

# Student Services Annual Report for the Financial Year 2016/17



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**Our aim is:**

***‘to ensure our customers are paid correctly and on time,  
every time’***

## **1. Purpose and Scope**

The primary purpose of this report is to provide an overview of Student Services' performance during the 2016/17 financial year, detailing all bursary expenditure and transactions for NHS Student Bursaries (SB), Social Work Bursaries (SWB) and the Education Support Grant (ESG).

## **2. General Overview**

The NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) is a Special Health Authority and an Arm's Length Body of the Department of Health (DH). It provides a range of critical central services to NHS organisations, NHS contractors, patients and the public.

The NHSBSA was created in 2006 by bringing together a number of previously separate NHS organisations. The NHSBSA still delivers its core functions but has taken on additional services as stakeholders' needs have evolved.

The current portfolio of services and the date the NHSBSA became responsible is shown in Figure 1 below. The NHSBSA took responsibility for SB in 2006, SWB in 2007 and the ESG in 2012.

**Figure 1**



## **Our strategy**

Our updated strategy gives details of the work we have planned and will continue to do to ensure our success.

It's now more important than ever that we play our part in reducing the financial pressure on the NHS and continue the important work that the NHSBSA was set up to achieve. We have captured this in our new purpose statement – that we are here to:

### **Support a better NHS**

While our purpose is clear, it's important that we continue to develop as an organisation and realise our ambitions so that we are in the best possible place to continue to support the NHS in the future. With this in mind, we have developed a new vision for the NHSBSA:

### **To be the delivery partner of choice for the NHS**

Striving towards our vision will ensure the NHSBSA is a key player on the healthcare landscape and one which is trusted and capable of supporting the NHS.

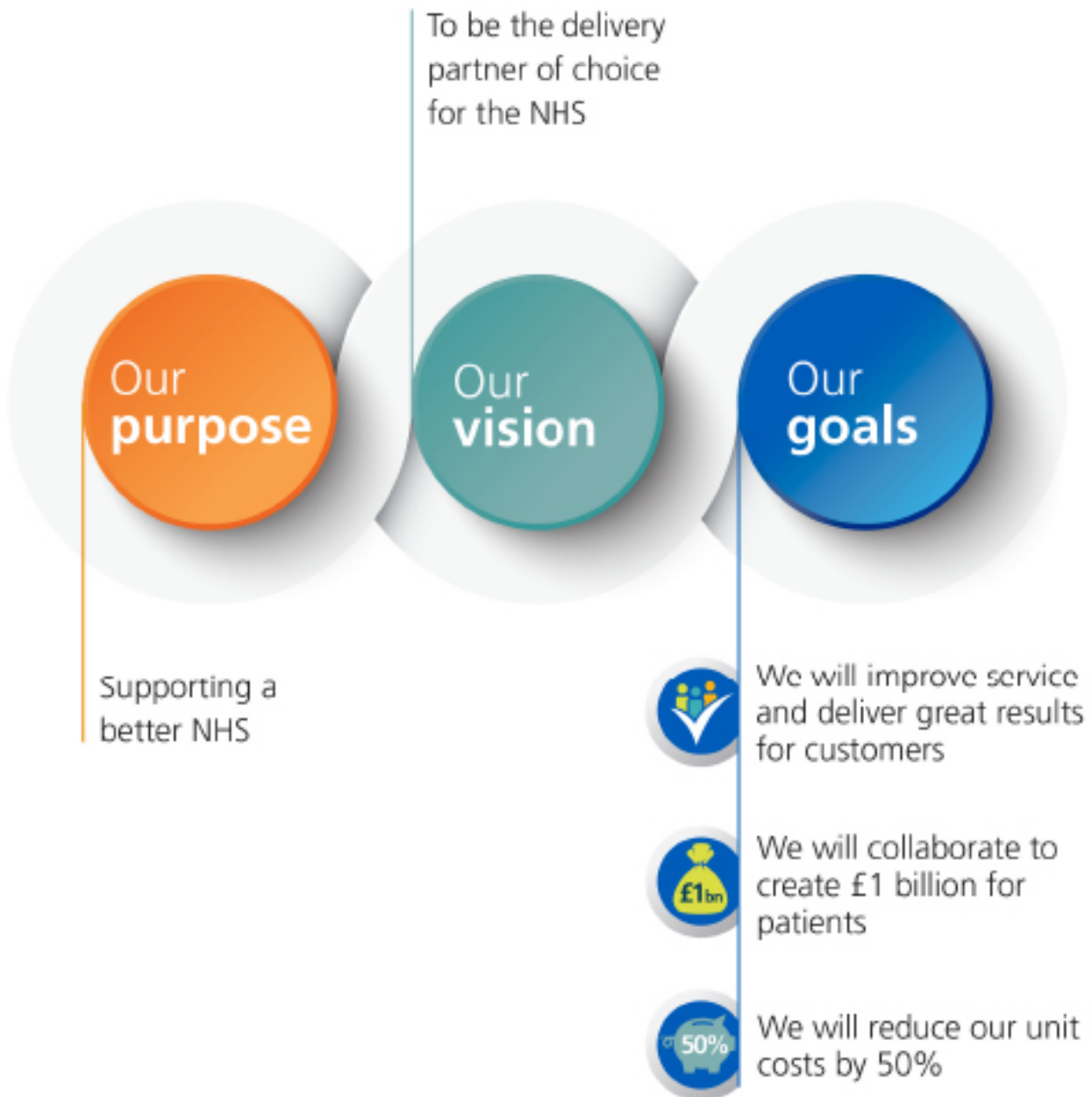
With our purpose and vision established, we have rationalised our previous strategic goals to ensure that our aims will fully help us to meet our purpose and strive towards our vision, while ensuring we can continue to address threats and opportunities identified in the longer term:

