

SDR 158/2013

25 September 2013

Education Maintenance Allowances Awarded in Wales, 2012/13

This Statistical First Release presents a final update on the number of Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) awarded to students in further education in academic year 2012/13, as at the end of August 2013. The release is based on data provided by the Student Loans Company (SLC) and is correct as at 3 September 2013. This is the final in a series of monthly updates on 2012/13, and provides some additional breakdowns by age, and level of allowance. The Welsh Government is currently reviewing the content, scope and timing of this statistical release. Further information is provided in the [Notes](#) page.

The EMA Wales scheme was introduced for 16 year olds in 2004/05 and extended to include 17 year olds in 2005/06 and finally to include 18 year olds in 2006/07. EMA is a weekly allowance, linked to satisfactory attendance, paid fortnightly to eligible students attending learning centres in Wales.

From academic year 2011/12, the criteria for new EMA a student receiving the £30 award has changed, and the £10 and the £20 awards are no longer available. A new table has been added to the release to indicate the breakdown of the £30 award (*Table 6*). Students new to EMA may qualify for an award of £30 per week, depending on household income and family circumstances. Students who received EMA in 2010/11 who are returning to education and meet the same eligibility criteria as for 2010/11 will continue to get their EMA, be it for £10, £20 or £30 per week. The performance bonus payments (previously paid in September, January and July) were removed at the end of academic year 2010/2011, and are no longer paid out to any students.

Key results

Overall, approved applications for EMA were down 7 per cent on last year, whilst the total number of applications received was down by 6 per cent (*Charts 1 and 2*). A comparison of August 2012/13 and August 2011/12 data implies that although the number of approved applications for the £30 award has decreased; the decrease in the number of total approved applications is largely a result of the removal of the £10 and £20 awards for students new to EMA from 2011/12 onwards (*Table 3*). This is the final year that £10 and £20 will be awarded to returning students, who met the 2010/11 criteria, after three years of receiving EMA.

- A total of 31,915 applications were received for 2012/13, a decrease of 6 per cent compared with 2011/12 (*Chart 1, Table 1*).
- 30,270 (95 per cent) of applications received were approved, 1,130 (4 per cent) were rejected and 510 (2 per cent) were incomplete (*Chart 3, Table 1*).
- 12,820 (42 per cent) of approved applications were from 16 year olds, 11,450 (38 per cent) were from 17 year olds and 6,000 (20 per cent) were from 18 year olds and over (*Chart 5, Table 4*).
- 14,585 (48 per cent) approved applications were from first year claimants and were therefore entitled to £30 per week due to the change in the EMA eligibility criteria (*Table 6*).

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Trends in Applications and Approvals for EMA

Trends in applications and approvals for EMA provided in this release should be considered against the context of trends in the eligible cohort (of mainly 16 to 18 year olds), their participation in education and training, and their household income levels (since EMA is means-tested). In general, demographic trends have shown a decline in this age cohort since mid-2008, currently projected to continue until around 2020¹. The effect of the recent recession on employment levels and household income may have influenced numbers eligible for means-tested allowances.

Chart 1: Cumulative number of all applications received by month and year of study

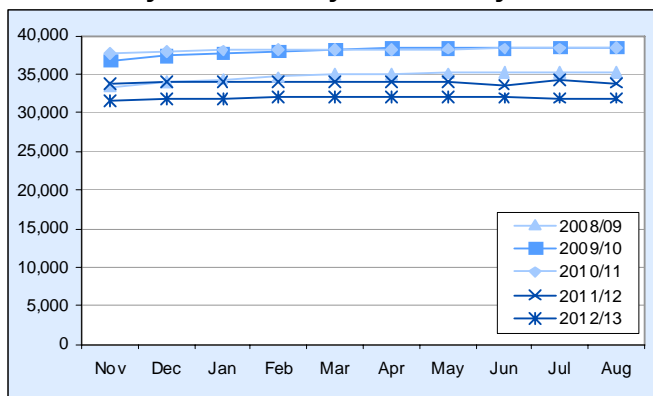
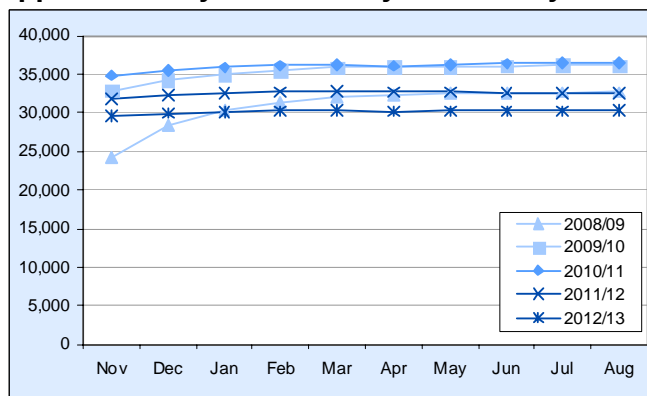


