



# THE MORAY COUNCIL EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CARE

## Activity Agreement Guidance

An Activity Agreement is an agreement between a young person and their 'Main Contact' person that the young person will take part in a programme of learning and activity which must be planned and delivered in ways which assist the young person to become ready for formal learning or employment. There must be regular monitoring of the Agreement, with the young person. Where the young person receives Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), this will be in accordance with EMA financial requirements.

A non formal option through an Activity Agreement can only start once the young person has left school; however planning may take place in their final term so that they can begin their programme when they leave school.

### **Eligibility**

16+ Learning Choices is the Scottish Government's model for ensuring that every young person has an appropriate, relevant, attractive offer of learning made to them, well in advance of their school leaving date. The offer may include the following options:

- Staying on at school
- Training (Get Ready For Work)
- Employment (with or without training)
- Further/Higher Education
- Volunteering
- Personal and Social Development Training.

In circumstances where none of these options are appropriate and where it is likely to enable them to progress, young people can be offered an Activity Agreement.

Young people must be:

- Eligible to leave school (up to age 18years) Young people with learning disability maybe up to 19
- Unable or not ready to access other post school options because of significant barriers.

Priority should be given to the most vulnerable young people:

- Those with disabilities or considerable additional support needs
- Those who have been excluded from school
- Those who have been educated out with mainstream
- Looked after young people (those leaving care)
- Young parents with responsibility for their children
- Young carers
- Young people whom have been in the youth justice system.

The above list is not comprehensive and each factor alone would not necessarily warrant the offer of an Activity Agreement. Each individual must be assessed on their own individual needs and if they are ready for a formal option, an Activity Agreement would **not** be appropriate.

## **Allowances**

Young people being offered Activity Agreements may be eligible for EMA. This should be applied for through the EMA Administrator in Moray Council in the usual way.

## **The Role of the ‘Main Contact’**

Only individuals from agencies approved by the 16+ Learning Choices Strategy Group can authorise an Activity agreement. These could include:

- SDS Keyworkers/Careers Advisers
- Moray Council Employment Services
- CLD
- Social Work Through Care After Care Keyworkers
- Other Social Care staff
- Action for Children
- Housing
- Other third sector organisations

Ideally the Main Contact should be identified and known to the young person before they leave school. This may be done through planning/transition meetings or through reviews or meetings around single plans (GIRFEC), or during meetings that may be held to support young people leaving school. If the young person is currently working with a keyworker from one of the agencies approved this is the person who will normally become their Main Contact. If not, the Guidance Teacher will discuss this with the young person, and identify who is most suitable to take on the role of Main Contact.

Main Contacts may carry out similar roles as part of their existing posts and come from a variety of agencies (both statutory and voluntary) but will be required to provide feedback on any Activity Agreements they draw up which will also be monitored by the 16+ Learning Choices Strategy Group for quality assurance purposes.

Main Contacts will provide a clear point of reference for young people and offer advice, support, and encouragement in addressing the barriers to progressing into a positive destination through a programme of learning. They should work with young people to plan, put in place and monitor an Activity Agreement and review this agreement to ensure that young people are meeting targets and progressing towards a positive destination. Reviews should be kept as brief, informal and informative as possible; the focus should be on providing the rationale for the Activity Agreement

(why it is needed?); assessment of the young person's needs; engagement with them; and working with them to enable them to access appropriate learning.

The Main Contact will also ensure that the Activity Agreement is shared with the nominated person within Moray Council (prior to the Agreement commencing) and with learning providers and others who support the young person throughout the Activity Agreement. The young person must sign their agreement to confirm their consent to this.

## **The Content of an Activity Agreement**

The Activity Agreement should be considered as a negotiated contract between the Main Contact and the young person, identifying specific activities they should undertake to move towards a successful progression into a formal option.

Some suggestions on activities that could form part of an Agreement:

- Local Authority CLD provision including D of E
- Third Sector CLD provision
- Volunteering opportunities
- Moray College (informal learning opportunities)
- ILA accredited provision
- Youth Achievement Awards
- Literacy and Numeracy
- Team-building activity
- Outward bound and outdoor education
- Self-esteem/Confidence-building
- Peer learning/research
- Activity focused on ethical behaviour and active citizenship
- Workplace engagement/Work experience
- Health related activity, particularly related to mental or sexual health and addictions
- Outreach Activity through police, fire and armed services
- Arts and culture-related activity.

Much of the activity under consideration will be well known to the SDS and CLD practitioners in the area and ongoing consultation with them will be key to success. Where possible practitioners should work with those identified as likely to need an informal option to help identify local provision that will meet the needs of the group and each individual. Local Management Groups have a good knowledge of the range of provision available and have the capacity to create new opportunities by working together in different ways and by adjusting existing provision to respond to need. Reference to the Moray version of the e-prospectus and the employability directory will be useful resources. A more specific 'menu' of appropriate opportunities is being worked on.