- We will improve service and deliver great results for customers
- We will collaborate to create £1 billion for patients
- We will reduce our unit costs by 50%

This business plan shows the programmes of work and financial plans in place to help us achieve these goals, live up to our purpose and realise our vision.

Our key risks also inform our approach to business planning. This includes any interdependencies identified between our activities and those of the DH, other ALBs and other key stakeholders.

Our strategy can be summarised in this diagram:



## Student Services

There are three key service streams within Student Services:

<b>NHS Student Bursaries</b>	<b>Social Work Bursaries</b>	<b>Education Support Grant</b>
Assessing and paying bursaries totalling approximately £482 million <sup>1</sup> to over 110,000 health students in the financial year and over 80 Higher Education Institutions.	Assessing and paying bursaries totalling approximately £56 million to around 12,500 social work students in the financial year.	Making payments in excess of £19 million for social work placements to over 80 Higher Education Institutions.

Student Services are provided from various NHSBSA sites:

- Hesketh House, Fleetwood – SB, SWB, ESG, Communications and the hub for Student Services
- Ridgway House, Bolton - SB Scanning Services
- Bridge House, Newcastle - Customer Contact Services
- Stella House, Newcastle - Programme Management, Finance, Information Technology and other corporate functions

Across the three service streams, we administered payments totalling approximately £557 million to over 122,500 students and over 80 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the 2016/17 financial year.

Our overarching aims for Student Services, in line with the NHSBSA's vision, are:

- providing a modern, timely and reliable service for **customers**
- exceeding **client** expectations through effective and assured service and policy delivery
- supporting our **staff** to have job satisfaction and rewarding careers
- enabling our **organisational** objectives to be achieved

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<sup>1</sup> This includes tuition fees for medical and dental students.



### 3. Performance Summary

Overall, Student Services has delivered high levels of performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) across SB, SWB and the ESG throughout 2016/17.

Copies of the March 2017 sponsor reports have already been provided to clients and are also available on request.

#### NHS Student Bursaries (SB)

There are a few isolated incidences of failure to meet KPIs in 2016/17, all of which have been addressed and are being monitored on an on-going basis to prevent further service failures. The incidences are as follows

- The payment of tuition fees for Medical and Dental programmes missed the deadline on one occasion in December 2016; this was due to unexpected high volume of receipts over the Christmas period. This was quickly resolved and no complaints were received from HEIs.
- The deadline for informal complaints was missed on two occasions due to their complex nature and being sent to a junk mail account.

#### Social Work Bursaries (SWB)

There are a few isolated incidences of failure to meet KPIs in 2016/17, all of which have been addressed and are being monitored on an on-going basis to prevent further service failures. The incidences are as follows

- To deliver within a 5% tolerance of the monthly capacity and capability plans were missed on two occasions, firstly in April 2016 due to the application window opening earlier than previous years and higher volumes received than expected. Secondly, in August 2016 due to the late receipt of capping allocations.
- % cash variance was not achieved on two occasions; this was due to the rolling calculation from the previous financial year.

## 4. Client and Stakeholder Engagement

Student Services' clients are the DH and Health Education England (HEE) and our stakeholder network includes our clients, HEIs, students, partnership organisations and professional bodies e.g. the Council of Deans of Health.

Engagement with clients and stakeholders is central to ensuring we deliver service excellence to our customers (students and HEIs) in order to help our clients meet their objectives and those of the wider public sector, by using our knowledge, experience and insight. Engagement is delivered through both formal and informal means and often through day-to-day communications, the extent of which is not measurable.

Figure 3 below provides an overview of all the formal client and stakeholder engagement activity undertaken during 2016/17.

**Figure 3**



The following narrative provides further detail of key events either hosted by Student Services or events where Student Services has been actively involved in the delivery of the event.

## **National Stakeholder Events**

In January 2017 a Stakeholder Event was held at the National Council of Volunteers Office in London. The event brought together representatives from universities across the country to discuss the latest about the Healthcare Education Funding Reforms. Colleagues from the Student Loans Company (SLC) and Health Education England (HEE) attended the event and supported Student Services in the delivery.

The event consisted of an overview of Student Services and where we are now, followed by four workshops over the course of the day which allowed attendees to find out the latest on:

- Transitional arrangements; the arrangements for students on Postgraduate, Dental Therapy, Dental Hygiene and Part-time courses for 2017/18.
- Learning Support Fund – Child Dependants Allowance and Travel and Dual Accommodation Allowance; further information can be found in the Healthcare Education Funding Reforms section below.
- Learning Support Fund – Exceptional Support Fund; further information can be found in the Healthcare Education Funding Reforms section below.
- Student movement; arrangements for students who may have deferred their studies or taken a period of absence for a variety of reasons, for example maternity or bereavement.