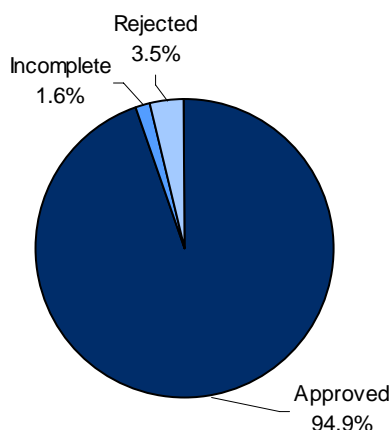
Chart 2: Cumulative number of approved applications by month and year of study



Overall, approved applications for EMA were down 7 per cent on last year (*Chart 2*) whilst the total number of applications received was down by 6 per cent (*Chart 1*). A comparison of August 2012/13 and August 2011/12 final data implies that although the number of approved applications for the £30 award has decreased; the decrease in the number of total approved applications is largely a result of the removal of the £10 and £20 awards for students new to EMA.

Applications Received by Current Work Stage

Chart 3: Total applications received by current work stage for 2012/13, as at 31 August 2013 (a)



As at 31 August 2013, 95 per cent of applications received had been approved and 4 per cent had been rejected (*Table 1*). The majority of the remaining applications received were incomplete. These include applications that are either “missing information” (e.g. no date of birth included) or “missing evidence” (e.g. no birth certificate attached).

(a) Current work stage denotes the status of the application at 3 September 2013 when data were extracted from the Student Loans Company (SLC) database.

¹ [Population projections by year and gender](#) (2008 based)

Table 1: Applications by current work stage and gender, 2012/13 (a)

| Application current work stage | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Approved | 14,485 | 15,785 | 30,270 |
| <i>of which received at least one payment</i> | 14,240 | 15,570 | 29,810 |
| Rejected | 570 | 560 | 1,130 |
| Incomplete (b) | 270 | 240 | 510 |
| Other (c) | * | * | * |
| Total | 15,330 | 16,585 | 31,915 |
| <i>of which are renewals (d)</i> | 7,740 | 8,685 | 16,430 |

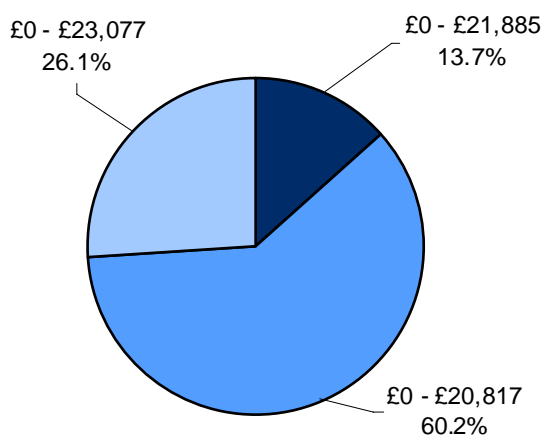
Source: Student Loans Company

- (a) As at 31 August 2013.
- (b) These include applications that have “missing information” (e.g. no date of birth included) or “missing evidence” (e.g. no birth certificate attached).
- (c) These include applications that are in one of the following workstages: assessed; awaiting rejection; data capture incomplete; failed assessment; validated; verified (as defined by SLC).
- (d) Applicants who also applied for an allowance in previous academic year.

Of the total applications received, 48 per cent were from males and 52 per cent were from females. The same proportions apply to approved applications. These proportions are similar to those for 2011/12.

