

Paying Kids to Stay on at School? – some findings from the piloting of Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs)

Does paying young people to stay on at school work? With a view to raising participation, retention and achievement in post-16 education among 16-18 year olds, particularly among those from lower-income families, the piloting of Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) began in 1999. EMA is an allowance paid to young people (or in some areas in the piloting phase, to their parents), eligibility for which is dependent on parental income. On the basis of evaluation evidence, the decision to roll out EMAs nationally from 2004 was announced in the 2002 Spending Review.

Between 1995 and 1999 post-16 education rates had remained more or less stagnant, and the drive to expand the participation rates of young people in post-16 education continued to challenge policy makers. Young people from lower-income groups (and males in particular) remain under-represented and one perceived barrier is the lack of financial support. Post-16 student support has for many years been subject to variations in local decision-making, so that where a student lives has often determined how much or how little financial support they receive (Herbert and Callender, 1997; Kennedy, 1997). The removal of financial barriers to learning in post-16 education has also been linked to overcoming social exclusion among some young people (SEU, 1999; Newburn, 1999).

The purpose of this article is to describe the methodology that was designed to measure the impact of the piloting of EMA and to highlight some key findings from the evaluation.

The Evaluation Framework

The piloting of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) began in 15 Local Education Authority (LEA) areas in 1999, and the scheme was extended to a further 41 LEAs in England in September 2000. The full EMA weekly allowance (of £30 or £40) is payable if the total parental gross taxable income does not exceed £13,000, while for those with a total parental income of between £13,000 and £30,000 (£20,000 for the London pilot), a progressively tapered EMA down to a minimum weekly allowance of £5 is payable.

Four variants of EMAs are being tested in the original 15 pilot areas. These offer varying weekly allowances, as well as bonuses for retention and achievement. In three of the four variants, the weekly allowance is paid directly to the young person during term time; in the fourth, payment is made to the parent. Payment can be made for a maximum of two years, although some young people with special educational needs are entitled to payments for a third year.

The large scale longitudinal evaluation of the piloting of EMA, funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), started in 1999 and will be completed in 2003. The evaluation has been undertaken in the original 15 pilot areas by a consortium of research organisations, co-ordinated by CRSP.

The other organisations are:

- The Institute for Fiscal Studies
- The National Centre for Social Research
- The National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling; and
- The Institute for Employment Research.

A number of strands are included in the evaluation, with each focusing on different aspects of EMA and its impact on post-16 education participation, retention and achievement rates. Each strand combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods (see Figure 1).

1. *Paying Kids to Stay on at School? – some findings from the piloting of Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs)*

4. *New Projects*

5. *CRSP Makes Links Down Under*

5. *Jobcentre Plus*

6. *CRSP News Update*

Figure 1

Evaluation of Education Maintenance Allowance Pilots	
Main Pilot Evaluation 10 urban and rural areas and 11 control areas	Longitudinal Methods Implementation studies Surveys of young people and parents Qualitative interviews with young people and parents Collection of socio-demographic information
Leeds and London Leeds and 4 Inner London LEAs	Secondary analysis of Careers Services and LEA databases Qualitative interviews with education providers Implementation studies
Vulnerable Pilots 4 of the main EMA pilot areas	Longitudinal 'nested' case studies involving longitudinal qualitative interviews with young people and their 'significant' others Implementation studies
EMA Transport 5 LEAs	Implementation studies Surveys of young people and parents Qualitative interviews with young people and parents Collection of socio-demographic information Interviews with transport providers

Key Findings from the Evaluation

Three years' evaluation evidence has now been presented to DfES and has assisted in the decision-making to implement EMA nationally from 2004. The findings presented in this article are all based on published data. While the crucial test for the evaluation was to measure the impact of EMA on post-16 participation, retention and achievement rates in full-time education, findings have also been reported on the local delivery of EMA and the perceptions of young people, parents and representatives from key local agencies of the value of EMA. The remainder of the evaluation has now been re-focused in order to assist policymakers in developing an effective national model.

