and requirements.

Additional Learning Support

Disabled students currently have no right to appropriate support needed to participate in mainstream further education. Local authorities participating in the Right to Control pilots provides direct payments in lieu of social care, Disabled Facilities Grant and Access to Work services. Unfortunately, the further education funding stream has not been included into the pilots, even though there are legal provisions to allow the Secretary of State to issue these regulations. Until the Secretary of State allows local authorities to provide direct payments in lieu of college, disabled learners’ support arrangements will remain inadequate.

ALLFIE’S RECOMMENDATIONS

- A legal right for all disabled students to access mainstream educational and training opportunities.
- The Secretary of State for Education to issue regulations allowing for disabled students to have a direct payment similar to the one available in higher education, the Disabled Student’s Allowance.
- The local authorities participating in the Right to Control pilots to be able to offer direct payments in lieu of college support services.
- Individualised budgets to include further and higher education funding streams for disabled students.
- One budget for all learners rather than two separate ones for learners with and without learning difficulties

EVIDENCE

Currently colleges and training providers are responsible for administrating ALS so therefore can control disabled students’ access to certain courses. The college rather than individual student applies for additional learning support. The National Union of Students’ “Finding the Way in FE, Disabled Students Participation in Further Education” report (2010) highlighted disabled students’ dissatisfaction with how the learning support is arranged by their college. Learners requiring support are discriminated against if they want to enrol onto mainstream courses:

“I was also discriminated against because I was not able to access free transport like the students in the special needs section of further education college, because I was deemed to not need this support because I was following a mainstream course...” (NUS 2010)

ALLFIE has heard through its networks how young people are prevented from attending mainstream courses of their own choosing. We suspect this is because a disproportionate amount of additional learning support funding is being used to fund segregated courses for learners with learning difficulties rather than supporting real choice for disabled learners participating in mainstream further education.

⁸⁶ Adult Learning Inspectorate (2006) “Greater Expectations for Learners with Disabilities—Provision for learners with disabilities” ([http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Post-16-learning-and-skills/Read-about-this-new-section/Greater-expectations-provision-for-learners-with-disabilities/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Post-16-learning-and-skills/Read-about-this-new-section/Greater-expectations-provision-for-learners-with-disabilities/(language)/eng-GB))

⁸⁷ Times Education Supplement (Friday 11 February 2011) “Foundation Tier Turns Off Employers Say Providers” article.

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Apprenticeships

ALLFIE welcomes the Government's commitment to provide a greater number of apprenticeships for young people. Since last year some improvements have been made to make apprenticeships more inclusive for young disabled people. The Labour Government's reconsideration of all young people being required to have five GCSEs including Maths and English to gain entitlement for an apprenticeship placement was warmly welcomed. However there are still provisions in the apprenticeships entitlement which could prevent local authorities and education and training providers from supporting disabled young people.

ALLFIE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- The apprenticeships framework should provide flexibility so that disabled young people can pass their apprenticeship. Such flexibility may include duration, hours worked and being required to complete functional numeracy and literacy at level 2 or 3.
- Apprenticeship employment and education support should be provided by one funding stream (ie the local authority's Right to Control pilots).

EVIDENCE

ALLFIE knows many disabled young people who are more than capable of holding down employment without having Maths and English equivalent qualifications. Many well known employers such as TESCO providing apprenticeships opportunities do not require entrants or indeed those completing apprenticeships to have these functional skills qualifications before moving into paid employment, such as being a sales assistant.

Careers Guidance

ALLFIE welcomes the move for local authorities and schools to arrange independent careers guidance and advice if the advisors are well-informed about what mainstream education opportunities are available for young disabled people.

ALLFIE knows anecdotally how poor the information, advice and guidance around careers for young disabled young people can be.

ALLFIE'S RECOMMENDATION

Local authorities and education providers should have careers officers who are well trained and have high aspirations for their disabled clients.

EVIDENCE

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) "Staying On" report⁸⁸ highlighted how careers advisors tailor their advice to what people with a particular impairment "should" do rather than base it on an individual's aspirations.

"Stereotyping—careers advice, the choice of subjects to study at school and for an apprenticeship, and work experience placements are all subject to stereotyping that tend to have an impact more significantly on distinct groups, including girls, the disabled, the working class and some ethnic minorities. The result is that young people's options and aspirations are limited at an early age."

The "Staying On" report also notes that disabled young people are not receiving information about opportunities in work-based learning and apprenticeships, and that the information received on further education options is often negative. This is an email ALLFIE received on 3 February 2011 from a parent about her disabled daughter making transition plans:

"Before Christmas 2010 we'd met with a new Connexions officer. She was a bit taken aback when she offered Sam a full-time placement post-16 special school and we said "no".... Bit of a waste of everyone's time. What was good was Sam's teacher and teaching assistant were there and the next morning they had loads of ideas to put together a person-centred programme based on what we know works for Sam."

The EHRC report attributed this lack of information and inadequate guidance to professionals not believing that young disabled people could cope with certain choices as a result of viewing disability through a medical model, resulting in a "damage limitation exercise".

What impact has the Education Maintenance Allowance had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will the Discretionary Learner Support Fund be in replacing it?

ALLFIE is concerned about the proposed changes in Disability Living Allowance which may prohibit young disabled people from participating in mainstream education. Reducing DLA is likely to lead to greater difficulty for students in paying for the additional costs of being disabled, such as using transport or paying for items

⁸⁸ http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/ehrc_education_60pp.pdf: EHRC (2009) "Staying On".

and support which may indirectly enhance their learning experiences whilst at college or undertaking a training course.

ALLFIE does not want young people to be deterred from participating in mainstream education simply because they or their parents cannot afford for them to continue after 16 years of age.

