

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

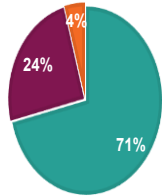
Education Maintenance Allowances 2021-22

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) provides financial support for young people aged 16 to 19 years from low-income households to overcome financial barriers to participate in school or college courses, or in a Learning Agreement.

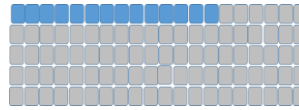
The programme aims to increase participation and retention in post-compulsory education.

■ Schools ■ Colleges ■ Learning Agreements

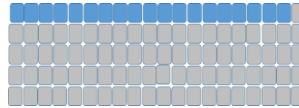
23,905 students received
EMA payments in 2021-22



↓ Down **1,125** (4.5%) from 2020-21



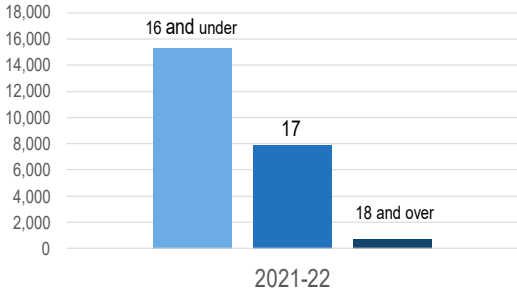
Around 14% of all
Scottish 16-18 year old's
received at least one
payment in 2021-22



This has been decreasing
since 2016-17 when 19% of
16-18 year old's received
EMA.

Most EMA payments go to either
16 or 17 year olds

Number of
recipients



There are **slightly more** female
recipients than male

51% of EMA
recipients



£776 on
average
over the
year

49% of EMA
recipients



£778 on
average
over the
year

but males received
on average **more than**
females in 2021-22

39% of EMA
recipients come
from the 20% most
deprived areas



up from **38%** in 2020-21

Total payments were **£18.6 million** in 2021-22
↓ down from **£22.1 million** in 2020-21



and average payment was **£777**
↓ down from **£882** in 2020-21

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1. Background information

The EMA programme aims to provide support for young people aged 16 to 19 from low income families to overcome financial barriers to stay on in post-16 education; either in school or on a college course, or to take up a Learning Agreement.

The programme is an entitlement and demand-led programme which is administered by local authorities and colleges on behalf of Scottish Ministers. A weekly payment of £30 is made to a young person and is subject to attendance and agreement of a learning plan.

For a young person to receive EMA support they must first meet all the eligibility criteria. This includes meeting residency criteria; having a household income under the EMA income threshold; be of an eligible age, and be taking part in an eligible course of learning.

Additional information can be found at www.mygov.scot/ema. This release is accompanied by online tables that cover more detailed analysis.

2. Impact of Covid and Data Quality

The time series presented in this publication includes years where the EMA programme has been affected – either directly or indirectly – by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The impacts of COVID-19 health protection measures should therefore be kept in mind when considering changes in these data over time.

The greatest effect of the pandemic on attendance is likely to have been in 2019-20, as the closure of schools and colleges had an impact on how EMA payments were administered. Therefore, data for 2019-20 should not be compared to other years and will be shown as a break in any time series figures and tables within this report.

The figures in this publication show the resumption of the time series from 2020-21 and some comparisons will be made between data from 2020-21 and 2021-22. However, both the 2020-21 and 2021-22 academic year saw continued COVID-19 related challenges for both schools and colleges, such as COVID-19 related absences. As such, the data in this publication are also likely to be impacted by the pandemic.

Due to the impact of COVID on EMAs and the unknown changes to the time series more generally, the decision was taken in 2022 to publish these data as Official Statistics, rather than National Statistics. This approach has been maintained for the 2021-22 Publication.

Further information on the quality of the data is included in Appendix A.

3. EMA recipients

Total numbers

Throughout the 2021-22 academic year, 23,905 young people received at least one EMA payment. This represents a 4.5% reduction on the figure for 2020-21 (25,030).

Figure 1: The total number of EMA recipients is trending downwards over time

EMA recipients, by the type of institution, from academic year 2016-17 to 2021-22.