The day provided a forum in which the attendees could ask Student Services staff questions about the reforms which in turn allowed the team to take back comprehensive questions and ideas which were then considered and helped influence the development of the new policies.

## **Academic Registrars Council Subjects Allied to Medicine (ARC SAMS)**

The ARC SAMS is the national forum of senior managers responsible for the academic administration of student matters in HEIs and colleges of Higher Education. The council meets three times a year and Student Services is invited to provide operational and policy updates and answer any queries raised. In October 2016 we introduced the Student Loans Company to the group to forge further partnerships as we transition into the new funding arrangements.

## **Student Loans Company**

We attended the annual Student Loans Company support seminar in March 2017. Over 400 delegates were at this event and we jointly delivered two sessions regarding the funding reforms.

## **National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA)**

NASMA is the National Association of Student Money Advisers. NASMA is a registered charity working to relieve the poverty of students through the provision of advice, information and training.

NASMA host an annual conference for its members and in July 2016 the conference was held at the St John's Hotel in Solihull, Birmingham. Student Services supported the event by providing a training session for approximately 40 delegates on SB and SWB.

In February 2017 we held a meeting with the National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA) at Liverpool John Moores University. This brought together advisors from across the country to discuss the reforms in more detail, with a focus on the Exceptional Support Fund (ESF) element of the Learning Support Fund. This allowed the team to bring attendees up to date with the policy formation and, as with the stakeholder event in London, enabled detailed discussions to take place which again helped inform the finalisation of the policy.

## Customer satisfaction

The NHSBSA undertakes annual customer satisfaction research across its services.

The research was undertaken and analysed by the Customer Insight and Research team at the NHSBSA and the response rates for 2016 are as follows:

- 3,176 people completed the SB survey which was a response rate of 21%
- 4,729 people completed the SWB survey which was a response rate of 26%

The purposes of the surveys are to:

- understand how students find out about SB and SWB and their views on the application process
- understand the ways students communicate and their experience of contact
- assess satisfaction with the service and identify any areas for improvement (by choosing a satisfaction level score out of 10)
- compare performance with previous years

## NHS Student Bursaries

### Key findings from the survey

- University/HEI continues to be the main way students find out about Student Bursaries and the website is the main source for finding out more information.
- Students were very satisfied with the ease of finding out about Student Bursaries, but were not well informed about some of the expenses and allowances.
- Satisfaction with all aspects of the application process through BOSS has significantly improved from 2015/16.
- Satisfaction with all individual aspects of the Student Bursary award are now green, although there has been a decrease in satisfaction with payments being made as expected.
- Six of seven comparable Customer Contact ratings have fallen (8.1 overall). Students using telephone and Facebook are more satisfied than those using email or letter.
- Just under one-third of students had visited the web pages in the last six months. All aspects continue to receive green satisfaction ratings (8.4 overall).
- The proportion of students aware of 'Ask Us' continued to increase (64%, up from 54% in 2015/16), and 20% have used it (up from 15% in 2015/16).
- Satisfaction with communication is significantly lower than in 2015/16 (8.4), now at 8.2.
- Overall satisfaction is the same as in 2015/16 at 8.4.

## Recommendations

- Continue to raise awareness of the *Guide to NHS Student Bursaries* booklet, the BOSS guidance video and the process for Practice Placement Expenses (prior to application).
- Continue to work closely with HEIs to ensure they have the most up to date information available as the main source of information for students, and are aware of any changes.
- Review and improve content on the website in line with the new NHSBSA wide website creation.
- Clarify evidence what will be required at the outset of the application process.
- Review current information regarding expenses and how this can be improved.
- Provide regular progress updates and reminders at key times during the application cycle.
- Explore low customer service ratings and comments and how we can improve these.
- Increase the use of technology to communicate more effectively with students regarding their application, e.g. use of SMS messages
- Explore relatively low satisfaction with the application process, communication and service in general amongst medical and dental students and students limited by a health problem or disability.

## Social Work Bursaries

### Key findings from the survey

- Satisfaction with Social Work Bursaries amongst students has significantly decreased from 2015/16 across a range of key measures. The overall satisfaction has significantly fallen to a mean score rating of 8.2 and the Net Promoter Score based on satisfaction has fallen to +43.
- University/Higher Education Institution continues to be the main way students first find out about Social Work Bursaries and the web pages are the main source for finding out more information.
- Satisfaction with ease of finding out about Social Work Bursaries (7.9) is consistent with last year.
- Satisfaction with aspects of the application and the application process overall is also consistent with last year.
- Satisfaction with all comparable aspects of the award and the NOA have significantly decreased.
- Most satisfaction ratings for customer contact remain green but all aspects comparable with last year have significantly decreased.

### Recommendations

- Continue to increase awareness of the Social Work Bursary prior to students applying for their course. Ensure universities are clear on how students apply for the bursary and are aware of the eligibility criteria/entitlement calculation.
- Review the process for informing students they will receive a bursary as some found out after they have started the course or left full-time employment which is stressful.
- Continue to communicate regularly with students, particularly by email and explore use of SMS, providing updates on the progress of applications, expected timeframes and payment dates.
- Regularly review the information on the website and the layout of the website so that information is easier to find.
- Investigate the causes of decreased satisfaction amongst social work bursary students and how these can be rectified.