Approved Applications by EMA £30 Award and Household Threshold Levels

Chart 4: Approved applications by EMA £30 award and household threshold levels, as at 31 August 2013 (a)



(a) Current work stage denotes the status of the application at 3 September 2013 when data were extracted from the Student Loans Company (SLC) database.

Of those entitled to a £30 award, 14 per cent of approved applications were from returning students with a household threshold income of £21,885 or less; 60 per cent were from new claimants with a household income of £20,817 or less (independent students or only child in household), and 26 per cent were from new claimants with a household income of £23,077 or less (with siblings aged 16 or under in the household or one or more siblings aged 20 or under in full-time education or training and eligible for child benefit in the household). There were 25 claimants whose household income was ‘unknown’ (Table 6).

Table 2: Approved applications by EMA £30 award (a)

| | 2008/09 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Household threshold level | | | | |
| £0 to £21,885 | 27,015 | 30,585 | 14,765 | 4,080 |
| £0 to £20,817 | . | . | 10,405 | 17,905 |
| £0 to £23,077 | . | . | 4,750 | 7,750 |
| Unknown | 0 | 0 | 20 | 25 |
| Total | 27,015 | 30,585 | 29,940 | 29,760 |

Source: Student Loans Company

(a) Figures as at 31 August
 "." denotes not applicable.

Of those entitled to a £30 award, 17,905 applications come from students with a household income of £20, 817 or less (independent students or only child in household), and 7,750 applications come from students who had a household income of £23,077 or less (with siblings aged 16 or under in the household or one or more siblings aged 20 or under in full-time education or training and eligible for child benefit in the household). 4,080 returning EMA students in 2012/13 were awarded an award of £30 per week, and thus had a household income of £21,885 or less.

There was a change in the household income criteria for students new to EMA from 2011/12 onwards. Returning EMA students, who continue to meet the eligibility criteria for 2010/11 EMA scheme, will continue to get their EMA, be it for £10, £20 or £30 per week. Students new to EMA in either 2011/12 or 2012/13 may qualify for an award of £30 per week. There are two different household income thresholds, which are based on the student's family circumstances.

See [Notes](#) page for more information about courses household income criteria.

Table 3: Approved applications by learning centre type, gender and value of award, 2012/13 (a)

| | £30 | £20 | £10 | Total |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| Further Education College: | 19,185 | 275 | 140 | 19,600 |
| Males | 9,410 | 130 | 65 | 9,600 |
| Females | 9,775 | 150 | 75 | 10,000 |
| Secondary School: | 9,960 | 50 | 30 | 10,045 |
| Males | 4,470 | 35 | 15 | 4,515 |
| Females | 5,490 | 20 | 15 | 5,525 |
| Other Learning Centre: | 615 | 5 | 5 | 625 |
| Males | 365 | * | * | 370 |
| Females | 250 | * | * | 260 |
| All Learning Centres: | 29,760 | 335 | 175 | 30,270 |
| Males | 14,240 | 165 | 80 | 14,485 |
| Females | 15,520 | 170 | 95 | 15,785 |

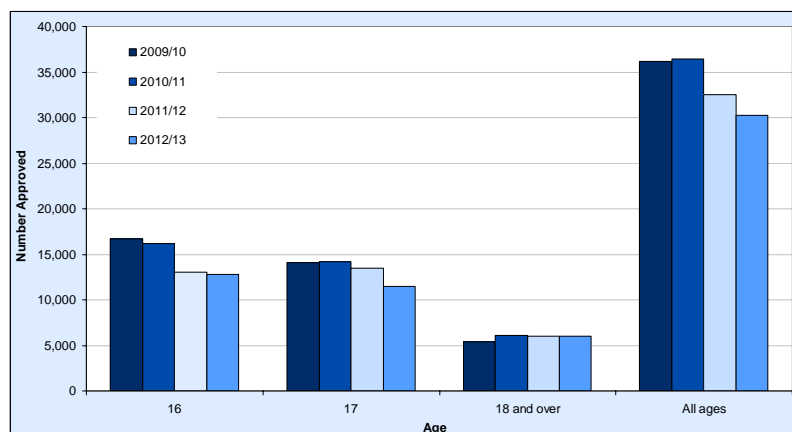
Source: Student Loans Company

(a) Figures as at 31 August 2013

£30 awards accounted for 98 per cent of all approved applications, with £20 awards accounting for 1 per cent and £10 awards accounting for 1 per cent.