Measuring the Impact of EMA on Participation, Retention and Achievement Rates in Post-16 Education

Survey findings from both the first and second years of the evaluation demonstrated that EMA was having a positive effect on post-16 participation and retention rates. In the first year of its operation, EMA raised participation in post-16 education. Gains in participation amongst EMA eligible young people in the pilot areas ranged from three to eleven percentage points. Application rates were high and the vast majority had been successful. More than half of awards were for the maximum amount and less than one per cent were for the minimum amount (Ashworth et al., 2001).

The second year statistical analysis focused on measuring the impact of EMA on both post-16 education participation and retention rates. EMA had significantly increased participation in post-16 education among eligible young people in the pilot areas by 5.9 percentage points. The effect of EMA had been

particularly pronounced in urban areas, and among young men and those eligible for a full EMA award. The estimated impact of a national scheme is for similar increases in participation amongst EMA eligible young people. EMA also appears to have had a positive effect on retention, increasing the EMA induced participation gain to 7.3 percentage points in Year 13 for the first cohort included in the survey (Ashworth et al., 2002).

The main statistical evaluation of EMA could not be extended to Leeds and London because of different eligibility criteria which were operational in those two localities in the first year of the pilot. Administrative data for 1998 and 1999 collected in Leeds and London, whilst not providing conclusive evidence about an EMA impact, show that participation by young people in post-16 education increased by nine percentage points between 1998 and 1999 in the four London boroughs and by four percentage points in Leeds (Heaver et al., 2002).

The results of statistical analysis which was undertaken in the third year of the evaluation, and which focused on measuring the impact of EMA on both retention and achievement rates, will be published later in the year.

The Local Implementation of EMA

During the piloting of EMA, responsibility for the local delivery of the scheme rested with LEAs. Differences emerged between the pilot areas in the way in which EMA was implemented. This included variations in the membership of implementation groups, which managed local delivery of EMA, as well as in the roles and responsibilities of those representing LEAs, education providers and other local

agencies (Maguire et al., 2001 and Allen et al., 2003). Collaboration between local agencies was integral to the success of encouraging vulnerable groups of young people (including the homeless, teenage parents and young people with disabilities) to apply for EMA (Allen et al., 2003).

EMA now appears to be regarded as an established part of the post-16 infrastructure in the pilot areas, and is said to be firmly entrenched in the consciousness of young people. It was felt by the majority of respondents that EMA had made a major impact on improving retention rates, particularly among groups of young people who received the maximum levels of EMA entitlement. However, it was acknowledged that greater efforts could be made to inform young people, especially those who are irregular school attenders and who may also be least likely to access formal sources of advice and guidance, about the availability of EMA (Maguire et al., 2002 and 2003).

Perceptions of EMA

Both the qualitative interviews undertaken with young people and parents and the round table discussions with local stakeholders highlighted that the introduction of EMA had been broadly welcomed as an incentive to encourage more young people to remain in education (Maguire et al., 2001; Legard et al., 2001 and Allen et al., 2003). In addition, EMA was enthusiastically received as an initiative which seeks to address some of the problems facing the pilot areas (Maguire et al., 2001).

EMA has also helped young people feel a degree of financial independence and can relieve anxieties in the family over funding post-16 education (Legard et al., 2001). Income from EMAs was spent on a variety of items, including educational expenses (for example books), board, travel, clothes, and food, and for social expenditure (Legard et al., 2001 and Ashworth et al., 2001). Views and experiences of EMA were also mainly positive among vulnerable groups of young people (Allen et al., 2003).

While the introduction of EMA has been largely well received, most school and college representatives have continued to emphasise the labour intensive responsibilities which go hand in hand with education providers being required to submit weekly attendance records to LEAs and the large number of queries which emanate from a weekly payment system. It was widely reported that the administrative responsibilities on both education providers and LEAs to ensure that the receipt of EMA was both accurately and efficiently awarded could not be understated (Heaver et al., 2002 and Maguire et al., 2002 and 2003).