## Setting up an Activity Agreement

### Identification

Referrals for an Activity Agreement may be made at a planning meeting for a young person, or as part of transition planning with a pupil through current 16+ Learning Choices processes. Coordination with and awareness of the GIRFEC process and LIAP action plans would need to be taken into account. Referrals may also be made after a young person leaves school if they have no positive destination, if they have dropped out of college or left employment etc. and are unable to progress towards a positive destination without additional individual support. In the first instance they should be referred to Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to avoid confusion and duplication of effort. It will also be essential to work in partnership with SDS on progression options at the appropriate stage.

Activity Agreements can be proposed by the young person, teachers, SDS, CLD social workers, third sector, parents and carers or others involved with the young person. It is anticipated that at least initially most young people identified will already be known to the agency undertaking the role of Main Contact and so this will enhance the service they already offer.

It is however the young person who will ultimately decide whether or not to take up this opportunity and indicate that they are willing to adhere to the requirements of the Agreement.

### Action Plan

For some, the initial Activity Agreement may need to start only with regular meetings with their Main Contact, with other elements being agreed and added as and when identified. Others may start their activity Agreement experience immediately on a relatively full programme, particularly if this has been planned in advance of their school leaving date. The Activity Agreements are likely to include a large element of short-term goals which will need to be reviewed frequently and the plans will need to be adjusted to reflect developments as these evolve.

The **duration of programme** should reflect the needs of each individual. However it is anticipated that most young people undertaking an Activity Agreement should be able to move into a formal option within a few months. While there should be no default period, a young person should not remain in training on an Activity Agreement for longer than 9 months without advance approval from the 16+ Learning Choices Strategy Group. Due to the nature of the needs of the learners some may need to build up their participation in an Activity Agreement quite slowly over a period of time. *The number of hours may affect eligibility for EMA.*

If a **work placement or work based activity** is to form part of the plan then the Main Contact needs to ensure that all necessary safety checks have been carried out **before** the placement can begin. Placements organised jointly with The Moray Council's Work Experience Coordinator will be drawn from a database of employers for whom relevant health and safety checks have been carried out. Main Contacts need to share information relating to **additional support needs** which may impact on any placement.

## Financial Support

Where a young person meets the eligibility criteria for EMA, this could be applied for also.

If appropriate, young people can apply for Individual Learning Accounts (ILA). This funding can be used to pay for ILA approved courses.

## Submission and EMA application

When an Activity Agreement has been drawn up and agreed with the young person, including arrangements with all supporting providers, **the agreement must be signed and dated by the young person and the Main Contact**. Copies of the signed Activity Agreements need to be lodged with the nominated person from The Moray Council 16+ Learning Choices Strategy Group for monitoring and quality assurance purposes prior to becoming active. Main Contact to inform EMA unit at Moray Council on a fortnightly basis (retrospective) whether young person entitled to payment for that period (dependent upon agreement being fulfilled).

The Main Contact should try to establish the young person's **benefit status** as part of the initial assessment process and where necessary advise the appropriate under 18 claims adviser that the young person is about to embark on an Activity Agreement programme.

## Monitoring

Main Contacts should meet regularly with the young person. A record of these meetings should be kept following an agreed format. The Main Contact should communicate regularly with providers – by phone call or email – to get feedback on the young person's attendance and progress, though there is an expectation that providers will also keep Main Contacts up to date on any issues.

## Review/Progression

Main Contacts should hold a review meeting with young people **monthly**. The review meetings should assess progress, and discuss what next steps need to be taken, including changing or adding to the current provision. A proforma will be provided.

As noted above Activity Agreements have no defined length, but the review process should identify progress or lack of it, and an Agreement should not normally last more than nine months. If there is a need for the Activity Agreement to continue beyond nine months this must be with the approval of Moray Council 16+ Learning Choices Strategy Group.

A review should also be carried out when an Agreement comes to an end. Main Contacts are required to forward copies of Activity Agreements and subsequent

reviews to the identified person from The Moray Council 16+ Learning Choices Strategy Group for monitoring and quality assurance purposes. Activity Agreement outcomes will be monitored and information regarding their success, and/or any improvements necessary will be shared/discussed at meetings of the Strategy Group. When an agreement ends Main Contacts and Young People need to complete a questionnaire which should be sent along with the final review.

### **Support Post Activity Agreement**

For an agreed period (of at least 3 months) after positive progression onto a formal option, the Main Contact should maintain some contact with the young person to support them to sustain their place. Information regarding destinations should also be written into final reviews.

