



Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Statistics

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The Government announced in the Spending Review that the Education Maintenance Allowance Scheme (EMA) in England will stop at the end of academic year 2010/11. No new applications will be accepted from the start of January 2011. EMA currently provides up to £30 per week for students from low income households to encourage them to stay in education beyond the end of compulsory education.

This note includes data on expenditure, the number of recipients, types of students who receive EMA and looks at the evidence on its impact on participation. The [EMA section](#) of the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) website gives information about eligibility criteria and how to apply. It also includes data on [take-up](#) and [research](#) into the impact of EMA and the effect of some of the changes to the scheme. It looks at the scheme in England only.

1 Background

The EMA scheme was initially piloted in 15 local authority areas from 1999 and was rolled out nationally at the start of academic year 2004/05. Full-time students aged 16-18 were eligible in the former pilot areas, while eligibility in the rest of the country was for 16 year olds only in 2004/05, 16-17 year olds in 2005/06 and 16-18 year olds from 2006/07. Detailed eligibility criteria can be found on the [YPLA website](#). The main criteria are age, type of course and income. Eligible students need to be on either a full-time further education course at a school/college, a course leading to an apprenticeship or a Foundation Learning Programme. For EMA in 2010/11 their household income in financial year 2009-10 needs to be below £30,810. EMA is paid at three rates for different levels of household income:

- < £20,817 **£30**
- £20,818 to £25,521 **£20**
- £25,522 to £30,810 **£10**

The Coalition Government have said that EMA will be replaced by an enhanced discretionary learner support fund. This means it will be up to schools/colleges to decide who should

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receive financial support. This is currently worth £26 million and the Government expects it will increase to around three times this level by 2014-15.¹ The next section looks at expenditure under the EMA.

2 Expenditure and take-up

Total spending on EMA since the pilot scheme 2001 is given below. These data are in financial years, but they clearly show the increase in expenditure as the scheme was rolled out nationally to a wider age range of students. As financial year 2011-12 crosses over with academic year 2010/11 there will still be some EMA spending, but this will be the last year.

EMA expenditure in England, £ million

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Cash	109	120	142	260	407	503	544	525	580	564	174
2009-10 prices ^a	134	143	165	294	452	541	568	534	580	548	166

Note: 2010-11 figures are budgeted expenditure, 2011-12 are estimates

(a) Prices adjusted using September 2010 GDP deflators

Sources: DCSF Departmental Report 2009, and earlier

Department for Children, Schools and Families Resource Accounts 2009-10

HC Deb 15 November 2010 c593W

The indication given (above) by the Coalition Government of the likely level of the discretionary learner support fund in 2014-15 means that it could be worth around one eighth of the total value of EMA spending and discretionary learner support in real terms. If this funding is increased incrementally up to 2014-15 the gap will be greater in the intervening years.

Data on take-up of EMA is given below. This clearly shows the growth in numbers connected with the national roll out between 2004/05 and 2006/07.

EMA recipients in England, thousands

1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
14	73	114	124	127	297	430	527	546	576	643

Sources: HC Deb 14 October 2008 c1118W

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Take-up, YPLA

The 643,000 young people who received EMA in 2009/10 represent around 32% of all 16-18 year olds in England young people, or 47% of those in full-time education.² Up to the end of December 2010 603,000 students were in receipt of EMA.³ Unless these figures are revised this will be the total for 2010/11 as no new applications can be accepted.

Local data on take-up can be found on the [take-up](#) pages of the YPLA website.

Data on the average amount received, or the proportion of recipients receiving £30, £20 or £10 per week is not routinely published. The approximate breakdown of recipients by weekly

¹ HC Deb 17 November 2010 c801W

² Denominators from *Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England*, DfE. The total number in full-time education is at the end of 2009 while EMA take-up is calculated as anyone receiving one or more payment during the year, so the rates may be slight overestimates.