ALLFIE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- EMA should be reinstated and extended for young people on any course.
- The DLA review should ensure that disabled young people will not be worse off than they would have been when in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

What impact will raising the participation age have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision?

Through providing mainstream educational and training opportunities disabled learners are more likely to fulfil their ambitions later on in life in whatever they do, in terms of career path, developing a hobby and preventing the risk of social isolation. All of these assist disabled people to find their role to play in the Big Society which the Coalition Government wants to create.

28 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Abdulhaq Bismillah, parent and parent governor, BSix, Sixth Form College, Hackney

What impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people?

I am Parent Governor at BSix sixth form in Hackney and have four children who will be affected with two children and two others recently who have benefitted hugely from receiving full rate of £30 per week EMA.

I represent views of parents on the college governing body. I have been overwhelmed along with student union and college administrators as to financial consequences for many poor and disadvantaged families especially at a time when there are other deep and massive cuts happening in public and welfare services.

I work with young people and I know how crucial EMA is in terms of retaining many young people at further education establishment and especially at BSix at a time increasingly many young people who are in NEET category—Not in Education, Employment or training.

I am extremely surprised at the way the government have gone about axing lifeline of EMA from many young people especially those from families who are in living in poverty; this will not alleviate child poverty and will only mean struggling to juggle household budget on a day to day basis.

For many young people it will lead to lots of pressure on young people and their families and having to prioritise whether to feed a family, pay increasingly fuel bills, or keep a child in college to receive essential education which will lead to qualification and at the end gainful employment.

EMA is already targetted those who need it most in our increasingly marginalised society where we increasing have and have nots. For me, many parents and students do not understand the government's position and thinking in cutting back this crucial benefit, which benefits many in our society especially those who come from white working class and members of black and ethnic minority students.

The cuts come at a time when there are cuts in public service budgets especially in an inner-city Labor controlled councils and government plans to transfer sums to suburban Conservative councils where at present many do not qualify for EMA as their parent have income of more than £30,000. I accept that there are families that live in countryside who are also affected with this cut in government spending.

The life chances of many young people will be diminished as they are at present look forward to staying on further education as there is an incentive of up to £30 per week if they achieve punctuality and attendance targets.

There are many young people who are affected with burden of not being able to achieve five A*-C GCSE academic qualifications especially many in the urban inner-city areas where attainment level is very low increasingly affecting young men. Therefore, there is no incentive for them to stay at college or sixth-forms centres. I have seen many young people struggle at school with basic literacy, numeracy and life skills for them equip in the wider society. By withdrawing EMA and subsequent reduction in level of funding of Discretionary Learners Fund it will mean many will drop-out of colleges and will be at home having nothing to do ie boredom and may lead to increase in isolation of young people from mainstream society.

There is already increase youth unemployment across the country at a time we do not have any positive stories in job creation, yet there are redundancies across all sectors of job market. Cut in EMA, will not help or alleviate young people's aspiration as they will not stay in education. Thus, leading to lost generation who will not be equipped to compete in job market and prospect of long term unemployment. By retaining EMA it

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will mean young people are productive where they are in education, training or in employment and making contribution to UK plc with taxation and betterment for themselves and the society they live in.

With increase in youth crime, young people going through youth justice system, increase in youth offenders system, and increased use of ASBOS to tackle many petty/ minor crime, young people will be disproportionately affected with this cut in EMA as there are cuts in youth provision, libraries, college funding and now many charities and voluntary sectors funding has been cut will mean there will be no hope of long term prospects of them staying on at colleges.

Thousands of low-income students and their families will not be able to study as they rely upto £30 of EMA to help students with travel especially in London where the travelling by public transport is not cheap and at least 2/3 of costs will go towards travelling to and from home to college. This will mean students will be left with balancing act of whether to spend on buying tea/coffee/cappuccino or a meal at lunch time. As we know in London it is very expensive city to live in and it is highly unlikely that student will be able to afford lunch at minimum of £2. Where will they get money to support them? This does any amount included for their personal need of clothes, shoes, books, stationery/equipment, leisure/hobbies, and entertainment. I would suggest that a Minister should try to live on £30 per week for a month, as per former Rt Hon Matthew Parris MP (now journalist of The Times) and see how they would struggle to live on a day to day basis and survive without having to resort to other desperate measures ie begging, prostitution, stealing, fraud etc.

There are insufficient apprenticeship and with the traditional industries/manufacturing that was decimated in the 80's, there are very limited opportunity for young people to train for traditional tool trade jobs i.e. plumbers, electricians, painters and decorators, shipbuilding. The decline in council/social housing has also meant many young men who were not academically gifted or chose to go into those trades where it relied on house building. Therefore young people career opportunity has limited and their life chance of living a decent wage has disappeared as private sector is unlikely train people for free without gaining any financial benefit.

There has also been cut in future job fund where it targeted young people who were on job seekers allowance and thus instead of keeping young people active and at the same time learning while earning has disappeared without any thinking of consequences of long-term worklessness. The Government's thinking is very short-term and it is very damaging future employment prospects of young men and women.

There are many young people who due to their family circumstances have never known any stability in their domestic life due to their family life due to separation or divorce of their parents who will be supporting them as they lived with foster family and it is the parental income that is taken into account. What will happen to them when new system comes into account?

For many young men and women post 16 will be an unsure start to their lives as they will have to borrow or live on a good will of their parents and carers to stay in education. UK is the fourth richest country in the world, surely, the Government must increase spending in education and upskilling our young people for better of themselves and the wider society especially at a time when we are in completion with highly skilled personnel from many developing countries where they are investing in further and higher education.