## 5. Policy updates

### NHS Student Bursaries

The NHS Bursary Scheme New Rules is the fifth edition of the new rules which apply to students starting their courses on or after 1 September 2012. They include a number of changes from the fourth edition of the NHS Bursary Scheme Rules published in 2015. The same changes also apply to the sixteenth edition of the NHS Bursary Scheme Old Rules. At a summary level the changes are:

- In the introductory paragraph a new section v. was added regarding the funding reforms which will be implemented from 1 August 2017.
- Information has been updated regarding residency rules contained within section 2.
- Amendments to wording throughout changing 'NHS organisation' to 'Health Education England'
- In section 3, additional paragraph added to 3.6 to provide clarity on professions which will be removed from table 2 in the next edition of the rule effective from 1 August 2017.
- In section 4, table 4, the tuition fee rates for medical and dental students studying in Northern Ireland has been updated from £3,805 to £3,925.
- Section 5, paragraph 5.5 updated to clarify how the maintenance award is paid.
- Changes to the policy regarding DSA have been updated in section 6
- Information regarding practice placement expenses has been updated in section 7.
- Section 8 contains updated regarding childcare allowances including care by foster carers and allowances payable in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland
- Clarity provided in section 12 which states applications must be made within six months of the first date of the academic year.
- Update to glossary terms in section 14.

## Social Work Bursaries

A summary of the bursary arrangements for the 2016/17 academic year, as published by the DH in August 2016, is detailed below:

- The number of whole-time equivalent (WTE) SWB for postgraduate students starting in the 2016 academic year has been set at 1,500;
- The number of WTE SWB for undergraduate students who started in the 2015 academic year has been set at 2,500;
- The arrangements for students applying for SWB is unchanged;
- Information is provided on the inclusion criteria for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to use when shortlisting students and remains unchanged from 2015/16;
- The ESG rates remain the same as 2015/16;
- The arrangements for HEIs applying for the ESG remains unchanged (whether the HEI is part of a Teaching Partnership or not).

## Healthcare Education Funding Reforms

Following the Government's consultation regarding the changes to the way some healthcare courses are funded, we have been working closely with colleagues from the Department of Health, Health Education England and other organisations to finalise the new policies.

The reforms affect new Nursing, Midwifery and some Allied Health Professional (AHP) courses from 1 August 2017. Students will need to apply the Student Loans Company (Student Finance England provisions) for their tuition fees and maintenance loan rather than an NHS bursary. Additional funding support will be available and administered by Student Services as follows:

- **Child Dependants Allowance**  
This provides eligible students with a £1,000 grant per annum (pro rata for part-time students) which will be payable in three termly instalments. This is a fixed amount and does not depend on how many children students may have.
- **Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses**  
Similar to the old Practice Placement Expenses received by NHS Bursary students, this allows eligible students to claim for travel and dual accommodation expenses incurred as part of the placements. This scheme is also open to students in London.
- **Exceptional Support Fund**  
Eligible students who are in severe financial hardship and who have explored other means of support may be able to claim for an amount up to £3,000 in each academic year.

We have been working on policy development, communications products and systems development throughout 2016/17. A project team is in place to coordinate the funding reforms work and ensure key deliverables are met.

## 6. NHS Student Bursaries

The NHSBSA is directed by the DH to administer NHS Student Bursaries (SB) following the [NHS Bursary Scheme Rules](#). The policy sets out the Scheme Rules and administrative arrangements for the payment of NHS Bursaries to students who meet the eligibility requirements and have accepted a place on an eligible course. The NHS Bursary Scheme Rules ensure the bursaries are paid fairly and consistently.

SB processes in excess of 90,500 applications per academic year for healthcare students at over 80 HEIs. In respect of medical and dental students, SB also pays tuition fees to HEIs. The total financial value of cash payments for SB activity is around £482 million in the 2016/17 financial year. HEE is accountable for both the funding paid to students and HEIs for HEE commissioned courses and is responsible for the management of the associated education commissioning activity through contracts with the HEIs.

There are two sets of rules, one for students who started their course before 1 September 2012 (which incorporates the pre-2007 scheme rules) and one for those who started on or after that date. The NHS Bursary Scheme covers bursary awards as set out in Table 1.

**Table 1**

<b>Undergraduate and postgraduate students:</b>	
Tuition fee contributions (medical and dental students only)	
Maintenance Award:	
<b>A. Non-Means Tested Allowances:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-Means Tested Grant</li> <li>• Disabled Students Allowance</li> <li>• Practice Placement Expenses</li> </ul>	<b>B. Means Tested Allowances:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Means Tested Bursary (Basic Allowance/Award)</li> <li>• Extra Weeks Allowance</li> <li>• Dependants Allowance/Parent Learning Allowance</li> <li>• Childcare Allowance</li> </ul>

The following sections provide a detailed account of activity across the service streams for the 2016/17 financial year. SB supports around 90,500 students in training in any one academic year. However, across the financial year the number of students supported is in excess of 110,000. This is due to the crossover between the financial year and academic year, where essentially four cohorts of students are in our systems in any financial year.