Approved EMA Applications by Age

Chart 5: Approved applications by age (a)(b)



42 per cent of approved applications in 2012/13 were from 16 year olds, compared with 40 per cent in 2011/12. The percentage of applications from 17 year olds has slightly decreased from 41 per cent in 2011/12 to 38 per cent in 2012/13; whereas the percentage of applications from 18 year olds and over has slightly increased from 18 per cent in 2011/12 to 20 per cent in 2012/13 (Table 3).

(a) Figures as at 31 August

(b) Data include 19 year olds who are eligible due to exceptional circumstances.

Table 4: Approved applications by age, learning centre type, gender and academic year (a)

| | 2011/12 (b) | | | | 2012/13 (c) | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| | 16 | 17 | 18+ | Total | 16 | 17 | 18+ | Total |
| Further Education College: | 7,210 | 7,875 | 5,100 | 20,185 | 7,485 | 6,970 | 5,140 | 19,600 |
| Males | 3,570 | 3,765 | 2,480 | 9,815 | 3,725 | 3,365 | 2,505 | 9,600 |
| Females | 3,645 | 4,110 | 2,620 | 10,370 | 3,760 | 3,605 | 2,635 | 10,000 |
| Secondary School: | 5,635 | 5,290 | 690 | 11,620 | 5,110 | 4,265 | 670 | 10,045 |
| Males | 2,550 | 2,330 | 340 | 5,220 | 2,310 | 1,850 | 355 | 4,515 |
| Females | 3,085 | 2,960 | 355 | 6,400 | 2,800 | 2,410 | 315 | 5,525 |
| Other Learning Centre: | 230 | 270 | 215 | 715 | 225 | 210 | 190 | 625 |
| Males | 140 | 150 | 130 | 420 | 135 | 135 | 100 | 370 |
| Females | 90 | 120 | 90 | 295 | 90 | 80 | 90 | 260 |
| All Learning Centres: | 13,075 | 13,435 | 6,010 | 32,520 | 12,820 | 11,450 | 6,000 | 30,270 |
| Males | 6,260 | 6,250 | 2,950 | 15,455 | 6,175 | 5,355 | 2,960 | 14,485 |
| Females | 6,820 | 7,185 | 3,060 | 17,065 | 6,650 | 6,095 | 3,040 | 15,785 |

Source: Student Loans Company

(a) Age at start of academic year.

(b) As at 31 August 2012. Includes 19 year olds (see notes for explanation).

(c) As at 31 August 2013. Includes 19 year olds (see notes for explanation).

19,630 students attending further education colleges had their applications approved. These accounted for 65 per cent of all approved applications. 10,045 students attending secondary schools had their applications approved, accounting for 33 per cent of all approved applications. The remaining 2 per cent of approved applications were for students attending other learning centres.

Approved EMA Applications by Gender

Table 5: Approved applications, by gender and academic year (a) (b)

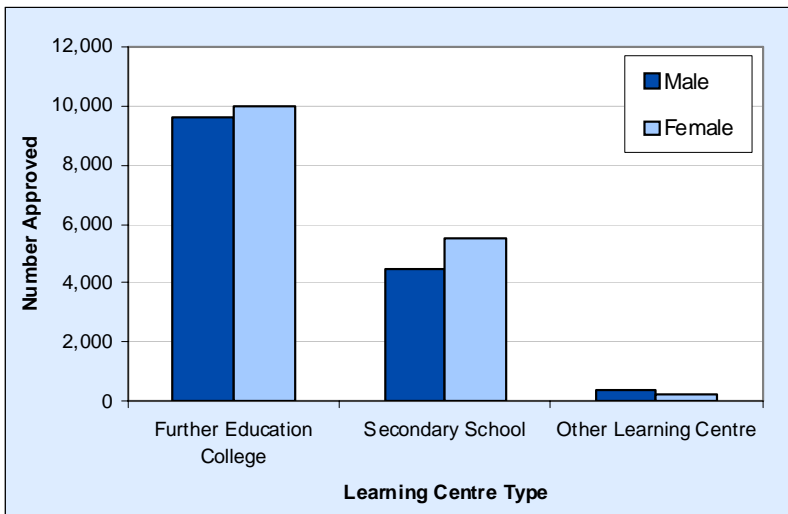
| | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| All Learning Centres: | 36,185 | 36,460 | 32,520 | 30,270 |
| Males | 17,180 | 17,415 | 15,455 | 14,485 |
| Females | 19,010 | 19,045 | 17,065 | 15,785 |

