

EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE (EMA) & OTHER SUPPORT FOR 16-19 YEAR OLDS

Semta submission

Name: Claire Donovan

Postal Address: Semta, 2nd Floor, Weston House, 246 High Holborn, London WC1V 7EX

1. Are you responding: (please tick one box)
(b) **on behalf of** a group/organisation

3 The name and address of your organisation **will be made available to the public** (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government website). Are you also content for your **response** to be made available?

Yes

About Semta

Industry owned and led, Semta aims to increase the impact of skilled people throughout the science, engineering and manufacturing technologies sectors. We work with employers to determine their current and future skills needs and to provide short and long term skills solutions, whether that be training and skills development, or campaigning with government and other organisations to change things for the better. Through our labour market intelligence and insights from employers across our sectors, we identify change needed in education and skills policy and practice, and engage with key industry partners and partners in the education and training sector, to help increase productivity at all levels in the workforce.

The sectors we represent are: Aerospace; Automotive; Bioscience; Electrical; Electronics; Maintenance; Marine; Mathematics; Mechanical; Metals and Engineered Metal Products. Semta is part of the UK-wide network of 25 employer-led Sector Skills Councils

Financial Support

16. *How could EMA be targeted more effectively?*

As the Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering, and Manufacturing Technology, Semta would like to see the EMA targeted on those subjects which are key to our sector's employers. Academic learning in science and mathematics, together with practical applied learning in engineering and technology subjects, should be the focus of funding for learning for young people. We therefore recommend that the EMA system introduce differentiation by subject, with students of these key 'STEM' (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) subjects receiving an enhanced rate.

This would make for a consistent funding regime for education and training provision as a whole, where the additional costs of providing STEM subjects is usually reflected in the funding which providers receive.

While this recommendation, if implemented, would undoubtedly benefit science and engineering companies in Scotland, we believe it will also have a positive impact on the Scottish economy as a whole. Many companies in different sectors value STEM knowledge and learning in their young recruits and graduates. Indeed the value of such knowledge and understanding is proven to stand students in good stead regardless of their eventual career progression and destination. Prioritising

these subjects would show companies and individuals across the nation that the government recognises their critical status.

Also, by financially incentivising study in these subjects at the earliest opportunity, the government can send a clear signal to young people that these subjects are valued and in demand in the workplace. In essence, it says to young people 'Scotland needs these skills'.

24. If we remove the £10 and £20 payments, do you think £30 is still appropriate?

We believe that young people should be given the opportunity to understand about demand for skills and subjects at an early age. If the idea of EMA is to help young people remain in learning, from which they will be able to progress into rewarding careers, the idea of means-testing is somewhat at odds. In the workplace, earnings are not related to household income. We recommend removing the means-tested element, and instead using subjects of study as the criteria for EMA eligibility (see our response to question 16 above).

28. Does the current higher training allowance of £55 per week skew the educational choices of individuals?

We are happy with the higher rate of payment for those on the GRfW scheme, as we believe that those undertaking vocational preparation for the workplace should receive a higher amount. These young people require greater incentives, and may have greater costs in terms of travelling to different placements. It is also appropriate for young people to see the value which is placed on gaining those 'employability' skills which are essential in the workplace, and for progression through a career.

In addition, we would recommend consideration of whether those young people undertaking placements and learning related to STEM subjects should receive an enhanced rate, in line with our recommendations on EMA.

29. What is your opinion of the proposal to allow those on GRfW to receive EMA?

We do not think that extending EMA to those on GRfW is appropriate.