There are currently two NHS Bursary Schemes which students were assessed under in 2016/17.

These are:

- 2007-2012 Scheme (4,565 students)
- 2012 Scheme (105,993 students)

## Eligible professions

A course is eligible for an NHS Bursary if it satisfies all the following conditions.

These are that:

- it is provided by a **recognised institution of Higher Education** in England or, for courses leading to professional registration as a doctor or dentist, in the **UK**
- it leads to a professional registration in one of the healthcare professions listed in the table below
- it is either provided under a contract with an NHS organisation or it is a course leading to professional registration as a doctor or dentist
- the minimum level of qualification required for a course to be eligible is a Diploma of Higher Education Level

The courses which attract NHS Bursary funding are set out in Table 2.

**Table 2**

Eligible Healthcare Professions	
Chiropodist or Podiatrist	Operating Department Practitioner
Dental Hygienist/Dental Therapist	Orthotist/Prosthetist
Dentist	Orthoptist
Dietician	Physiotherapist
Doctor	Radiographer
Nurse	Radiotherapist
Midwife	Speech and Language Therapist
Occupational Therapist	

Only the later years of courses leading to professional registration as a doctor or dentist are eligible for an NHS Bursary. These years are set out in Table 3 below.

**Table 3**

Type of medical or dental pre-registration course	Part of course eligible for an NHS Bursary					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Years 6 +
Five or more years pre-registration course (including any integral foundation or intercalating years at bachelor or masters degree level).	x	x	x	x	✓	✓
Accelerated pre-registration course for graduates with relevant prior learning	x	✓	✓	✓		
Accelerated pre-registration course for graduates with relevant prior learning	x	✓	✓			

### NHS Bursary rates

NHS Bursary rates are published annually by the Department of Health.

Table 4 lists the gross annual bursary rates applicable for the 2016/17 financial year for the purpose of this Annual Report, across the three different NHS Bursary Schemes.

**Table 4**

	<b>2007-2012 Scheme</b>	<b>2012 Scheme</b>
Basic Award – Parental Home	£2,470	£2,207
Basic Award – Lodgings Rate	£2,958	£2,643
Basic Award – London Lodgings Rate	£3,571	£3,191
Extra Weeks Allowance – Parental Home	£56	£56
Extra Weeks Allowance – Lodgings Rate	£84	£84
Extra Weeks Allowance – London Lodgings Rate	£108	£108
Non Means Tested Grant	-	£1,000
Spouse or First Child Dependants Rate	£2,693	£2,448
Child Under 11 Dependants Rate	£549	£549
Child 11 to 15 Dependants Rate		
Child 16 to 17 Dependants Rate		
Child Over 18 Dependants Rate		
Standard PLA Rate	£1,329	£1,204
Standard OSA Rate	-	-
Standard OSA Rate – Aged 26	-	-
Standard OSA Rate – Aged 27	-	-
Standard OSA Rate – Aged 28	-	-
Standard OSA Rate – Aged 29	-	-
Standard SPA Rate	-	-
Childcare Allowance – One child (Maximum Weekly Rate)	£128.78	£128.78
Childcare Allowance – Two or more children (Maximum Weekly Rate)	£191.45	£191.45
Disabled Students Allowances – Non-Medical Helper	£20,725	£20,725
Disabled Students Allowances – Specialist Equipment	£5,214	£5,214
Disabled Students Allowances – Other	£1,741	£1,741
Tuition Fees Variable Rate – 2013/14	-	£3,465
Tuition Fees Standard Rate – 2013/14	-	£1,380

## NHS Student Bursaries activity

Student Services assessed and approved (finalised for payment) 92,783 bursary applications in the 2016/17 academic year. The total volumes of new and continuing students, by profession, are detailed in Table 5 below.

**Table 5**

Profession	New Students <sup>2</sup>	Continuing Students	Total
AHP Foundation	2	3	5
Chiropody	328	618	946
Dental Hygiene	23	14	37
Dental Hygiene & Dental Therapy	191	347	538
Dental Therapy	24	38	62
Dentistry	0	968	968
Dietetics	388	772	1,160
Medicine	0	9,878	9,878
Midwifery	2,474	4,147	6,621
Nursing	21,775	33,984	55,759
Occupational Therapy	1,534	2,586	4,120
Operating Department Practitioner	922	950	1,872
Orthoptics	90	135	225
Physiotherapy	1,669	2,673	4,342
Prosthetics & Orthotics	30	56	86
Radiography	1,345	1,958	3,303
Radiotherapy	379	491	870
Speech & Language Therapy	697	1,294	1,991
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,871</b>	<b>60,912</b>	<b>92,783</b>

The number of applications approved is not the number of NHS Bursary holders in training. This is because Student Services assess and approve more applications than students in training, due to a number of students never taking up a training place or students that subsequently withdraw.

<sup>2</sup> There are no new students for dentistry or medicine as the first year of funding for such students is normally provided by the Department for Education.



## NHS Student Bursaries cash payments

This section details cash payments made to students in the financial year. The following points apply to all tables, unless specified.