Source: Student Loans Company

(a) Figures as at 31 August

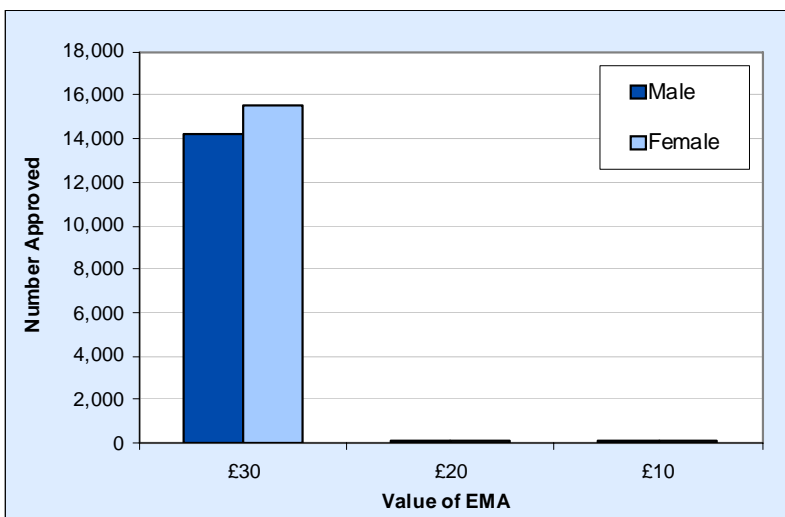
(b) Data include 19 year olds who are eligible due to exceptional circumstances.

Chart 6: Approved applications by learning centre type and gender, 2012/13



A higher proportion of approved applications were from females than males in both further education colleges and secondary schools (51 per cent and 55 per cent respectively). 41 per cent of approved applications were from females in other learning centres². However, only 630 approved applications were from students attending other learning centres.

Chart 7: Approved applications, by level of award and gender, 2012/13



As at 31 August 2013, £30 awards accounted for 92 per cent of all approved applications, with £20 awards accounting for 5 per cent and £10 awards accounting for 3 per cent (Table 2).

98 per cent of successful applications from both males and females at further education colleges were entitled to the maximum award of £30; for secondary schools the proportions were 99 per cent for males and 99 per cent for females.

² 'Other learning centres' comprises of Special schools and Independent schools.

Table 6: Approved applications by year claiming EMA (a)

| | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Year claiming EMA: | 32,695 | 36,185 | 36,460 | 32,520 | 30,270 |
| First | 17,740 | 19,535 | 18,415 | 14,625 | 14,585 |
| Second | 11,970 | 13,055 | 13,735 | 13,305 | 10,865 |
| Third | 2,980 | 3,590 | 4,300 | 4,590 | 4,815 |
| Fourth | 5 | 5 | 10 | * | 5 |

Source: Student Loans Company

(a) Figures as at 31 August

In 2012/13, 14,585 applications (48 per cent) of approved applications were from first year claimants and were therefore entitled to £30 per week.

Annex: Notes

1. Context

1.1 Policy/operational context

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a scheme providing young people who wish to continue in education after school leaving age with an incentive to earn awards through good attendance and achieving agreed objectives. Changes to this scheme were introduced from September 2011, with further details provided here: <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/101109emaen.pdf>

1.2 Eligibility criteria, 2012/13

A student has a general entitlement to receive an EMA if:

Student criteria

- He/she is aged 16, 17 or 18 years old³ on 31 August 2013.
- He/she has a bank or building society current account.
- He/she meets the nationality/residency criteria.

Course criteria

- He/she is studying full-time at a school; or studying at least 12 guided hours a week at a recognised further education institution.
- He/she is studying an academic or vocational course up to and including level 3. Eligible academic or vocational course include GCSEs, A-Levels, BTECs, NVQs, GNVQs and Basic Skills courses.
- He/she is studying an eligible course that lasts at least 10 weeks.

Household income criteria

Evidence of household income in the prior tax year determines whether a student will be eligible for an EMA.