³ *Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Take-up*, YPLA

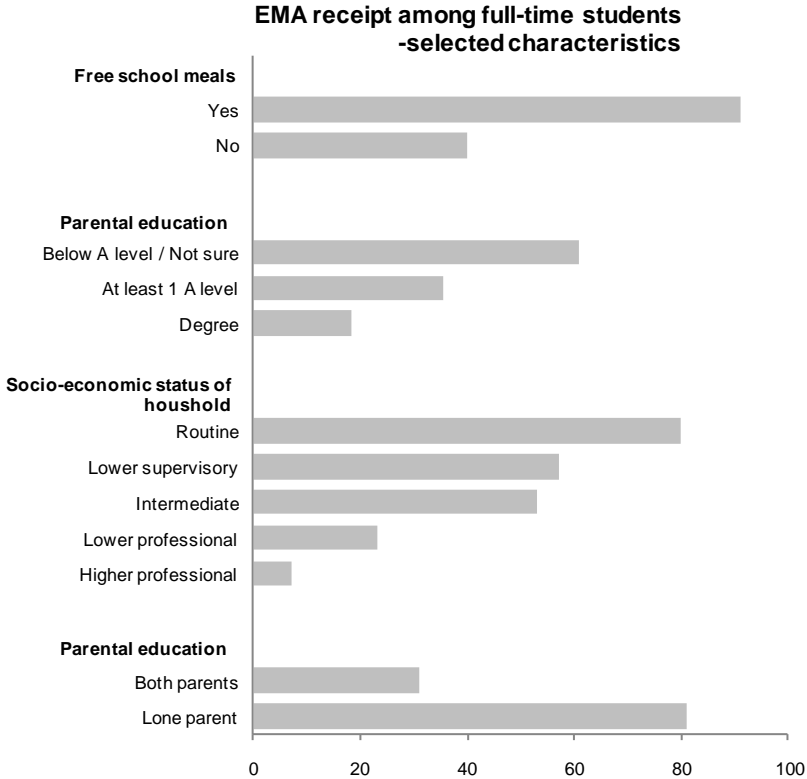
amount has been given as 80% receiving £30 per week, 10% £20 per week and 10% £10 per week.⁴

3 Who receives EMA?

The table at the end of this note looks at rates of EMA receipt among 17/18 year old students responding to the *Youth Cohort Study*. The pattern shown is clearly closely linked to income patterns as we would expect. There was higher overall EMA receipt and average weekly amounts among the following groups of students:

- minority ethnic groups, particularly Bangladeshi and Pakistani
- 'lower' socio-economic groups
- those who received free school meals while at school –almost 90% of students who received free meals at school received EMA and almost all of them at the top rate.
- those whose parents are less well educated
- students who are living with only one parent.

Some of the more prominent patterns are illustrated below.



⁴ HC Deb 24 March 2010 c972-4W

4 Evidence on the impacts of EMA

The last Government said:⁵

EMA has been the subject of one of the most extensive and robust independent evaluations of an education initiative ever undertaken in England.

The Coalition Government has said that a 'key finding' of the most recent research was that:⁶

...only 12% of young people overall receiving an EMA believe that they would not have participated in the courses they are doing if they had not received an EMA.

The Coalition Government have also said:⁷

In reaching the decision to end education maintenance allowance (EMA) we have looked closely at evaluation evidence and other research, which indicates that the scheme does not effectively target those young people who need financial support to enable them to participate in learning. The evidence suggests that around 90 per cent of the young people who receive EMA would still have participated in learning if the scheme was not available.

The research being referred to was published in June 2010 as *Barriers to participation in education and training*⁸ and was originally commissioned under the last Government. The study looked the barriers and constraints young people face at the end of compulsory education. 12% of respondents who received EMA agreed with the statement 'I would not have done a course or training, if I had not received an EMA.' The not sure/disagree breakdown has not been published. The report looked at 16 and 17 year olds only, it is possible that results for 18 year olds could have been somewhat different, but their inclusion is unlikely to have had a major impact on the overall percentage figure.

The last Government quoted estimates which were produced as the result of a series of studies carried out specifically to look at the impact of EMA. The last assessment was published in 2005⁹ and concluded that EMAs increased participation among 16 year olds in receipt of EMA by an estimated 5.9 percentage points, and across all students (including those not receiving EMA) by 3.8 percentage points. EMA was estimated to increase participation at 16 and 17 (i.e. staying in post-compulsory education for two years) by 7.1 percentage points or 4.1¹⁰ points across all students. There was a greater impact among young men, students from 'lower' socio economic background and those with low or moderate levels of attainment at the end of compulsory education.¹¹ Despite only being