- All figures relate to the number of students paid any bursary element in the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. As such figures exclude nil award holders (i.e. EU Fees Only students, students who chose to not disclose income and students whose award was fully abated by means testing).
- Monetary values include all bursary elements (Basic Award, allowances and one-off payments) paid directly to students or to third party providers of services for disabled students.
- Tuition fees paid directly to HEIs to meet the tuition fee liability of students studying medicine or dentistry are **not** included in the tables analysing cash payments by profession.
- The total paid includes all payments that were made and does not include accruals or adjustments (e.g. overpayments or cancelled payments).
- No adjustment has been made to the student count to reflect part year attendance and payment (e.g. for first and final year students or students who withdrew from or returned to training in the period).

Table 6 lists a national summary of cash payments to students by profession.

**Table 6**

Profession	No of Students Paid	Total Paid (£000s)	% of All Professions Paid	Average Paid per Student (£000s)
<b>Medical &amp; Dental</b>	12,121	£25,439,922	6.04%	
<i>Of which:</i>				
Medicine	10,704	£23,141,482	5.50%	2,162
Dentistry	1,417	£2,298,440	0.55%	1,622
<b>Nursing &amp; Midwifery</b>	74,574	£323,073,971	76.77%	
<i>Of which:</i>				
Nursing	66,334	£286,937,827	68.18%	4,326
Midwifery	8,240	£36,136,144	8.59%	4,385
<b>Allied Health Professions</b>	20,794	£60,807,664	14.45%	
<i>Of which:</i>				
AHP Foundation	5	£23,005	0.01%	4,601
Chiropody	1,178	£3,557,067	0.85%	3,020
Dietetics	1,319	£3,736,753	0.89%	2,833
Occupational Therapy	5,092	£16,414,750	3.90%	3,224
Orthoptics	275	£872,666	0.21%	3,173
Physiotherapy	5,316	£12,563,018	2.99%	2,363
Prosthetics & Orthotics	113	£330,529	0.08%	2,925
Radiography	4,007	£13,346,768	3.17%	3,331
Radiotherapy	1,065	£3,471,807	0.82%	3,260
Speech & Language Therapy	2,424	£6,491,303	1.54%	2,678
<b>Professions Complementary to Dentistry</b>	727	£2,389,166	0.57%	
<i>Of which:</i>				
Dental Hygiene	61	£179,184	0.04%	2,937
Dental Hygiene & Dental Therapy	605	£1,956,681	0.46%	3,234
Dental Therapy	61	£253,300	0.06%	4,152
<b>Other Health Professions</b>	2,342	9,136,856	2.17%	
<i>Of which:</i>				
Operating Department Practitioner	2,342	£9,136,856	2.17%	3,901
<b>All Professions</b>	110,558	£420,847,578	100.00%	

The 'average paid per student' figures in Table 6 above relate to the number of students paid any bursary element in the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. As such, figures

exclude nil award holders i.e. EU fees only students and students whose award was fully abated by means testing. No adjustment has been made to the student count to reflect part-year attendance and payment e.g. for first and final year students or students who withdrew from or returned to training in the period.

Nursing (all branches combined) accounts for the largest proportion (68.18%) of cash payments and, excluding the small number of AHP Foundation students, is second only to midwifery in terms of the average paid per student (£4,326).

Nursing and midwifery have greater average bursary paid per student because the courses leading to professional registration in nursing or midwifery generally have longer term dates, resulting in an increased gross annual bursary.

Together, these professions account for 76.77% of cash payments, or £323.1m.

In Table 7 below, the same professions grouped are analysed for the last 10 financial years; from April 2007 to March 2017.

**Table 7**

Financial Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Professional Group	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Medical & Dental	19,215	20,198	21,152	22,228	21,887	22,967	23,424	23,236	23,118	25,440
Nursing & Midwifery	370,858	369,762	385,721	399,366	385,371	349,453	320,586	301,307	309,436	323,074
Allied Health Professions	47,800	46,285	47,737	50,296	50,275	52,759	55,697	58,129	60,513	60,808
Professions Complementary to Dentistry	1,675	1,636	1,606	1,744	1,886	1,863	2,102	2,337	2,438	2,389
Other Health Professions	14,714	16,766	19,270	20,262	19,692	16,735	10,114	8,780	8,905	9,137
<b>Total</b>	<b>454,262</b>	<b>454,647</b>	<b>475,486</b>	<b>493,896</b>	<b>479,111</b>	<b>443,777</b>	<b>411,923</b>	<b>393,789</b>	<b>404,410</b>	<b>420,848</b>

The cash payments for nursing and midwifery professions have reduced since 2011/12 - the first year after Traditional Diploma non-means tested bursaries were removed from the NHS Bursary Scheme. There has been a slight increase in 2016/17 when compared to 2015/16, but this can be attributed to an increase in student nurses paid, from 63,518 in the 2015/16 financial year to 66,334 in the 2016/17 financial year.

Cash payments for Allied Health Professions (AHP) has now levelled off following significant annual increases over the previous five financial years. These increases were due to a steady rise in the number of students receiving a bursary – 17,412 AHP students received a bursary in the 2011/12 financial year compared with the 20,642 in 2015/16 and the 20,794 now as shown previously in Table 6.