CONCLUSION

EMA has been great success in securing attendance, punctuality, effort, achievement and retention of young people in higher education. The Government's short term strategy is a disaster for many student and their families as they greatly depend upon this allowance to add to their family income. For many young men and women EMA is the lifeline of staying in education and makes huge differences to quality of life to those that need it most and it is already a means tested benefit a sit depend upon parental income of students. This benefit is already carefully targetted and I am unsure how this can be further targetted. Hence, it means cuts to many people and it does not matter how this can packaged in different wrappers. Government should be encouraging young people to stay in education and not destroying their dreams without loading them with debts. Withdrawing EMA will ultimately affect the people who needs it most and disproportionately affect more white working class (especially many Northern England towns and cities, parts of Wales and Scotland) and people from black and minority ethnic communities where attainment level is low and unemployment is high. The future for young people's future prospects and morale will be low.

As regards to welfare of young people, the Government would fail "Every Child Matters (ECM)" five themes:

"Be healthy, Stay safe, Enjoy and achieve, Make a positive contribution and Achieve economic well-being".

The Government's duty is to abide by these themes and values. Unfortunately, all values of ECM is unlikely to be fulfilled by withdrawing EMA as well as increase in tuition fees and cutting in housing benefit, withdrawal or reduction of many welfare benefits including disappearance of social housing and leaving to market forces to dictate supply and demand.

28 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by National Union of Students

1. Capacity and provision in advance of the raising of the education and training participation age.

2. Whilst NUS broadly supports the principles behind the raising of the participation age, we are concerned that the infrastructure to support this initiative is being eroded, including through the removal of the EMA and transport provision. Without a strong infrastructure, NUS is concerned about the possible effects on access, attendance, achievement and behaviour. Without adequate support, we are concerned that increasing numbers of young people could be classed as “NEETs” or criminalized.

What impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it

3. NUS challenges ministers’ assertions that 90% of EMA funding and recipients are “deadweight” and would attend college even if they did not receive the allowance.

4. The National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) study from which this figure was derived was unrepresentative and its use as the sole evidence for this decision is subject to question. The NFER research was only undertaken in a small sample of schools using a small number of students from Year 10 and 11 only, excluding the 69% of students in receipt of EMA studying in further education colleges. By including young people in sixth form colleges who typically have higher qualifications than students in the majority of providers—further education colleges, the results are themselves likely to be unrepresentative.

5. The NFER research also failed to full assess the take-up of and impact of EMA on BME communities. 91% of the survey sample self-defined as “white”, whereas 84% of all Bangladeshi and 70% of Pakistani students receive EMA.ⁱ

6. NUS’ EMA Satisfaction Survey 2010 shows that the financial support was critical, with 55% of all recipients—rising to 59% of those receiving the full £30 weekly allowance—stating that they could not continue in further education without EMA.ⁱⁱ

7. A strong defense of the role of the EMA has been made by Mick Fletcher, in his report for the CfBT Educational Trust, “Should We End the EMA?”ⁱⁱⁱ He argues in that document that the evidence is clear that EMA has had a positive impact on participation, and that it should be retained despite the raising of the education and training age (RPA) policy and the tightening of public finances. He believes that young people staying on in education or training will still require support to offset the costs of learning, and EMA payments will help ensure that learners do not work so many extra hours during term-time that this impacts on their attainment.

8. Even if Ministers’ arguments that 90% of EMA are deadweight were accepted, the costs of EMA are more than outweighed by its benefits. The Government failed to consider econometric evidence by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), which found that the EMA significantly increased participation rates in post-16 education among young adults, and concluded that its impact was “substantial”.

9. The December 2010 report from the Institute for Fiscal Studies, “An efficient education maintenance allowance?” concluded that “the costs of providing EMA were likely to be exceeded in the long run by the higher wages that its recipients would go on to enjoy in future.” The report states clearly “that even taking into account the level of deadweight that was found, the costs of EMA are completely offset”.

10. NUS believes EMA encourages attendance, retention and attainment, not simply participation. The research evidence shows that those in receipt of EMA not only stay on the course, but are more likely to achieve their learning outcomes. A 2007 IFS evaluation showed the EMA has had an impact on retention in two year courses, particularly in rural areas and amongst BME learners.^{iv}

11. The language used by the previous Government often indicated EMA was only ever an incentive payment intended to raise participation. It is true that this was an aim of the scheme, and one which it meets, by 7.3ppt for females and 5.5ppt for males in females who receive the allowance.^v

12. EMA has an impact on attainment too. According to NUS’ EMA Satisfaction Survey some 76% of learners thought they would have to work more hours in part-time employment without it, rising to 78% amongst those on £30 per week and with 21% of learners already working in excess of 15 hours per week this could only have a detrimental effect. Only 61% of respondents even believe the EMA fully covers their essential learning costs, such as travel, books and equipment, and food at college with the remainder reporting a shortfall.

13. The 157 Group of leading colleges more recently released its own study into the effectiveness of EMA, and some of the reports from individual colleges were equally impressive.^{vi} At one college there was a 15ppt difference in retention rate for those receiving the EMA and those who did not, and a 13ppt difference in pass rates between those receiving the EMA and those who did not. Attendance rates were also shown to be better for EMA recipients, and this is hardly surprising when the weekly payment is tied to attendance.

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14. NUS believes that part of the reason for EMA's success is in ensuring that recipients do not try to maintain too many hours of part-time employment to supplement their income during college, which impact on attainment and possibly participation. Our own research in the NUS' EMA Satisfaction Survey 2010 showed that 76% of recipients felt they would have to work more hours if they did not receive EMA. Indeed, at another college in the 157 survey, almost one in five students who dropped out in 2002 (before EMA was introduced) cited financial reasons—but by 2009 that figure was just one in 20.