Conclusions

The emerging findings from the piloting of EMA would suggest that the initiative has been largely successful in achieving its goals. A common thread running through most of the findings from each strand of the evaluation, and from both quantitative and qualitative results, is that the introduction of EMA has helped more young people from lower income-groups to benefit from post-16 education. While the published results from the evaluation are largely positive and can support the case for

the extension of EMA in 2004, the national implementation of EMA raises some important issues in relation to the role EMA can play in:

- significantly enhancing participation, retention and achievement rates in post-16 education; and
- achieving the twin aims of tackling disaffection and addressing under-representation in post-16 education among some groups of young people.

The research team at CRSP includes Sue Maguire, Sue Middleton, Karl Ashworth, Yvette Hartfree, Kate Legge, Kim Perren and Joanne Rennison.

Bibliography

Allen, T., Dobson, B., Hardman, J., Maguire, S., Middleton, S., Graham, J. and Woodfield, K. (2003), **Education Maintenance Allowance Pilots for Vulnerable Young People and Childcare Pilots: Implementation and Reported Impacts in the First Year.** DfES RR 396

Ashworth, K., Hardman, J., Woon-Chia, L., Maguire, S., Middleton, S., Dearden, L., Emmerson, C., Frayne, C., Goodman, A., Ichimura, H. and Meghir, C. (2001), **Education Maintenance Allowance: The First Year. A Quantitative Evaluation.** DfEE RR257.

Ashworth, K., Hardman, J., Hartfree, Y., Maguire, S., Middleton, S., Smith, D., Dearden, L., Emmerson, C., Frayne, C. and Meghir, C. (2002), **Education Maintenance Allowance: The First Two Years. A Quantitative Evaluation.** DfES RR352.

Heaver, C., Maguire, M., Middleton, S., Maguire, S., Youngs, R., Dobson, B. and Hardman, J. (2002), **Evaluation of Education Maintenance Allowance Pilots: Leeds and London First Year Evidence.** DfES RR353.

Legard, R., Woodfield, K. and White, C. (2001), **Staying Away or Staying On? A Qualitative Evaluation of the Education Maintenance Allowance.** DfEE RR256.

Maguire, M., Maguire, S. and Vincent, J. (2001), **Implementation of the EMA Pilots: The First Year.** DfEE RR255.

Maguire, S., Maguire, M. and Heaver, C. (2002), **Implementation of the EMA Pilots: The Second Year.** DfES RR333.

Maguire, S. and Maguire, M. (2003), **Implementation of the EMA Pilots: The Third Year.** DfES RR395.

New Projects

US Welfare-to-Work Meta-Evaluation (Governance 2)

Funder: US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) via University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), USA

Governance 2 extends the work completed under Governance 1, adding further cases to our database and extending its coverage to include indicators of the impact of US welfare-to-work interventions on the children of programme participants. Further meta-analysis of intervention impact data for sub-groups (e.g. programme participants with or without recent employment experience) are planned alongside a repeated analysis of all programmes in the expanded database and of impacts on children. The project is undertaken jointly with the University of Maryland Baltimore County (USA) and will run until Spring 2004.

Employers Pension Provision Survey 2003

Funder: Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) via British Market Research Bureau (BMRB)

The Employers Pension Provision study is the fourth in a series of employer surveys identifying the extent and type of pension provision by employers for their employees, covering occupational, stakeholder and private pensions. The representative survey of some 2,000 employers is conducted by BMRB, with CRSP undertaking the analysis of the survey data.

IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) Tracking Survey

Funder: Department for Education and Skills (DfES) via Institute for Employment Studies

The IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) project is a feasibility study based on a literature review and expert panel discussion of how best to construct a methodology for an impact analysis of IAG on the national adult population of Britain. The project is headed by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES), and Karl Ashworth is the CRSP representative on the expert panel.