The 2016/17 financial year is only the second year when the 2012 NHS Bursary Scheme changes were in full effect for all study years of the mainstream full-time three year courses and this is reflected when analysing cash payments by award element .Table 8 does this.

**Table 8**

<b>Scheduled Monthly Payments</b>			
<b>Award Element</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Total Cash Amount Paid<sup>3</sup> (£000s)</b>	<b>Expenditure<sup>4</sup> (£000s)</b>
Basic Award <sup>5</sup>	90,971	148,978	149,416
Childcare Allowance	9,659	30,632	27,357
Dependants Allowance	16,988	32,838	32,590
Extra Weeks Allowance	94,674	94,637	93,743
Non Means Tested Grant <sup>6</sup>	106,788	76,614	76,459
Older Students Allowance <sup>7</sup>	7	2	3
Parent Learning Allowance <sup>8</sup>	17,054	13,689	13,509
<b>Total (Monthly Payments)</b>	<b>336,141</b>	<b>397,389</b>	<b>393,077</b>
<b>Award Element</b>			
Disabled Students Allowances	4,507	8,524	8,582
Practice Placement Expenses	31,286	14,934	15,148
Tuition Fees <sup>9</sup>	10,600	60,955	67,876
<b>Total (One-off Payments)</b>	<b>46,393</b>	<b>84,413</b>	<b>91,606</b>
Overpayments and Debt Provision			3,464
<b>Grand Total – All Elements</b>	<b>382,534</b>	<b>481,803</b>	<b>488,145</b>

In Table 9, the same award elements are analysed for the last 10 financial years; from April 2007 to March 2017.

<sup>3</sup> This is the total value of the transactions extracted from the Bursary Online Support System (BOSS).

<sup>4</sup> This is expenditure net of all allowable adjustments (e.g. overpayments or cancelled payments) and matches the actual amount paid. There is an increase in payments due to the introduction of £9,000 tuition fees and the size of the accrual for non-received invoices.

<sup>5</sup> Covers the first 30 weeks of training.

<sup>6</sup> 2012 Scheme students only.

<sup>7</sup> Pre-2007 Scheme students only.

<sup>8</sup> 2007-2012 and 2012 Scheme students only.

<sup>9</sup> Medical and dental students only.

**Table 9**

Financial Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Award Element	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Basic Award</b>	322,994	324,771	337,862	343,363	318,061	258,840	193,789	153,829	145,631	148,978
<b>Childcare Allowance</b>	26,249	26,009	29,039	32,724	33,838	33,507	32,174	29,993	28,586	30,632
<b>Dependants Allowance</b>	32,101	33,755	36,528	38,960	39,370	37,964	35,767	32,947	32,310	32,838
<b>Extra Weeks Allowance</b>	27,690	29,518	33,640	39,258	47,677	61,355	76,114	85,251	90,388	94,637
<b>Older Students Allowance</b>	18,245	10,896	4,524	1,001	256	57	17	5	3	2
<b>Non-Means Tested Grant</b>	0	0	0	0	0	11,830	35,398	57,216	69,635	76,614
<b>Parent Learning Allowance</b>	2,227	7,024	12,123	15,730	16,608	16,190	14,944	13,706	13,409	13,689
<b>Single Parent Addition</b>	6,429	4,023	1,842	145	92	17	1	0	0	0
<b>Disabled Students Allowances</b>	6,684	6,879	7,993	8,647	8,641	9,072	10,422	9,239	9,422	8,524
<b>Extensions</b>	1,665	1,714	1,639	1,738	2,056	2,088	838	0	0	0
<b>Hardship Fund</b>	4	6	4	8	7	6	4	0	0	0
<b>Initial Expenses</b>	888	904	878	805	326	29	0	0	0	0
<b>Practice Placement Expenses</b>	8,920	8,978	9,271	11,077	10,792	11,137	11,717	11,599	15,026	14,934
<b>Tuition Fees</b>	11,237	13,814	14,046	27,560	30,312	38,442	40,211	36,560	36,827	60,955
<b>Other</b>	156	162	141	145	1,386	1,684	738	4	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>465,499</b>	<b>468,461</b>	<b>489,533</b>	<b>521,456</b>	<b>509,422</b>	<b>482,219</b>	<b>452,134</b>	<b>430,349</b>	<b>441,237</b>	<b>481,803</b>

Compared with 2015/16 total cash payments to students, Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) and third party providers of services to disabled students rose by £40.6 million or 9.19%

The largest increase was £24.1million (65.52%) in tuition fee contributions paid directly to HEI's on behalf of medical and dental students. Financial year 2016/17 was the first year that DH and HEE met the increase in tuition fee liability from £3,465 to £9,000 in respect of students enrolled on pre-registration courses lasting 5 or more years.

As regards the other award elements, there were a number of significant increases. The Non-Means Tested Grant rose by £7.0 million (10.02%) in line with the steady year on year increases seen since its introduction in 2012. Extra Weeks continued in the upward trend of

the last decade, increasing by £4.3 million (4.72%) and there was a 2.30% or £3.35 million increase in the Basic Award reflecting a rise in the student population.