15. The benefits of EMA extend to other, less obvious areas—one report suggests that the introduction of the EMA reduced crime in the community, with greater decline in burglary and theft convictions amongst young people recorded in a study of some of the pilot local authority areas in England.^{vii}

16. EMA created one, comparatively simple, national scheme. The benefits of this approach should not be lightly disregarded.

17. Of course, the Government argues that EMA is not being scrapped, merely replaced by more targeted, and thus more effective funding. The mechanism for doing so will be “enhanced” discretionary learner support funds (DLSFs), pots of money administered by colleges and other learning providers within broad national guidelines.

18. The total funds available after the CSR announcement of a cut of “around £0.5 billion” will leave a tiny fraction of the present EMA budget—projected as £564 million for 2010–11—to be allocated to 16 to 19 year old learners through whatever new method of “targeted support” emerges out of “locally managed discretionary funds” and/or local transport subsidies.

19. Current DLSFs are often exhausted early in the academic year, leaving those starting courses in the winter or later at risk of receiving less support than if they started in the autumn. Indeed, learners at smaller (often work-based) learning providers may receive next to nothing as their providers receive very little or choose not to administer these funds at all.

20. Critics of EMA like to paint it as an aberration, something which appeared like a mushroom in 2004 (or in 1999 when the pilots commenced) rather than placing it in its actual historical context. The Education Act of 1944 gave local authorities the power to make discretionary grants to young people in education. Fifty years later they were still doing so, but a 1998 DFEE report, *New Arrangements for Effective Student Support in Further Education*, or the Lane Report, identified just the problems that the new system could create—including variable funding from local authority to local authority, creating uncertainty and unfairness. It reported that “policies [were] not related to student need but mostly driven by resource availability,” and the interaction between grants and benefits was unclear.

21. NUS is concerned that, within the DLSF scheme, learners will be placed at a disadvantage if their local authority or provider is not allocated adequate funds. Any new allocations model should take into account the number of students attending a provider, in addition to the level of social deprivation within the locality.

22. The fact that every provider could have a different policy to navigate will make the process more difficult for learners to understand, and will mean some in identical circumstances receiving different treatment. Learners will have no idea ahead of the course what their entitlement, if any, will be. Such confusion and unfairness deterring many from applying in the first place, or learners making decisions based on funding that might not materialise.

23. We may not even know the extent of the impact, as atomised budgets spread across individual learning providers will be difficult to monitor and it will be far from clear if the money is being targeted in the way the Government intended.

24. Even if it is accepted that only 1 in 10 learners “need” EMA, it is not a simple task to identify who those learners are. Either providers make policies based on broad categories, and risk recreating or exacerbating the same problems the Government has with EMA, or there are in depth forms, but this then places greater administrative burdens on learning providers, who in some cases would have to make assessments of thousands of applications, check evidence and determine priorities.

25. Indeed, this picture is reflected today in the variation in the provision of 16–18 transport subsidies by local authorities. Authorities have a legal requirement to develop a policy in this area, but this varies from relatively generous provision in some areas to virtually nothing in others. The steep cuts to local government funding puts such provision at risk, so that learners face increased transport costs at the same time as EMA is abolished.

26. At present, the DLSF does not cover travel. The government do not have an estimate of how much it costs to travel to a post-16 course, the latest figures they have are from 2003. In many areas, especially rural ones, EMA is crucial in meeting travel costs. With local authority cuts impacting on young people's travel subsidies, this will increasingly be important. Any financial support system must take into account the cost of physically attending college.

27. NUS believes that the eligibility criteria for DLSF should be set nationally. Providers and local authorities will be placed in an extremely vulnerable position if they are given responsibility for deciding which students

or groups of students should qualify for the fund. Moreover, students themselves are at risk of dropping out of education if they are told part-way through a course that they do not qualify for support.

28. There are some benefits to EMA that also could be lost. EMA payments are made weekly, based on attendance whereas there is no guarantee that learning providers will do the same, impacting on learner's abilities to budget and reducing their incentives to go to their classes. If they do pay weekly they incur additional costs of making bank transfers, further increasing the administration costs of the scheme.

29. EMAs are also clearly disregarded for entitlement to social security benefits, whereas discretionary payments are often included. The rules are complex, and the new system risks reducing the learner or their family's benefit entitlement, creating a poverty trap and raising barriers to their participation.

30. NUS believes that the stability and transparency provided by a national system allows young people and their families to plan ahead. It means that young people know what they can expect if they attend college, are punctual and do their coursework. A hardship fund will not offer this stability. EMAs are relatively unusual as forms of state support in that payment is contingent not only on rules relating to residency and an income assessment, but also on continuing attendance at the learning provider. Students are given a level of financial independence but also responsible and accountable for their behaviour—including attendance, completion and performance.

What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness.

31. Local authorities will need to plan what education provision will be needed—including academic, vocational and work-based learning. These preparations will be based on the number of young people and the nature and demands of local labour markets, but will also need to take into account that further education colleges recruit from a wider area than their immediate local surroundings, including crossing local authority boundaries. They need accurate data to inform this work.

32. NUS is concerned that local authorities will not have the capacity to ensure that each and every 17 and 18 year old is participating in education or training. We are also concerned that local authorities will not be able to oversee the raising of the participation age in institutions not under local authority control.

33. The Department for Education or others will have to consider the impact of national policy on the demand for different course types given changes in both the further and higher education sectors in terms of funding and financial support for learners.

34. NUS is not of the belief that the duties placed on local authorities are strong enough and doubt the ability of local authorities, given the scale of cuts to their budgets, in being able to enforce their duties. Many authorities are issuing redundancies in the very departments that are needed here or simply not replacing staff when they leave. This will severely impact on local authority's readiness.