Developing Budget Standards for Disabled People

Funder: Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF)

The Centre for Research in Social Policy, with the support of the Disability Alliance and the Disability Benefits Consortium (DBC) will carry out research to investigate the costs of disability in adulthood. The project will explore the additional financial, practical and social costs of disability from the perspective of disabled people themselves. The aims of this study are to develop consensual budget standards for disabled people living in different circumstances and with differing types of impairment; to generate sufficient information to provide detailed explanations of the rationale underlying the budget standards; and to provide local and national government and disability organisations with a baseline of minimum needs for disabled people so as to inform policy-making in the provision of both benefits and services.

Saffron Sure Start Evaluation

Funder: Saffron Under 8s Forum

The Government's Sure Start programme aims to improve the health and well-being of families and children before and from birth. Although a national initiative, local programmes are unique in their design, management and implementation and, therefore, governmental as well as local targets are set to monitor and evaluate progress. Saffron Under 8s Forum commissioned CRSP to work with them to develop an evaluation framework or 'tool-kit'. This can then be used by stakeholders (including project workers and participants) to monitor and evaluate progress and outcomes and feed into the on-going development of the local programme.

Employers and Service Providers' Responses to the DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) in 2003

Funder: Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 includes provisions to tackle discrimination by employers and service providers against disabled people. This research uses case studies and a telephone survey of employers and service providers to assess their reactions to existing and forthcoming requirements of the Act. The study is funded by DWP and is being conducted in conjunction with British Market Research Bureau (BMRB).

Evaluation of the New Opportunities Fund for PE and Sport

Funder: New Opportunities Fund

The New Opportunities Fund's PE and Sports Initiative seeks to encourage participation in sport among young people in the United Kingdom. It also aims to achieve wider social objectives by targeting disadvantaged communities and improving sport facilities of schools and community grounds in disadvantaged areas. The evaluation, running over six years, will assess the process of implementation, including partnership building, and the wider impact of the Initiative in 20 case study areas. This project is undertaken jointly with the School of Sport and Exercise Science at Loughborough University.

Modern Forms of Marriage

Funder: Care for the Family

'Modern Forms of Marriage' is a feasibility study, which seeks to explore why some marriages last and others do not. The study involves eight focus groups with married men and with married women to discuss their view on and experiences of marriage. All participants are first-time married and are selected according to duration of their marriage. The aim of the research is to ascertain the key factor that participants attribute to lasting marriage, and how perceptions and experiences might change with the length of individuals' own marriage.

CRSP Makes Links Down Under

Laura Adelman, a Research Associate from CRSP, is currently being hosted, for 12 months, by the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. SPRC is a highly regarded research centre in the field of social policy and is directed by the eminent international social policy analyst, Professor Peter Saunders. CRSP is keen to develop links between the two centres and is already working with SPRC on the International Social Security Association project 'Assessing the Coverage Gap'. The visit by Laura Adelman will provide a wonderful opportunity for further links to be established between the two centres, which are similar in a number of ways, including: structure; funding; research areas; and research methodologies. In addition, it will give Laura the chance to learn about Australian social policy and the work of the Centre, and inform SPRC of the work undertaken by CRSP and other researchers within the Department. During her visit Laura will continue to work on two CRSP projects. The first project analyses access to, and exclusion from, minimum income in European countries (funded by the European Commission). The second project is being undertaken to determine the extent of severe child poverty in the UK and the characteristics associated with it (funded by Save the Children UK). More information about SPRC can be found on their website: <http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/>

Jobcentre Plus

The new Jobcentre Plus service is a key part of the Government's strategy for welfare reform, and is being rolled out nationally to provide a single point of delivery for people of a working age. It aims to provide a work focus to the benefit system for everyone using the service. Through the new service, customers are encouraged to make the initial contact with Jobcentre Plus via a telephone call to a Contact Centre. An appointment is then arranged at the local Jobcentre Plus office, where the customer sees a Financial Assessor who checks with the customer that the appropriate claim forms have been correctly completed. The customer then has a meeting with a Personal Adviser, where the discussion focuses on work-related issues, including ways of overcoming potential barriers to work.