### **Personal information – Data sharing**

Main Contacts will need to consider, on a case by case basis, what background information, if any, should be shared with potential providers about individual young people. Such information would, as per usual practice, need to be relevant and relate to Health and Safety/Risk Assessment criteria. Permission needs to be given by the young person prior to information being shared with providers.

### **Summary of Action**

1. Young person is identified – SDS consulted to avoid duplication.
2. EMA applied for as soon as it is clear an AA is the appropriate route. Young person supported to do this.
3. AA drawn up, providers contacted and provision put in place with agreed start dates. Jobcentre advised when any young person in receipt of DWP benefit.
4. The Activity Agreement template completed based on individual needs and interests.
5. Young person and Main Contact both sign and date the AA. **Note that the young person must sign twice, to agree to information being shared and to agree to code of conduct.**
6. Main Contact makes copies for young person, own records.
7. Electronic copy of AA and Reviews sent to nominated person\* for monitoring and quality assurance purposes and recording on SEEMIS.
8. Administrator enters on SEEMIS, and EMA unit alerted that AA is now in place.
9. **Safety checks must be carried out before any work placement can be undertaken.**
10. Monitor attendance and progress.
11. Notify relevant partners when an Agreement comes to an end (or where the young person decides not to continue).
12. Agree post programme support.

\*April 2011 and March 2012 Central Contact will be the 16+ Learning Choices Development Officer.

### **Main Contact – Role**

#### Overall Purpose of Role

To provide a clear point of reference for young people who are at risk of not being in a positive and sustained destination at any point during the senior phase of education. To offer advice, support and encouragement in addressing the barriers to progressing into education, training and employment. To work with young people to plan, put in place and monitor an Activity Agreement and to evaluate same.

#### Key elements:

- Build and maintain a good relationship with the young person
- Supporting and contributing to the assessment processes of the young person's needs and abilities
- Supporting existing school transition planning and programmes
- To work with the young person to design a bespoke Activity Agreement
- To monitor that agreement and complete relevant paperwork
- To maintain good communication links with relevant parties
- Advocate where appropriate, on behalf of the young person
- Signpost the young person to other service where required and support the young person to access these
- Maintain regular contact with the young person for an agreed period of time after the Activity Agreement has ended
- To attend relevant training/briefing sessions

### Current guidance (liable to change)

#### **Benefit Information for Activity Agreement 'Main Contacts'**

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- It is important that **Activity Agreement Main Contacts** establish the benefit position of young people before allowing them to sign up to an Activity Agreement plan as it may impact on the terms on which the customer participates.
- To facilitate this, **Activity Agreement Main Contacts** will inform the Activity Agreement Coordinator who will liaise with Jobcentre Plus when a young person wishes to enter in to an Activity Agreement; upon receipt of this notification Jobcentre Plus must check whether the young person is in receipt of any benefit and, if so, inform them.
- Procedures for this two-way exchange of information must be agreed at a local level and comply with both data protection legislation and DWP data security guidelines.
- The data protection issue, as it relates to the information supplied by Jobcentre Plus, has been considered at national level. If it is identified that a customer is claiming a Jobcentre Plus benefit, simply note 'claiming JSA', 'claiming IS' etc against their name. No other information about the claim must be noted or disclosed and no information about dormant claims must be noted or disclosed. If the customer is not claiming a Jobcentre Plus benefit the form/list must not be annotated in any way.
- None of the information supplied by **Activity Agreement Main Contacts** must be retained (either clerically or electronically) by Jobcentre Plus.

#### **Activity Agreement participation for 16/17 year olds claiming benefit.**

##### **Jobseekers Allowance**

- A young person in receipt of JSA may enter in to an Activity Agreement with **an Activity Agreement Main Contact** but the agreed activities would have to be less than 16 hours per week and the customer is **NOT** eligible to receive EMA.

##### **Income Support (lone parent)**

- A young person in receipt of Income Support because they are a lone parent may enter in to an activity agreement without any restrictions and may be eligible for EMA; receipt of the allowance has **NO** impact on the level of Income Support paid.

##### **Incapacity Benefit / Employment Support Allowance**

- A young person in receipt of Incapacity Benefit or (from October 2008) Employment Support Allowance may enter in to an Activity Agreement without any restrictions but is **NOT** eligible to receive EMA.

##### **Carers Allowance**

- A young person in receipt of Carers Allowance may enter in to an Activity Agreement as long as those activities do not interfere with their requirement to be a carer for at least 35 hours per week; the young person may be eligible for EMA.

#### **Impact of young person receiving an Activity Allowance on a family member's claim for means tested benefit.**

- Payment of EMA to a young person will **NOT** affect any means tested benefit that another member of the family might be claiming i.e. it is disregarded as income.