35. There are also areas that may be missed if pure labour market demand and profitability of courses for an institution drives provision. Gaps in provision may arise as well as possible over supply in what may be seen as relatively "easy" provision in terms of both student numbers and delivery.

36. It is also worth noting that with the abolition of Connexions, there must be adequate provision for information, advice and guidance (IAG) for all young people, especially with the requirement for them to participate in education or training with the increase in the participation age.

What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision.

37. Whilst NUS broadly supports the principles behind raising the participation age, we are concerned that the infrastructure to support this initiative is being eroded. The abolition of the EMA and the lack of transport provision for 16–19 year olds will prevent some young people from undertaking education or training. Without a strong infrastructure, young people will be unable to participate, and NUS is concerned that these young people will be classed as "NEETs" or criminalised.

38. Raising the participation age in education and training will place constraints on the life choices of young people aged 16 and 17. Whilst NUS supports the idea that young people will remain in education or training beyond the age of 16, care should be taken to ensure that their personal and educational choices are respected.

39. Upon the raising of the participation age, teaching staff will be faced with a fresh set of challenges relating to increased class sizes, a different set of demands from learners, and may encounter increased discipline and behaviour issues. NUS is concerned about the effects of FE budget cuts on the resources put into teachers' CPD, at a time when they will need more intensive support and development to deal with changes to the learner demographic, and a potential increase in discipline and behaviour issues.

40. To ensure that learners are apprised of the complete range of education and training opportunities available at 16–19, including both vocational and academic routes, measures should be taken to ensure that learners under the age of 16 receive the highest standard of independent and impartial information, advice and guidance at school level.

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41. With more people staying in education and training beyond the age of 16, it is vital that there exists a fair system of access to higher education. NUS is concerned about the effect of the abolition of Aimhigher on access to university for young people from underprivileged backgrounds.

42. NUS believes increasing the participation age for education and training whilst simultaneously removing funding for further education and financial support for learners is unlikely to lead to better results or tackle the well-documented unemployment issues currently faced by 18–24 year olds.

43. Given that more young people aged 16–18 are now expected to stay on in education following the raising of the participation age, it defies sense to cut the further education budget by 25% over the CSR period, amounting to more than £1 billion in reductions. Current cuts to FE budgets mean that institutions are already looking to cut courses and staff when they should be looking to expand resourcing and provision.

44. Though NUS has long-supported reform of Connexions, the service had a central role to play in the raising of the participation age. Following the abolition of Connexions, there must be adequate information, advice and guidance (IAG) provision in its stead. Although it is outside the remit of this Committee, abolition of outreach schemes such as Aimhigher and practical assistance through the Future Jobs Fund are likely to harm the opportunities and prospects of 16–19 year olds in the coming months and years.

45. Increased competition for places available in education and training should be expected as the participation age increases. It is unclear as to whether the further education sector and employers can meet the demand that will be placed on them, and they should be supported in order to do so. In particular, the number of apprenticeships needed and demanded far outstrips those that are supplied.

46. NUS is concerned that the lack of supply of apprenticeships and the ending NVQ entitlements will make it harder for those staying in education and training to find the courses and routes that are right for them. Greater investment is needed in vocational education that provides clear progression routes.

47. NUS is also deeply concerned that the removal of EMA without an adequate replacement will create a situation where it is more difficult for those compelled to stay in education and training to afford to do so.

REFERENCES

ⁱ <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000850/index.shtml>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/asset/news/6011/emareport2010.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.cfbt.com/evidenceforeducation/pdf/1.EMA_v4%28FINAL%29W.pdf

^{iv} <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-emaevaluationadministrativedata-jan2008.pdf>

^v http://www.cfbt.com/evidenceforeducation/pdf/1.EMA_v4%28FINAL%29W.pdf

^{vi} <http://www.157group.co.uk/news/news/157-group-research-features-in-tes-fe-focus-ema-keeps-recipients-in-education-for-longer>

^{vii} <http://www.learningbenefits.net/Publications/ResReps/ResRep14.pdf>

28 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Training and Development Agency for Schools

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY FOR SCHOOLS CONTEXT

The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) has responsibility for ensuring the supply of high quality teachers, for initial teacher training (ITT) and for supporting the skills of teachers who are already in the workforce. The Agency has also acquired considerable expertise in both the training and development needs of vocational learning practitioners, and in developing vocational qualifications for support staff.

The TDA works collaboratively with a range of stakeholders, including those from the further education (FE) and higher education (HE) sectors to inform and support the supply of an effective and well trained 16–19 workforce. The Agency also works closely with a range of Training Schools and School Partnerships, and has an experienced team of Regional Leads who have been able to provide an indication of local responses both to the questions posed by the Select Committee, and to recent relevant policy changes. There is little hard evidence at this stage, but there are some recurring themes in the intelligence gathered.

TDA KEY MESSAGES

- Raising the participation age is likely to increase the demand for qualified teachers in both school and FE sectors, but it is not currently possible to comment on the scale of that increase.
- Skills required of teachers in both sectors are also likely to change:
 - Greater demand for subject specialists to meet the needs of expanded sixth form provision.