Students new to EMA in either 2011/12 or 2012/13 may qualify for an award of £30 per week. There are two different household income thresholds, which are based on the student's family circumstances. Students will not be able to receive EMA if their household income is above the threshold levels.

For students new to EMA from 2011/12 onwards (eligible for £30 award only)

| Family circumstances | Household income threshold |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| You are the only dependant child in the household | £0 - £20,817 |
| You have one or more dependants aged 16 or under in the household | £0 - £23,077 |
| You have one or more dependants aged 20 or under in full-time education or training and eligible for child benefit in the household | £0 - £23,077 |

Returning EMA students, who continue to meet the eligibility criteria for 2010/11 EMA scheme, will continue to get their EMA, be it for £10, £20 or £30 per week. This is the final year that £10 and £20 will be awarded to returning students, who met the 2010/11 criteria, after three years of receiving EMA.

Returning EMA students who meet 2010/11 criteria

| Household Income (per annum) | Entitlement Amount (per week) |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| £0 - £21,885 | £30 |
| £21,886 - £26,840 | £20 |
| £26,841 - £32,400 | £10 |
| £32,401 or above | Nil |

2. Data source

EMA applications and payments are administered by the Student Loans Company (SLC). Data held on EMA students is entered by SLC staff onto an administrative database for the purpose of assessing and paying EMA to students. This data is also stored in a management information data warehouse for the purpose of management reporting, operational performance reporting, audit of processes, statistics,

³ Entitlement may be extended to 19 year olds if they have not already received 3 years of EMA.

future policy planning and forecasting. Further details of SLC's administrative sources will be published on [SLC's web page](#) later this year. Processes and systems which enable customer and application assessment data to be held electronically are subject to periodic audit and integrity checks. SLC Internal Audit ensure that the processes governing data entry and application assessment are adhered to. Data integrity validation rules are used to identify and correct errors in data. Management Information extracted from SLC systems are subject to quality assurances prior to distribution.

The data in this release were collected via the SLC management information system and were extracted on 3 September 2013. All information is based on applications received by 31 August 2013.

3. Definitions

3.1 Change in applicant circumstances

The data represented in this release refer to applicants' most recent learning agreement. Therefore if an applicant has attended more than one type of learning centre or has received different values of weekly payments, to avoid double-counting, they are only included under their most recent status.

4. Rounding strategy

All the figures are rounded to the nearest 5 for confidentiality. Where figures have been rounded there may be an apparent discrepancy between the sum of the constituent items and the total.

The following symbols are used in the tables:

- the data item is not exactly zero, but is less than half the final digit shown.
- . the data item is not applicable.
- .. the data item is not available.
- * the data item is disclosive or not sufficiently robust for publication.

5. Equal Opportunities

8,355 Equal Opportunities monitoring forms were received in 2012/13, which equates to 26 per cent of all applications received. It is not known whether these applications have been approved, rejected or are currently being processed since the data are disassociated from the application process, and not all forms were fully completed.

The data as at 1 September 2013 show that of the applications for which an equal opportunities form was completed:

- 7 per cent classed themselves as disabled;
- 94 per cent classed their ethnicity as white;
- 5 per cent made up each of the groups who were of mixed race, Asian or British Asian and 'Chinese or other ethnic origin';
- 1 per cent said they were 'Black or British Black'.

6. Key Quality Information

This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability.

6.1 Relevance

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor educational trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. Some of the key users are:

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- Officials in the Welsh Government;
- Other government departments;
- Further Education Institutions, Work-Based Learning providers, schools and local authorities;
- Wales Audit Office;
- Students, researchers, academics and universities;
- Individual citizens, private companies, and the media.

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- advice to Ministers;

- to inform and evaluate the education policy-making process in Wales;
- to forecast future expenditure of student support schemes in Wales.

6.2 Accuracy

Statisticians within the Welsh Government review the data and query any anomalies with the Student Loans Company before tables are published. The figures in this release reflect the final position as at the end of the 2012/13 academic year (31 August 2013), and are correct as at 3 September 2013.