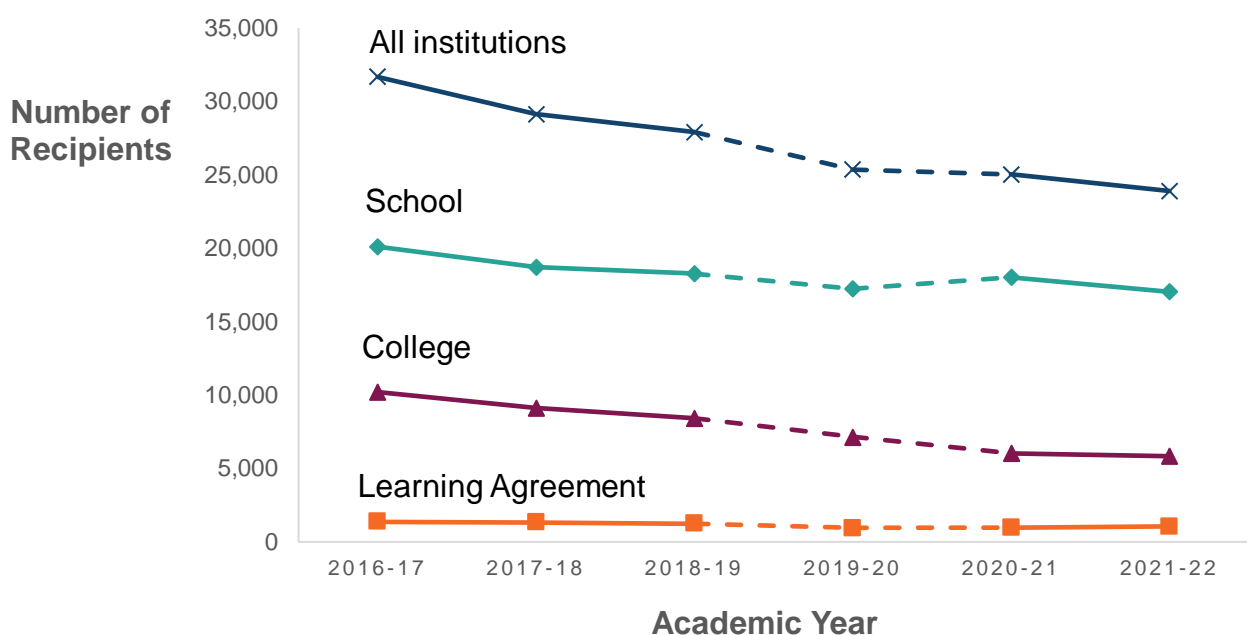


Figure 1 shows that the total number of EMA recipients (all institutions) is decreasing over time. In 2021-22, there were 17,035 recipients in school, down from 18,025 in 2020-21. There were 5,835 recipients in college, down from 6,035 in 2020-21 and 1,035 recipients on a Learning Agreement, up from 970 in 2020-21.

In 2021-22, 71% of EMA recipients were school pupils, 24% were college students and the remaining 4% were young people on Learning Agreements, which is broadly consistent with academic year 2020-21. These proportions have changed over time, mainly due to the reduction in EMA recipients from college, when college bursaries were introduced. In 2016-17, there were 20,110 recipients in school (63%), 10,205 recipients in college (32%) and 1,360 recipients on Learning Agreements (4%).

It is estimated that, around 14.1% of all Scottish young people aged 16-18 were in receipt of EMA in 2021-22. The proportion has been decreasing since 2016-17, when it was around 18.7% of the 16-18 population.

Age

In 2021-22, 64% of EMA recipients were 16 years and under and 33% were 17 years old. Only 3% of recipients were aged 18 years and over.

Young people cannot receive EMA until they reach 16 years of age. However, as the analysis is based on age as at 30th September of the academic year, some recipients are recorded as being 15 years old.

There has been a notable drop in recipients aged 18 and over at college in recent years, from 1,970 in 2016-17 to 415 in 2021-22. Again, this is due to the fact that colleges have moved from providing EMA payments to bursaries for eligible 18-year olds.

Gender

In 2021-22, 51% of overall EMA recipients were female and 49% were male. This is consistent with the historic trend that more females receive EMA than males.

This pattern is observed in schools, as 51% of recipients are female and 49% of recipients are male; and colleges, where 52% of recipients are female and 47% are male (1% are recorded as 'Other').

Deprivation

Deprivation is measured using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

In 2021-22, 39% of all EMA recipients were from the 20% most deprived areas, an increase of 1 percentage point from 2020-21.