- Increasing number of teachers required to have appropriate vocational knowledge and competence to develop true employability skills in young people.
- Increasing demand for skills to engage and manage those young people who are reluctant to participate.
- Crucial role of teachers in accurately signposting young people to high quality careers advice.
- The provision of high quality careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is fundamental to ensuring successful outcomes for young people, and to meeting skills shortages such as those in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects.⁸⁹
- Intelligence gathered from the nine regions tells us that it is difficult to isolate the impact of one factor such as Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) or Raising the Participation Age (RPA) in a landscape of concurrent changes and uncertainty.
- Collaborative approaches by providers are likely to be a significant factor in determining impact on participation. The TDA has established relationships with 260 school partnerships (over 3000 schools, colleges and higher education institutions (HEIs)) that could potentially play a part in both supporting such approaches across the sectors and raising awareness of new opportunities.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Response</i>
1. What impact has the Education Maintenance Allowance had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people?	<p>1.1 Evidence of impact appears to be ambiguous. Some research⁹⁰ tells us that EMA has had a positive impact on participation, particularly of low achieving groups of young people and those in receipt of free school meals, as well as encouraging retention amongst minority ethnic groups⁹¹. Some regions report year-on-year increases in participation and reduction in the not in education, employment or training (NEET) population since the introduction of EMA. Other arguments rely on the apparently contradictory statistic⁹² that 87% of EMA recipients said that receipt did not affect their choice to participate. This disparity is reflected in the intelligence gathered from the regions.</p> <p>1.2 It is clear, however, that the impact on providers has not been proportional. Take-up of EMA is higher in rural areas and amongst young people leaving key stage 4 with low attainment.</p> <p>1.3 FE providers across the nine regions have expressed concern that without EMA it will be considerably more difficult to ensure regular attendance and, therefore, achievement. On the other hand, there are those in more affluent catchment areas who argue that EMA has been costly to implement with minimal impact on recruitment.</p> <p>1.4 Removal of EMA may have an adverse impact on social mobility and the skills strategy as it is low income/unskilled households who will be affected.</p> <p>1.5 Transport is commonly identified as the biggest barrier to participation if EMA is withdrawn.</p>
2. How effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing EMA?	<p>2.1 Much will depend on the level at which it is set, the criteria applied and ensuring that it is not an administrative burden on providers.</p> <p>2.2 Lessons learned from the administration of EMA could be applied in establishing a Discretionary Learner Support Fund.</p>
3. What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years?	<p>3.1 There is a need to ensure adequate provision of high quality vocational education with secure progression pathways.⁹³ Learners who would have left education or training at 16 and are unable to find employment are likely to seek vocational rather than academic routes, and demand a more diverse range of opportunities.</p> <p>3.2 Young people will need high quality careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) to help them navigate different learning routes and/or find employment. This is at a time when the Connexions service is ending and the transition to the new All Age Careers Service is under development.</p>

⁸⁹ Towards a strong careers profession—a report by the Careers Profession Taskforce 2010 & STEM Careers: Report to the Gatsby Charitable Foundation Nov 2010

⁹⁰ EMA: Evaluation with Administrative Data Institute for Fiscal Studies Nov 2007—p10

⁹¹ <http://www.parliament.uk/briefingpapers/commons/lib/research/briefings/snsg-05778.pdf>

⁹² Evaluation of the EMA National Roll-out—Final Year Report

⁹³ The Wolf Report March 2011

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<i>Question</i>	<i>Response</i>
4. What is their current state of readiness?	<p>3.3 Increasing numbers of young people entering sixth form or FE provision will change the profile of teacher numbers and skills required. This is increasingly likely during the current recession as young people will be less likely to move into employment or apprenticeships and more likely to remain in education. This will disproportionately impact on areas of high unemployment.</p> <p>— Whilst we know there is likely to be an impact on the number of pupils in school-based sixth forms, and hence on the size of the teaching workforce required, detailed projections rest with the Department for Education (DfE). The TDA is well placed to work with the DfE to support the modelling of teacher demand/supply (using the Teacher Supply Model) in terms of both numbers and skills and develop an appropriate recruitment strategy.</p> <p>— We also know that there is likely to be an impact on the shape of the teaching workforce: larger sixth forms will require more specialist teachers and it is much harder for teachers to teach outside their specialist subject at this level. The TDA relies on the DfE's modelling to reflect this in ITT targets, but could work with DfE colleagues to formulate expectations of school-based 16 plus stay-on rates and ensure that adequate strategies are in place to meet changing patterns of supply and demand.</p> <p>3.4 Lessons could be learned from the Ofsted Good Practice Survey 2009 which identified areas of excellent practices in reducing numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), highlighting the strategies, partnerships and activities which 12 local authorities have successfully employed to attract some of the most difficult to reach young people into work or learning.</p> <p>3.5 There is a need to consider local employment opportunities, particularly for employment with training, as many jobs are unavailable to those under 18 years of age.</p> <p>3.6 Areas where there is a high incidence of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are likely to pose a greater challenge to expanding training and apprenticeship places.</p> <p>3.7 Curriculum changes such as the introduction of the English Baccalaureate will impact on the local supply/demand for teaching specialisms.</p> <p>3.8 Post-16 curriculum and transitional support arrangements will also need to meet the needs of vulnerable young people.⁹⁴</p> <p>3.9 Clarity is needed regarding accountability for young people who fail to participate or attend but fail to engage/achieve.</p> <p>4.1 Reports submitted by TDA Regional Leads paint a variable picture across the nine regions. In some areas there is little evidence of preparation.</p> <p>4.2 Collaborative approaches by providers are likely to be a significant factor in avoiding duplication and ensuring consistent quality of provision.</p> <p>4.3 Lack of detailed information/understanding on a wide range of issues (eg the level and criteria for DSLF, curriculum changes (EBACC & Wolf), changes to school infrastructure, teacher supply/demand, travel subsidies, post-16 funding methodology, impact of the loss of EMA, impact of changes to HE tuition fees, and the loss of Connexions/roll-out of the All Age Careers Service) may mitigate against the ability of providers and local authorities to plan and prepare.</p> <p>4.4 Planning completed during previous government is now outdated and in need of considerable revision.</p>