Looking at previous years' data, it is possible to estimate how close provisional data is to final data. Below is a table showing the percentage increase/decrease seen between each month's update of approved applications, compared with the final figure as at end of August, published in September:

Percentage change in the number of approved applications between provisional data (as at end of stated month) and final data (as at end of August)

| | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|
| 2008/09 | 34.8% | 15.1% | 7.5% | 4.1% | 2.1% | 1.3% | 0.7% | 0.3% | 0.1% | 0.0% |
| 2009/10 | 9.6% | 5.3% | 3.2% | 1.8% | 0.9% | 0.7% | 0.4% | 0.2% | 0.1% | 0.0% |
| 2010/11 | 4.3% | 2.6% | 1.5% | 0.8% | 0.4% | 1.0% | 0.7% | 0.3% | 0.1% | 0.0% |
| 2011/12 | 2.1% | 0.4% | -0.2% | -0.6% | -0.8% | -0.5% | -0.6% | -0.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 2012/13 | 2.5% | 1.1% | 0.5% | 0.1% | -0.2% | 0.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.1% | 0.0% |

6.3 Timeliness and Punctuality

For 2012/13 the first monthly publication on the number of EMA applications was released in December 2012, relating to applications up until the end of November 2012. Monthly updates during a given academic year are published as soon as possible, a few weeks following the end of a given month, and according to a planned and pre-announced series of publication dates. Data in this release refers to final 2012/13 data.

6.4 Accessibility and Clarity

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website. It is accompanied by more detailed tables on StatsWales, a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data.

6.5 Comparability

For the academic year 2004/05 only students aged 16 at the start of the academic year were eligible to receive an EMA. The scheme was extended to 17 year olds for the 2005/06 academic year and finally 18 year olds in 2006/07. Therefore comparability between years varies, and before 2006/07 should be restricted to comparisons. Figures from 2006/07 onwards are comparable with each other.

Data for 2011/12 includes approximately 310 students who are 19 years old and are eligible for EMA due to exceptional circumstances and providing they have not received EMAs for more than two years (see eligibility criteria). 2012/13 includes approximately 275 students who are 19.

Data for 2011/12 will only be comparable with previous years' data from November onwards. This is due to a change in the Student Loans Company's procedure for renewing applications for existing students, which first came into affect in academic year 2010/11.

The reported number of academic year 2011/12 approved EMA applications dropped significantly between March and April 2011. This is due to the annual exercise carried out by SLC to sample check a proportion of those returning EMA applicants who have chosen to self certify their income and assess the application against the applicants' previous years income evidence. If the applicant later fails to provide evidence of household income (if requested) then they will be assumed to no longer be eligible for support.

From academic year 2011/12, students new to EMA can only qualify for an award of £30 per week, depending on household income. Students who received EMA in 2010/11 who are returning to education and meet the same eligibility criteria as for 2010/11 will continue to get their EMA, be it for

£10, £20 or £30 per week. No further bonus payments (previously paid in September, January and July) were paid out to students.

Northern Ireland and Scotland have their own EMA schemes. The EMA scheme in England has been cancelled and has been closed to new applicants since 1 January 2011. This scheme has been replaced by a £180m bursary scheme which focuses on students from less wealthy households. Further information on this can be found via the following link:

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/MoneyToLearn/16to19bursary/index.htm>

7. List of Tables and Data Items Provided in StatsWales

1. [Cumulative totals of applications for EMA by academic year and workstage](#)
(*Chart 1* and *Chart 2*)
2. [Approved applications by learning centre type, gender and value of award](#)
(*Table 2*)

8. Future of this release

The Welsh Government's Education and Skills Analytical team are currently reviewing the content, scope and timing of this statistical release to ensure that it continues to effectively support and inform the Welsh Government's Higher Education policy initiatives. We appreciate any feedback from users.

Further Information

Comparable monthly data and further detailed information on EMA applications can be found on the [StatsWales](#) website.

2013/14 monthly statistical releases can be found on the [Statistics for Wales](#) website.

Further information about the EMA scheme can be found at www.StudentFinanceWales.co.uk.

Related articles

The Scottish Government publish statistics on recipients of EMA, for example in the following link: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0041/00413124.pdf> (pdf file)

Statistical Releases on other strands of student support in Wales are available via the following link: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/theme/post16ed/student-finance/?lang=en>

User Feedback

We want to engage with users of our statistics and we invite you to send your comments on the publication to post16ed.stats@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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