⁵ Departmental report 2009, DCSF

⁶ HC Deb 18 October 2010 c463-4W

⁷ HL: Deb 15 November 2010 c154WA

⁸ Spielhofer, T. et al, National Foundation for Educational Research. *Barriers to participation in education and training*. Research Report DFE-RR009

⁹ Middleton, S. et al, *Evaluation of Education Maintenance Allowance Pilots: Young People Aged 16 to 19 Years Final Report of the Quantitative Evaluation*, Centre for Research in Social Policy/Institute for Fiscal Studies. DfES Research Report RR678

¹⁰ DCSF Departmental Report 2009

¹¹ Further work by the IFS has found greater impacts on participation among white males and females, black females and female students from generally more deprived backgrounds.

available for 16-17 year olds in most pilot areas participation was still higher among men at aged 18, the difference was not statistically significant for women. The report stated:¹²

It seems, therefore, that at least in terms of the initial decision to remain in full-time education, EMA had met its policy objective of increasing participation among young people from lower income families, of reducing the difference in participation between young women and young men, and of reducing the proportions of young people who became NEET [Not in Education Training or Employment].

The findings from this research and the evidence quoted by the Coalition Government do not necessarily contradict each other. They are looking at different things, people's views on the impact and how it changed their actions. In addition the earlier research was based on pilot areas only, results are analysed by sub-group and are expressed in a different form.¹³ Whether either figure is substantively, rather than statistically, significant is a question for debate and depends on the alternative ways of improving participation among these young people and alternative uses of public money.

Earlier research asked different questions about EMA and found that when recipients were asked what impact not receiving EMA would have had on their choices:¹⁴

- 45% said none
- 42% said they would have done the same course but would have needed to earn more money
- 7% said they would have gone into work-based learning instead and 6% would not have stayed on at all.

The figures varied by weekly amount of EMA with those receiving £30 less likely to say that not having it would have no impact.

The IFS have looked at their earlier research on the impact of EMA on participation and concluded that it is consistent with the 12% figure used by the Government. They have also said that the benefits of EMA in terms of higher wages 'completely offset' the costs.¹⁵ The Government's view is that the 'deadweight' cost of EMAs –the 88% who said receipt did not affect participation- is too high. The IFS points out that many public policies have a high deadweight cost and that EMAs could have other benefits such as improving attendance or allowing students or spending more time studying and less on part-time work.

¹² Middleton, S. et al,

¹³ A 5.9 percentage point increase, for instance, can be interpreted as for every 100 young people potentially eligible the receipt of EMA will result in six more staying on in education.

¹⁴ *Evaluation of the EMA National Roll-out – Final Report Year 1 evaluation and measurement of impact on participation and progress towards LSC targets*, RCU Research & Consultancy Service for the LSC

¹⁵ *An efficient maintenance allowance?* IFS December 2010

EMA receipt of full-time students by selected characteristics

17/18 year olds in England 2008

	% receiving EMA by weekly amount				Total
	£10	£20	£30	Don't know	
All	5	5	32	1	43
<i>Gender</i>					
Male	5	5	32	1	42
Female	5	5	32	1	43
<i>Ethnic origin</i>					
White	5	5	28	1	39
Mixed	5	5	43	..	53
Indian	6	5	32	2	45
Pakistani	2	3	70	2	77
Bangladeshi	1	..	84	2	88
Other Asian	49	..	57
Black African	2	8	56	..	67
Black Caribbean	5	7	50	2	64
Other	5	4	40	..	52
<i>Socio-economic classification of household</i>					
Higher professional	2	2	4	..	7
Lower professional	5	4	14	0	23
Intermediate	7	6	39	1	53
Lower supervisory	9	10	38	1	57
Routine	6	7	65	1	80
Other/not classified	1	2	79	1	83
<i>Parental Education</i>					
Degree	3	3	12	1	18
At least 1 A level	6	6	23	1	36
Below A level / Not sure	5	6	48	1	61
<i>Free School Meals (Year 11)</i>					
No	6	6	28	1	40
Yes	1	1	88	1	91
<i>Living Arrangements</i>					
Father only	9	7	48	..	64
Mother only	4	6	72	1	83
Neither parent	66	..	74
Both parents	5	5	21	1	31

Source: Youth Cohort Study and Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: The Activities and Experiences of 17 year olds: England 2008