#### **Impact of EMA payments on Housing Benefit**

- EMA payments should be disregarded in terms of Housing Benefit (Housing Benefit General Regulations Schedule 4 paragraph 11 refers).
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## ACTIVITY AGREEMENT

Name:			
Date of Birth:		National Insurance No.	
Address:			

Last school attended:			
Other education provision:			
Activity Agreement will start week beginning			
EMA applied for: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Date of application:		

I agree to share details of my Activity Agreement with all the learning providers who help me during this time, and any other professional person or body, where my Personal Advisor and I have agreed this. I agree to my details being stored on Moray Council database for purposes of monitoring and evaluation.

<b>Signed</b> (Participant)		<b>Date:</b>	
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**To be completed by the Main Contact**

I hereby confirm that the above named student understands and has agreed to the content of this Activity Agreement, has had the terms of the EMA explained and has agreed to the criteria for claiming EMA. I or one of my colleagues will notify Moray Council claimant's weekly attendance and inform them should the student fail to meet the EMA requirements for Activity Agreements.

I confirm that the number of hours per week which this Agreement constitutes is relevant to this young person's needs, and if less than 9 hours a week is the maximum he or she can sustain at this time. As the contract develops the updated plan will need to be signed.

Main Contact Name:			
Organisation:			
<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

SDS informed		Date:	
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Moray Council Authorized Signatory

<b>Signed</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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**Learner Agreement Contract**

No. Hrs/Wk

Learning Activity Provider

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Total No. Hours

**Activity Agreement Code of Conduct**

- I agree to take part in the learning set out in my activity agreement
- I will attend all activities at the time agreed. I will contact the activity leader to say if I will be late or absent from the activity and inform my Main Contact as soon as possible
- I will do my best to achieve everything I am working towards in my Activity Agreement
- I will always be respectful towards other people
- I will look after my own property and be respectful of other people's property.
- I will take care of my own well being and do nothing to endanger others, (if I need to wear protective clothing I will wear them at all times they are required.)
- I will not attend any part of my activity agreement under the influence of or in the possession of Alcohol or drugs. *(This or any other illegal activity will be reported to your personal advisor and may be reported to the police.)*

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to fulfill my \*learner agreement contract and follow the above code of conduct which has been fully discussed and explained.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4

### Activity Agreement Plan (Example 1)

Dates / Timescales	Activity (What things do I need to do or need help with?)	Who will help?	What I plan to Achieve (My Goals)	How will I know when I have achieved my Goals
weekly	Attend 1:1 appointment with Main Contact	Self / Main Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn to keep appointments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrive on time for my 1:1 appointment</li> </ul>
No. hrs/wk <input type="checkbox"/>				

### Activity Agreement Plan (Example 2)

Dates / Timescales	Activity (What things do I need to do or need help with?)	Who will help?	What I plan to Achieve (My Goals)	How will I know when I have achieved my Goals
weekly until next review	Attend 1:1 sessions with Main Contact	Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss and plan future goals</li> <li>Good timekeeping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrive on time for my 1:1 appointment and set realistic goals</li> </ul>
weekly until next review	Attend Job Club at centre	Self / SDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn about job searches</li> <li>Develop C.V.</li> <li>Write a cover letter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a copy of my C.V. and send it to employers I have found online with a letter saying I am looking for work</li> </ul>
No. hrs/week <input type="checkbox"/>				

### Activity Agreement Plan (Example 3)

Dates / Timescales	Activity (What things do I need to do or need help with?)	Who will help?	What I plan to Achieve (My Goals)	How will I know when I have achieved my Goals
weekly (review in 4 weeks)	Attend 1:1 sessions with Main Contact	Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss and Plan future goals</li> <li>Progress towards employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrive on time for my 1:1 appointment and set realistic goals</li> </ul>
weekly (review in 4 weeks)	Attend Job Club at Centre	Self / SDS /	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop C.V.</li> <li>Search for jobs</li> <li>Cold call employers</li> <li>Send letters to employers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send my C.V. and letter to employers I have found online looking for work</li> <li>Call local hotels</li> </ul>
twice weekly	Volunteer regularly at Café Project	Self / Main Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve self confidence</li> <li>Develop employability skills</li> <li>Develop healthy routines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get on well with everyone at the Cafe</li> <li>Do what my managers ask of me</li> <li>Have a healthy lunch</li> </ul>
weekly	Meet with literacy worker to on a weekly (min) basis	Self / Literacy Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop skills and increase confidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be able to read posters and newspaper</li> </ul>
No hrs/week <input type="checkbox"/>				

Activity Agreements - Summary of Action

