

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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| COMMITTEE:      | <b>Education, Culture and Sport</b>  |
| DATE            | <b>18 November 2010</b>  |
| DIRECTOR        | <b>Annette Bruton</b>  |
| TITLE OF REPORT | <b>Review of the Offer of Education Maintenance Allowances Grant 2010-11</b> |
| REPORT NUMBER:  | <b>ECS/10/087</b>  |

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To inform the Education, Culture and Sport Committee of notice received from The Scottish Government to review Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) to young people in December 2010 and the implications of this review.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- That the Committee notes the content of this report.
- That Committee request officers to provide an update in January 2011 following The Scottish Government's review of EMA in December.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

In 2009/10, Aberdeen City Council re-claimed £503,485 from The Scottish Government which had been paid out in the allowance to 485 applicants.

Uptake of EMAs this year is expected to be much the same as in 2009/10. At this point last year 390 applications had been received. To date, 340 applications have been received for 2010/11, though there may yet be a surge in applications due to the late notification to schools and local authorities of this year's EMA scheme from The Scottish Government. Based on this year's uptake to date and a comparison with last year's approved applications, it is estimated that 450 pupils would be eligible for the EMA in 2010/11.

### **4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

EMAs provide support to some of our most vulnerable young people.

Figures released by the Scottish Government in January 2010 showed that young people from the 15% most deprived areas in Scotland are more

likely to be in the EMA scheme than those outwith; 16% of 16-19 year olds in deprived areas received EMA payments throughout the year in 2008-09, compared to 10% of 16-19 year olds in non-deprived areas.

The figures also showed that 68% of those on the EMA scheme in Scotland completed the full academic year (2008/09). This is an increase from 60% on the scheme completing a full academic year in 2006/07.

## **5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) aim to provide a financial incentive to 16 to 19 year olds from low income households and vulnerable young people to remain in full-time school education beyond the statutory school leaving age.

The EMA programme was introduced across the UK in academic year 2004-05, aiming to increase participation and retention in post-compulsory education for this targeted group of young people.

Local authorities manage the delivery of EMAs for the school sector and other types of non-college provision. Payments are made by the Council to eligible young people in accordance with EMA (Scotland) Business Model (Version 10), released 22 June 2010.

On a monthly basis, the Council makes a claim to The Scottish Government to draw down funds for payments made to date.

### **5.2 Main Considerations**

Given the need to ensure proper scrutiny of public finances, The Scottish Government advised all Local Authorities in June 2010 that the terms of the EMA programme for academic year 2010/11 would be reviewed against their spend to date in December 2010 and that they would consider whether adjustments to the scheme are needed.

Under the EMA scheme, pupils whose families earn less than £20,000 are entitled to payments of up to £30 a week to continue in education.

| <b>Session</b> | <b>Roll S5 &amp;S6</b> | <b>EMAs Awarded</b> | <b>% uptake of EMAs from S5/S6 roll</b> |
|----------------|------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 2005/2006      | 2420                   | 629                 | 26%                                     |
| 2006/2007      | 2415                   | 571                 | 24%                                     |
| 2007/2008      | 2258                   | 543                 | 24%                                     |
| 2008/2009      | 2171                   | 485                 | 22%                                     |
| 2009/2010      | 2210                   | 507                 | 23%                                     |

The above table shows the total roll of S5 and S6 pupils over the last 5 years, that is those pupils who stayed on beyond school leaving age, the total number of EMAs awarded and the percentage of the S5/S6 pupils who were awarded the grant in each of these years. Demand for EMAs has remained fairly consistent over this period, though from session 2009/2010 the income thresholds changed so higher income households were no longer eligible.

In previous years, those students who had exemplary attendance records or performed well academically were further rewarded with bonus payments of up to £300.

These bonus payments were reviewed by The Scottish Government and from academic year 2010-11 are no longer part of the programme, reducing the grant available to applicants. Last year the bonuses awarded to young people in Aberdeen City amounted to £108,180.

The table below shows the number of applications processed for 2009-10 and applications received so far this year.

|               | <b>Applications received</b> | <b>Applications approved for allowance</b> | <b>Total number of applicants receiving payment</b> |
|---------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| 2009/10       | 583                          | 506  | 485   |
| 2010 to Date* | 340                          | Pending                                    | Pending   |

\* Applications can be submitted throughout the academic session 2010/11 - payments can be made retrospectively, therefore full year figures are not known until mid-way through 2011.

### **5.2.1**

In 2009/10, 485 young people remained on at school beyond school leaver age who were in receipt of an EMA, with 104 being awarded the allowance after the December holidays – this was 21% of the total awards made for session 2009/10. It is not possible to say how many of these young people would have remained on at school should they not have received an EMA.

### **5.2.2**

EMA applications for 2010/11 and Aberdeen City Council's EMA webpage have been updated, advising that The Scottish Government who fund the scheme plan to review the EMA programme in December and that any award made will only be guaranteed up to the end of December 2010.

### **5.3 Proposal**

Following their review of the scheme in December The Scottish Government will decide how to proceed.

## 6. IMPACT

### Corporate

This report relates to the vision in the Interim Service Business Plan 2010-2013 to develop Aberdeen as a 'City of Learning' and contributes to Educational Priorities 6 and 12 within *Vibrant Dynamic and Forward Looking* which aspires to:

- Ensure education is appropriate to pupils' needs and ensure pupils leave school with skills essential for living
- Continue work to raise the achievement of vulnerable children and close the attainment gap across the city

The report also links to National Outcomes 3 and 4 in the Single Outcome Agreement:

- We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Links to the Interim Business Plan 2010-2013 - to deliver improved outcomes aiming to make the city 'Smarter' by ensuring that:

- Young people are engaged, involved and achieve to enhance their quality of life and that of their communities.
- Vulnerable children are supported to achieve their full potential.

### Public

Following The Scottish Government review of the EMA in December, there may be an impact on the allowance offered to children aged 16 to 19 years old from low income households who wish to remain in full-time education beyond the statutory school leaving age.

## 7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- The Scottish Government Education Maintenance Allowance (Scotland): Guidance (Version 9), June 2010
- The Scottish Government Education Maintenance Allowance (Scotland): Scottish Business Model (Version 10), June 2010
- Letter from The Scottish Government – Education Maintenance Allowances (“EMAs”): Offer of EMA Grant – 2010-11
- Statistical Publication Notice: Lifelong Learning Series: Education Maintenance Allowances 2008-09
- The Scottish Government Education Maintenance Allowance Publication Tables - 2008-09

## 8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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