However, due to the overall decrease in the number of EMA recipients, the actual number of recipients from the 20% most deprived areas has decreased to 9,310, from 9,525 in 2020-21.

Figure 2: the proportion of EMA recipients from the 20% most deprived areas is trending upwards over time

Proportion of EMA recipients from the 20% most deprived areas, at school and college, from academic year 2016-17 to 2021-22

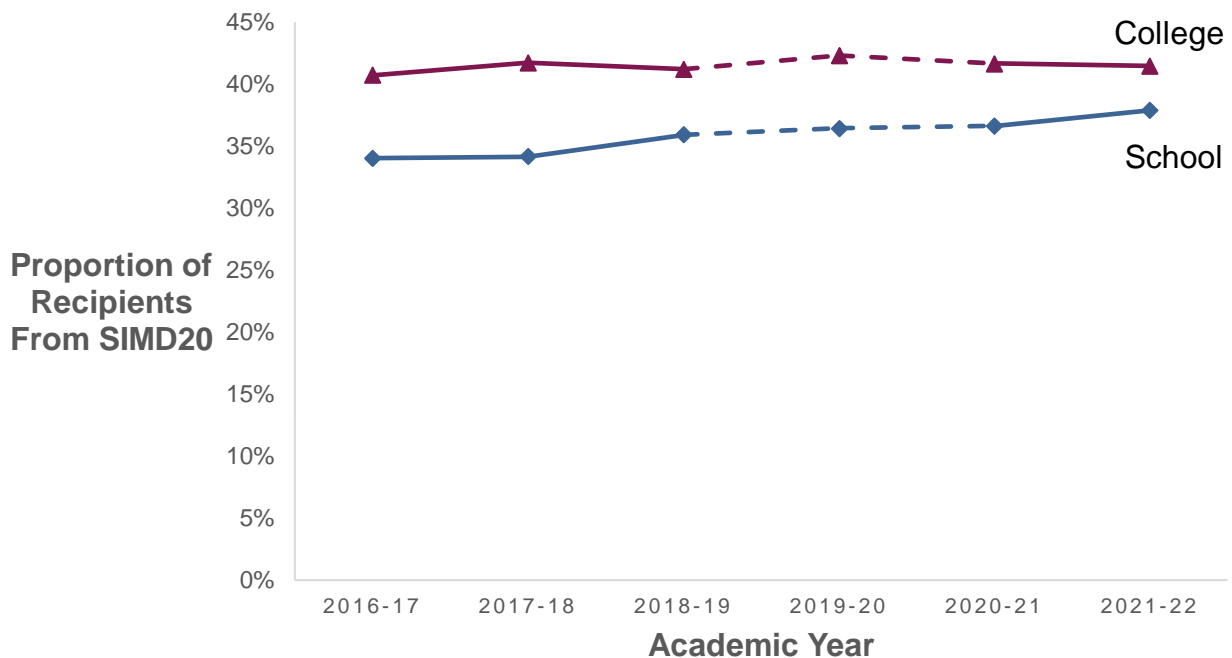


Figure 2 shows that 38% of EMA recipients in school and 41% of college recipients were from the 20% most deprived areas. The figure shows that colleges consistently have a higher proportion of students from deprived areas, compared to schools.

4. EMA payments

Total cost

The total spend on EMA in 2021-22 was £18.6 million, which is a reduction of approximately 19% on year 2020-21 (£22.1 million). Of this, £13.9 million was spent on school recipients, which constitutes 75% of total payments; £4 million on college recipients (22% of total payments) and £0.6 million on Learning Agreements (3% of total payments).

Average payment per person, institution type

The average payment per EMA recipient was £777 in 2021-22. This is a reduction of around 12% from year 2020-21 (£882). It is broadly in line with average payment levels in 2018-19 (£786), before the COVID pandemic.

Amongst EMA recipients, school students received on average £818 over the academic year; college students received £690 and those on Learning Agreements received £579. The difference is mainly due to the number of weeks in which each type is eligible to receive the benefit.

Average payment per person, by deprivation

Students from the most deprived areas are more likely to receive EMA: 9,310 recipients from Quintile 1 (the most deprived) versus 1,690 recipients from Quintile 5 (the least deprived) in 2021-22. This pattern is observed across institutions, as there was 6,455 recipients from Quintile 1 and 1,415 from Quintile 5 in schools. While there was 2,420 recipients from Quintile 1 and 250 from Quintile 5 in college.