CRSP (in partnership with ECOTEC Research and Consultancy Ltd) have been involved in a qualitative process evaluation of Jobcentre Plus since the first Pathfinder offices were established in October 2001. The aim of this strand of the Jobcentre Plus evaluation programme is to explore the extent to which Pathfinder offices were meeting the policy vision, and to inform the national rollout of Jobcentre Plus. To date, the evaluation has included two waves of fieldwork with staff and customers in selected case study sites, and plans are currently underway for a third wave of qualitative work. The latest wave of research was carried out over the summer of 2002. The findings suggested a number of areas of the Jobcentre Plus service that had improved, but required further attention to ensure that they met the Jobcentre Plus vision of delivering an efficient, work-focused service to customers. Key issues included:

- the need for a clear understanding amongst different staff about their role within the service;
- a need for increased confidence amongst staff in discussing work with clients who appeared unable to work because of health problems or caring responsibilities;
- time for staff to adapt to the shifting 'work focus' towards non-Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) customers;

- the requirement amongst different staff to have sufficient benefit expertise to enable them to carry out their jobs effectively;
- the need for improved IT systems to ensure that information was easily transferable from one system to another;
- the requirement for continued and enhanced training for staff, including developing expertise in conducting work focused interviews with non-JSA clients;
- the development of enhanced communication lines between different staff within the service, to ensure that expertise was shared, good practice was developed and there was a shared understanding of different roles within Jobcentre Plus; and
- the availability of information for clients about the new service, including promotion of the 'first contact' telephone number and an explanation of what clients might expect when they attend Jobcentre Plus appointments.

The findings from the early qualitative evaluation of the Jobcentre Plus Pathfinder offices show that progress has been made towards delivering the Jobcentre Plus vision. Local offices have 'bedded in', staff have become more familiar with their roles, and have gained experience and confidence in carrying them out. However, the delivery of a work focus to the service remains uneven and is largely confined to JSA clients and to those non-JSA clients who express a positive interest in work. A key requirement to achieve further progress appears to be additional staff training.

An overview of early evaluation evidence is available in the Department for Work and Pensions In-house research report Number 11 (<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/>).

The research team at CRSP included Karen Kellard, Yvette Hartfree and Liz Sutton.

Farewells

CRSP said goodbye to:

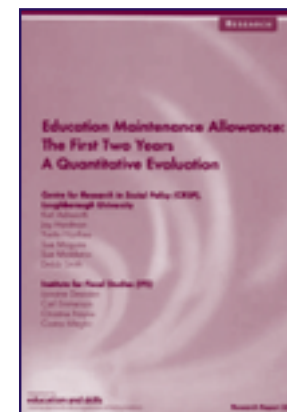
- Jay Hardman, Research Associate, left at the end of August 2002 to take up a post at Leicester City Council.
- Tracey Allen, Research Fellow, left in December 2002.
- Claire Heaver, Research Associate, left in March 2003 to take up a post at the University of Exeter.

CRSP Welcomed

- Kim Perren, Research Associate on 12 August 2002.
- Joanne Rennison, Research Associate on 28 August 2002.
- Siobhan Macdonald, a Social Policy student on 1 October 2002 for 9 months.

Congratulations to

- Noel Smith and Louise Clarke on their wedding and the christening of their daughter Lily Rosa.