⁹⁴ Including LLDD, teenage parents, young offenders, looked after children, those residing in areas with high levels of deprivation, Travellers, Refugees

<i>Question</i>	<i>Response</i>
5. What impact will raising the participation age have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision.	<p>5.1 Providers report that the impact will depend very much on funding arrangements: both capital funding to support new equipment and vocational centres, and funded learner numbers to expand provision.</p> <p>5.2 Raising stakeholder awareness of new routes</p> <p>5.3 Engaging young people who might otherwise become NEET and thus ensuring their attendance</p> <p>5.4 The impact of RPA cannot be estimated in isolation</p>

29 March 2011

Written evidence submitted by Jules Pipe, Mayor of Hackney on behalf of the London Borough of Hackney

I am writing to submit evidence for the consideration of the Education Select Committee as part of your inquiry into 16–19 Participation in Education and Training. I write on behalf of the Council and students from the borough to add our voices to the many you will no doubt already have heard from expressing grave concern at the decisions you are looking into.

This letter follows an inquiry by our own Community Safety and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Commission into the impact of the removal of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA); a Deputation brought by students from the local college, BSix, to Hackney's January Full Council meeting and a petition from students at BSix calling for the reversal of the Government's decision to abolish the EMA.

You will be aware that London has one of the highest percentages of 16–18 year olds in receipt of EMA (54%) but may not be aware that Hackney has one of the highest percentages in London (with around 82% in receipt of the maximum £30 allowance). You will no doubt receive a number of submissions relating to the flawed basis for the Government's decision and I look forward to your Committee's consideration of these widely discussed points—in particular the statistically flawed assumption that 88% of students would remain in education were EMA removed on the basis of 12% responding positively to an opposite question. This Council and borough would also welcome your Committee's comments on the subsequent analysis carried out by the IFS showing significant additional benefits to the continuation of the EMA as well as the paltry compensatory funding offered through an uplift in the Discretionary Learner Support Grant (the total budget of which is still only approximately 10–12% of EMA).

What has become clear from the evidence considered by the Scrutiny Commission and the voices of the students themselves is that the removal of EMA will have a significant detrimental impact on the ability of education providers in this borough to deliver on their objectives for reducing the numbers of workless or those Not in Education Employment and Training. It has further been highlighted that, as a result of the high proportion of students in receipt of EMA, a drop in participation as a consequence of removal may well lead to institutions failing to meet their funding targets for 2011–12 which will result in adverse settlements for 2012–13 and a resultant cycle of decline in funding and opportunity for students from economically deprived areas. Particular concerns have been raised by institutions in this borough about the continued participation of some of the most vulnerable students currently under their care.

I have attached to this letter a submission compiled by Hackney Community College, an institution in the borough where 41% of the current cohort is in receipt of EMA, which makes very clear the potential impact of the decision to remove this vital support to young people wishing to continue their education.⁹⁵

4 May 2011

Written evidence submitted by South Thames College

INTRODUCTION

South Thames College is a general Further Education College situated in South West London. The College has three campuses in Wandsworth, Merton, and Tooting, catering for nearly 4,000 16–18 year olds and approximately 19,000 adults on full and part-time courses, and leisure courses. In August 2009 the College merged with Merton College to create one of London's largest Colleges. In the same year the College was rated "Good" by Ofsted with "outstanding features". This year the College Principal Sue Rimmer was awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours (2011) for her outstanding services to local and national FE. This was significant in putting the College on track to achieving its aspiration to be an outstanding and inclusive College.

⁹⁵ Not printed, available for inspection in the House of Commons Library.

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1. *What impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it?*

1.1 EMA—Participation

South Thames College has found that the introduction of the EMA has been an important measure in increasing participation since its introduction in September 2004. The EMA has increased participation rates in FE amongst students from the most deprived backgrounds and on the lowest incomes.

It has encouraged attendance and reduced drop out rates. It has made FE a more attractive option for young people from lower income households for which benefits or low paid unskilled work might otherwise be the alternative.

1.2 EMA—Attendance and Achievement

- South Thames College has over 1,881 students (out of a total of 3,300 16–18 year olds) in receipt of EMAs and the vast majority of these are on the maximum £30 per week.
- Over 1308 (nearly 70%) of these students are from ethnic minorities.
- 374 are on the first year of a two year course.
- The success rate of students claiming EMAs (as measured by the number of achievers divided by the numbers starters) is 11% higher than those not.
- The attendance of EMA students is also higher compared to the rest of the student body.

At South Thames we believe the reasons for these improvements in attainment and attendance for the most disadvantaged students are due to direct incentives built into the way in which the system operates. Students only receive it when:

- They attend classes.
- They complete work to an agreed standard.

South Thames College's experience indicates that students generally use EMA for:

- Travel.
- Food.
- Books.
- Contribution towards the family budget.

Withdrawal of this funding without an adequate replacement is likely to result in financial hardship which will have a detrimental effect on the most deprived students. This will impact on their attendance and therefore their achievement and most importantly their life chances. Overall it will cause a fall in participation coinciding with the introduction of the raised participation age—creating significant disjunction between the two policy approaches.

1.3 Simon Hughes MP Focus Group with South Thames College students

South Thames College students recently took part in a consultation session on new arrangements with Simon Hughes MP (government appointed Advocate for Access to Education) and evidence provided from students themselves indicated the following:

- Family budget—students help with food for the family and siblings, they also contribute towards household bills.
- Travel—to and from College (although busses for 16–18 year olds are free, many take the tube as they live far away from College).
- Stationery—students have to buy printing credit in the library, books and equipment for their courses and many have to buy more expensive items such as laptops.
- Uniform—Public Services and Beauty Therapy students.