However, EMA recipients from the most deprived areas receive on average a smaller amount (£761 for Quintile 1 versus £819 for Quintile 5). Again, this pattern is observed when looking at both schools and colleges. Analysis of the 2021-22 school data show that on average, school recipients from the least deprived areas received a higher number of payments throughout the academic year than those in the most deprived areas.

Appendix A – Methodology note

A Official Statistics Publication for Scotland

These statistics are designated as Official Statistics in accordance with the [Statistics and Service Registration Act 2007](#). They have been produced to high professional standards set out in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

Further information on Official Statistics is published by the [UK Statistics Authority](#)

Terminology

Learning Agreements superseded Activity Agreements in 2022. The phrase Learning Agreement has been kept in the publication tables when referring to historic data to maintain consistency.

Data sources

For schools and Learning Agreements, the Scottish Government collects the data on EMAs from Local Authorities (the administrators of the EMA payments) and collated by SEEMiS (Scottish Educational Establishment Management Information Systems).

For colleges, the data is collected from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), who administer, collate and validate the data.

Where analysis refers to institutions rather than schools or colleges, data from both Scottish schools and Scottish colleges have been combined to report on all Scottish institutions.

Coverage

EMA is a means tested payment to young people participating in a school or college, or a Learning Agreement. The data included in this publication cover those who participate in the EMA programme, but not necessarily all of those who were eligible to participate.

Although measures are taken within both the school and college data to minimise the chances of more than one record being created for the same student, an element of duplication remains possible where a student moves from school into college in the same academic year. At the moment there is no reliable way of identifying such cases.

Age

The age of recipient refers to their age as at 30th September in the year of study. Although young people cannot receive EMA until they are 16 years old, some are recorded as being 15 for this reason.

Population estimate

The population estimates are based on the National Records of Scotland's mid-year estimates. For 16-19 year olds, the estimates are obtained by ageing 13 year olds from the appropriate number of years earlier. This approach avoids the estimates being susceptible to changes in net migration (including incoming overseas students) during these ages.

Deprived areas of Scotland

Analysis of entrants from deprived areas of Scotland is based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

EMA recipients from the 20% most deprived areas are those whose home address was within one of the 20% lowest ranked areas in Scotland. The SIMD is split into 6,976 small areas called Data Zones, with 20 per cent lowest ranked areas comprising of Data Zones 1 to 1,395. A process of postcode matching was undertaken to identify which Data Zones recipients belong to. In 2021-22, 98.99% of recipients were successfully matched through this process. Those recipients whose postcodes belonged to one of the 20% lowest ranked Data Zones in the SIMD are classified as entrants from deprived areas.

SIMD2020 has been used for the academic year 2021-22. SIMD 2016 has been used for academic years 2016-17 to 2020-21. SIMD 2012 has been used for academic years 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16. SIMD 2009 was used for all other academic years.

More information can be found at www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD.

Coverage of Spend Data

The financial figures in this publication refer to the amount spent on EMA payments only. This publication does not cover any other costs associated with the EMA programme, such as administrative costs. All financial figures in this report and the associated tables are presented in nominal terms and are not adjusted for inflation.

Historically, a small percentage of local authority payments (estimated in previous years to be less than 0.5%) are not recorded on management information systems. As detailed in section 2, it is anticipated that there were more payments made outwith systems in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years due to the impact of the COVID pandemic. These 'manual' payments are excluded from the figures presented in this publication.

Data presentation

In all tables and figures, the number of recipients has been rounded to the nearest 5. Figures on EMA spend have been rounded to the nearest pound. Unknown values are not displayed individually in tables but are included in totals.

Figures may not sum to totals due to rounding and the inclusion of unknown values. Unless stated otherwise, percentages are calculated from unrounded values.

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How to access background or source data

The data collected for this statistical bulletin may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact

FHEstatistics@gov.scot for further information.

Complaints and suggestions

If you are not satisfied with our service or have any comments or suggestions, please write to the Chief Statistician, GR, St Andrews House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: (0131) 244 0302, e-mail statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

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ISBN 978-1-83521-184-7 (web only)

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Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1323902 (07/23)