Department for Education and Skills**Education Maintenance Allowance: The First Two Years A Quantitative Evaluation**

Copies of this publication, ISBN: 1 84185 760 2, Ref No: RR352, price £4.95, available from:

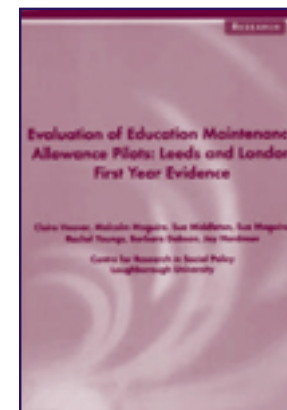
PROLOG, P.O. Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottingham NG15 0DJ

Tel: 0845 60 222 60 Fax: 0845 60 333 60

E-mail: dfes@prolog.uk.com

or free of charge from the website:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/programmeofresearch/index.cfm?type=5>

**Evaluation of Education Maintenance Allowance Pilots: Leeds and London First Year Evidence**

Copies of this publication, ISBN: 1 84185 764 5, Ref No: RR353, price £4.95, are available from:

PROLOG, P.O. Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottingham NG15 0DJ

Tel: 0845 60 222 60 Fax: 0845 60 333 60

E-mail: dfes@prolog.uk.com

or free of charge from the website:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/programmeofresearch/index.cfm?type=5>

Department for Work and Pensions and the Centre for Management and Policy Studies, Cabinet Office**From job seekers to job keepers: Job retention, advancement and the role of in-work support programmes**

Copies of the report, price £41.00, available from:

Publications Orderline, Corporate Document Services, 7 Eastgate, Leeds LS2 7LY

Tel: 0113 399 4040 Fax: 0113 399 4205

E-mail: orderline@cds.co.uk

or free of charge from the website:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rrep170.html>

**Self-employment as a route off benefit**

Copies of the report, price £31.50, available from:

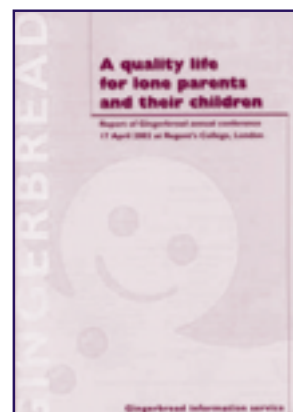
Publications Orderline, Corporate Document Services, 7 Eastgate, Leeds LS2 7LY

Tel: 0113 399 4040 Fax: 0113 399 4205

E-mail: orderline@cds.co.uk

or free of charge from the website:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rrep177.html>

Publications**Gingerbread****A quality life for lone parents and their children**

Copies of this publication, price £5.00, available from:

GINGERBREAD

the organisation for all lone parents and their children
7 Sovereign Close, Sovereign Court, London E1W 3HW

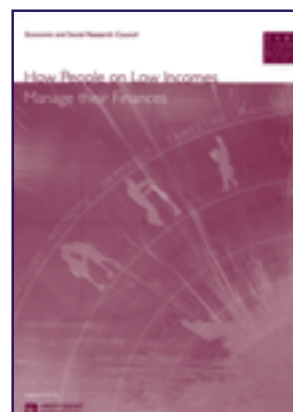
Tel: 020 7488 9300

Advice line: 0800 018 4318

Fax: 020 7488 9333

E-mail: office@gingerbread.org.uk

Website: www.gingerbread.org.uk

Economic and Social Research Council**How People on Low Incomes Manage their Finances**

Copies of this publication, ISBN: 0 86226 289 5, available from:

Economic and Social Research Council,
Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon SN2 1UJ

Tel: 01793 413000

Fax: 01793 413130

E-mail: exrel@esrc.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk>

CRSP is an autonomous research centre based in the Social Sciences Department at Loughborough University. The Centre was founded in 1983 by Professor Adrian Webb. Dr Bruce Stafford and Sue Middleton are Directors.

For further information about the research papers described here, to order Working Papers, to receive back issues of Briefings or our latest Annual Report, or to be added to the CRSP mailing list, please contact:

Rita Khatri +44(0)1509 223372 or E-mail CRSP@lboro.ac.uk

CRSP, Department of Social Sciences, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3TU.

Briefings is produced by CRSP.



CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN SOCIAL POLICY

Department of Social Sciences

Loughborough University, Leicestershire LE11 3TU

Tel: (01509) 223372 Fax: (01509) 213409

www.crsp.ac.uk