1.4 Students affected mid-way through course

South Thames College is also specifically concerned about the young people currently in Year 12 receiving an EMA who are only part way through their programme of learning. These young people embarked upon courses believing that they would receive financial assistance for the duration of their course. Colleges feel that it puts young people at risk of not being able to complete their courses. South Thames is concerned that its 484 students currently in receipt of EMA who are on the first year of a two year course, may not all be able to continue their studies next year if their EMA is removed. The College fears there may be a particularly large increase in the drop out rate amongst this group.

South Thames College has faced particularly difficulty guiding students who may be considering taking a place at the College from September 2011 because we have been unable to inform people of the financial support that will be available. It is important that the College knows how much learner support it will have

available to allocate to students who require it in the next academic year. It is also essential that the College knows the rules which will govern how it can be used.

1.5 Learner Support Fund

If it is not possible to preserve EMA, South Thames College is of the view that a form of EMA should be retained for the most deprived sections of the student population. In any event it will be necessary to redesign the Learner Support Fund scheme so that it can be applied in such a way as provide maximum support to students in need. For instance, the rules which currently prohibit the use of the fund to make contributions to students transport costs on a regular basis should no longer apply.

If the Learner Support Fund scheme is to be of maximum use in supporting attendance and attainment, Colleges will need to be granted as much flexibility as possible in how the scheme is administered and in how they choose to allocate funding locally. A diverse student population of the kind we have at South Thames College will require a varied range of support (from food, to transport, to child care) and this should not be centrally prescribed. This will address our current experience that the Learner Support Fund is more bureaucratic to administer than necessary.

South Thames College also believes that the allocation of funding between colleges should follow need (using appropriate deprivation indices) so that the national allocation is weighted to those colleges whose students most need it to support attainment and attendance.

2. What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness?

South Thames is of the view that the following issues need to be addressed to ensure that the raising of the participation can be successful. These are:

- A real choice of high quality provision for all students.
- The right financial support.
- Transport.

2.1 Ensuring a high quality offer to all students

Learners aged 14 to 16 should have the opportunity to go to College, ensuring that young people who might otherwise begin to disengage from education early on in secondary school do not do so.

Schools can lack experience in delivering high quality vocational courses. This gap can potentially be filled by colleges. With the right level of additional resourcing, South Thames College, which has teachers with the necessary vocational experience and access to specialist equipment, laboratories and workshops, would be well placed to provide the strong vocational offer which is often not found in schools.

2.2 The right financial support

Enrichment funding is additional entitlement funding for full-time learners within the 16 to 18 age range, the aim of which is to give students the opportunity to enhance their learning experience by taking up courses not necessarily related to their main programme of study. The government's decision to reduce this funding stream will also impact on the college's ability to motivate and integrate new groups of students who might not in the past have expected to be in education post 16.

South Thames College is due over the next three years to lose £2.5m of this entitlement funding which is used to provide essential tutorial and enrichment activities such as sport, drama, dance, music, extra-curricular subject-based clubs, provision of health education and access to professional counselling. We are concerned that this reduction in funding for tutorial time will have a negative impact on students, leading to a narrowing of their educational experience and holistic learning and development and an increase in drop-out rates.

Raising the participation age means re-engaging those who are NEETs (not in education, employment or training). The College is particularly experienced and qualified in re-engaging those who are NEETS and this funding ensures that we can provide them with the help and support they need to succeed and progress to Levels 2 and 3 and onto sustainable employment or Higher Education. In addition to funding directly related to qualification resources are needed to be able to educate people holistically so that we can develop young people who become active citizens making a positive contribution to their communities and thereby reinforcing cohesion.

2.3 Transport

South Thames takes the view that it is essential that all young people should have equal access to a full range of education and training opportunities and transport is often a key factor. The college is accessed by students who travel via rail and or tube both options which are often not affordable for young people in London without financial assistance.

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3. What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision?**3.1 Academic achievement**

School and College success is currently measured differently. For Colleges, “success rates” factor in the percentage of students retained on a course for its duration. The Government has promised that by 2015 school success rates will be measured in the same way as those in further education (i.e. they will include retention). Simply measuring pass rates at exams clearly produces more favourable-looking results as it ignores students who have dropped out or not been entered for the exam.

South Thames College believes this is important because Colleges’ success rates impact on funding, and also on inspection judgements.

However, the way they are currently measured is not helpful to Colleges who work with harder to engage client groups, the main focus of raising the participation age. Measuring achievement for this group needs to allow for breaks in learning, and achievement of credits or modules of a full qualification. Minimum levels of performance should be realistic and based on real achievement levels in colleges, not an “ideal”.

South Thames College believes that external measurements such as success rates must include “value added” and distance travelled indices, which take into account a student’s level of qualifications and abilities when they join a course compared to when they finish it. Vocational and academic achievements should also be given equal status when judging the performance of individuals and teaching institutions.

3.2 Access to vocational education and training

Raising the participation age is about more than raising the school leaving age. If students who traditionally felt disempowered or disengaged by school are to feel re-engaged by the raising of the participation age they need to feel as though they have real choices that motivate and engage them. Therefore access to high quality vocational education and training including studying in colleges and apprenticeships are vital to the success of the raising of the participation age.

In order to empower students and for them to be aware of the range of educational choices and careers open to them access to high quality advice and guidance is also a critical part of this.

3.3 Student attendance and behaviour

South Thames like other Colleges is currently in the “post-compulsory sector.” The nature of raising the participation age means that students attending College, even if only for a few hours a week, would change the relationship between the College and its students.

If raising the participation age is to be successful it is important that students do not feel that choices have been taken away from them and that the provision that Colleges are able to provide an attractive and relevant offer that will keep them engaged and motivated and most importantly develop their employability skills.

28 March 2011
