

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

AGENDA ITEM No. 4

To: EDUCATION (RESOURCES) SUB-COMMITTEE	Subject : EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE 2004-2005: PERFORMANCE REVIEW
From: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION	
Date: 20 July 2005	Ref: MM/JL

Purpose of Report

This report reviews the progress of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme for the period August 2004 to March 2005 and April 2005 to June 2005.

Recommendations

The education (resources) sub-committee is recommended to:

- (a) note the progress of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme for the school session 2004-05
- (b) request the submission of further performance reports to future meetings of the sub-committee.



Members wishing further information about this report should contact

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NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL : DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Education Maintenance Allowance : Performance Review 2004/2005

Report by the Director of Education

1. Background.

- 1.1 The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) initiative has been introduced as part of the Scottish Executive's agenda of encouraging access and participation in further and higher education by young people from low-income families. Students are eligible for a weekly allowance provided that they fulfil conditions set out in a formal EMA learning agreement. Payments are reliant on attendance and are made directly to the student's bank account.
- 1.2 In accordance with Education Maintenance Allowance guidelines, applicants who were 16 years old by 30 September 2004 were eligible to apply for support for the full academic year. Provided that the application had been received by 30 September 2004, the award was backdated to August 2004. Applications received from 1 October onward were entitled to support from the date of receipt. Applicants who became 16 years of age between 1 October 2004 and 28 February 2005 were eligible for support from the start of the January term in 2005. Provided that the application was received by 17 February 2005, the award was backdated to the start of the January term. Applications received from 18 February 2005 are paid from the date of receipt.

2. Applications

- 2.1.1 1168 applications have been received for academic session 2004-2005. Of these, 17 applications were refused because the students were not eligible for bursary support for the following reasons;
- (1) do not meet residency criteria (3)
 - (2) do not meet age criteria (13)
 - (3) attending school outwith North Lanarkshire (1)

Table 1 shows a breakdown of applications received

Table 1 – Applications Received

Full term applicants received by 30 September 2004	Full term applicants received after 30 September 2004	January Award received by 17 February 2005	January Award received after 17 February 2005
672	71	379	46

- 2.2 61 applications have been cancelled, either because the students left school early or they indicated that they no longer wished to be considered for support.

- 2.3 Of the 1090 eligible applications, 1058 letters of award have been processed. These have resulted in 12 no awards due to level of parental income and 28 provisional awards to students whose parents are self-employed. Awards have been made to 1046 students. A further 32 applications have not been decided because students have not yet provided all of the necessary documentation.

3 Payments

- 3.1 The 1046 awards were made taking account of parental income as follows:
- | | |
|--|--------------|
| Gross income up to £19,630 per annum | £30 per week |
| Gross income between £19,631 and £24,030 per annum | £20 per week |
| Gross income between £24,031 and £30,000 per annum | £10 per week |

Table 4 shows the number of students allocated each level of award.

Table 4 – Weekly Payments

Award	£30 per week	£20 per week	£10 per week
Students	770	115	161

- 3.2 Students who are eligible for support for the full term and who meet the requirements of their Learning Agreement are entitled to two bonus payments of £150. Students who are eligible for support for only one term and who meet the requirements of their Learning Agreement are entitled to one bonus payment of £150. The award of bonus payments is determined by the school. To date 528 pupils have received the first bonus payment and 688 pupils have received the second bonus payment.
- 3.3 Payments allocated for Education Maintenance Allowance awards from August 2004 to March 2005 are £493,080. Bonus payments of £ 79,140 have also been paid for this period.
- 3.4 Payments allocated for Education Maintenance Allowance awards from April 2005 to June 2005 are £351,540. Bonus payments of £103,200 have also been paid for this period.

4. Internal Audit Review

- 4.1.1 Schools have responsibility for monitoring the attendance of EMA students. Provided the school is satisfied that the students have attained 100% attendance each week, payment of the award for that week will be authorised by the school.
- 4.2 In order to ensure that schools are administering the EMA scheme in accordance with guidelines set by the Scottish Executive, Internal Audit have carried out an audit of the processes.
- 4.3 It has been recommended that the department issue clear, uniform guidelines to schools, carry out a review of all schools and monitor all bonus payments. Action is being taken to ensure that the issues raised in the report are being administered. This will ensure that all schools are consistent in their interpretation of the guidelines. A report will be submitted in due course to the sub-committee.

5. Recommendation

The education (resources) sub-committee is recommended to:

- (a) note the performance of the Education Maintenance Allowance budget for the period August 2004 to March 2005 and April 2005 to June 2005.
- (b) request the submission of further performance reports to future meetings of the sub-committee