For two award elements expenditure actually fell in 2016/17. The Disabled Students Allowance dropped by 898k (9.53%) due mainly to procedural changes to bring administration of the allowance under the NHS Bursary Scheme in line with the rules of the Department for Business Innovation & Skills. The other drop in expenditure was in relation to the re-imburement of expenses incurred by students whilst on practice placements; down £92k (0.61%).

The time series table shows little or no current expenditure for the Older Student Allowance, Single Parent Addition, Extensions, Hardship or Initial Expenses as these elements were either removed from the NHS Bursary Scheme from September 2012, or as in the case of Extensions, paid under one of the other award elements.

### Other key NHS Student Bursaries work items processed

Table 10, extracted from Student Services divisional plans, provides a summary of all other key work items processed in the 2016/17 financial year.

**Table 10**

Work Item	Processed
HEI Notification of Withdrawal, Resumption or Extension	16,534
Contact Centre Services (Student Helpline) Referrals	21,774
HEI Referrals (Emails and Correspondence)	9,541
Student Change of Circumstances	15,745
General Correspondence	31,987
Integra Invoices (Tuition Fees and DSA)	21,986
Practice Placement Expenses claims	67,384
Disabled Students Allowances claims or associated correspondence	18,294
Appeals	678
Stage 0 Complaints	248
Stage 1 Complaints	26
Stage 2 Complaints	8
Ombudsman Cases	1
High Level Correspondence <sup>10</sup>	0
MP Queries	21
Parliamentary Questions	7

<sup>10</sup>This classification no longer used.

Compared with FY 2015/16 there were significant increases in Change of Circumstances, up 4,254 (37.02%), General Correspondence, up 3,705 (13.10%), Practice Placement Expenses claims, up 1,991 (3.04%) and HEI Referrals, up 1,072 (12.66%).

In contrast, the number of Integra Invoices processed in the financial year fell by 2,893 (11.63%), Contact Centre Services Referrals by 1,378 (5.95%) and Disabled Students Allowance claims by 678 (3.57%).

Table 11 details the volume of telephone calls, email and Facebook queries received into the customer contact centre and email and correspondence received by the processing team in the 2016/17 financial year.

**Table 11**

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
<b>Calls to CCS</b>	20,265	22,444	21,054	18,838	20,587	25,260	19,005	15,146	10,258	13,767	11,425	15,328	<b>213,377</b>
<b>Emails to CCS</b>	1,072	1,333	1,351	2,447	2,534	2,742	1,843	1,645	1,201	1,661	1,540	1,939	<b>21,308</b>
<b>Facebook queries</b>	482	611	492	652	898	1,113	504	1,387	768	1,512	1,180	1,581	<b>11,180</b>
<b>Emails to SB team</b>	333	532	501	394	413	589	731	311	38	524	554	362	<b>5,282</b>
<b>Other correspondence</b>	3,354	4,256	6,285	2,655	3,266	2,474	1,398	1,823	969	2,021	1,299	1,394	<b>31,194</b>

Table 12 below shows the percentage of the types of query the Customer Contact Centre received.

**Table 12**

<b>Type of query</b>	<b>Percentage of overall queries</b>
Documents/evidence	27.32
Childcare Allowance	8.86
Payment	8.16
Change of circumstance	7.96
Progress of application	7.8
BOSS issues	5.88
Help with application	5.68
Practice Placement Expenses	4.78
Disabled Students Allowances	4.25
Eligibility	2.47
HEI call	2.16
Referral/call back not received	1.08
Notification of Award request	0.54
Third party authorisation	0.53
COSA	0.36
Invite	0.30



## NHS Student Bursaries Equal Opportunities Monitoring

A mandatory *Equal Opportunities monitoring form* is included in the BOSS application. The information is compiled anonymously and is included in the Tables 13 - 15 below. Although the form is mandatory, students have the option not to disclose the information being asked under each question.

**Table 13**

Questions asked with % of respondents:	
Gender	100%
Age Group	100%
Ethnic Group	100%
Religion	100%
Sexual Orientation	100%
Disability	100%

**Table 14**

What is your gender?		Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?	
Female	82.79%	Heterosexual/Straight	89.21%
Male	15.19%	Prefer not to say	7.70%
Prefer not to say	2.02%	Lesbian/Gay	1.79%
		Bisexual	1.30%
Which age group applies to you?		Are you a disabled person as defined by the Equality Act 2010?	
16-24	55.64%	No	91.59%
25-34	29.25%	Yes	4.46%
35-44	11.61%	Prefer not to say	3.95%
45-54	3.33%		
55-64	0.17%		
65+	0.00%		

**Table 15**

What is your ethnic group?		What is your religion or belief?	
White	72.22%	Christianity	41.96%
Black or Black British – African	9.70%	No Religion	37.83%
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2.87%	Prefer not to say	8.49%
Prefer not to say	3.14%	Islam	6.14%
Mixed	2.90%	Other	2.48%
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2.46%	Hinduism	1.54%
Asian or Asian British – Other	2.28%	Sikhism	0.62%
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1.67%	Buddhism	0.63%
Other Ethnic Group	0.96%	Judaism	0.26%
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.89%	Jainism	0.04%
Asian or Asian British – Chinese	0.50%		
Black or Black British – Other	0.40%		

## 7. Social Work Bursaries

The NHSBSA is directed by the DH to administer Social Work Bursaries (SWB) and the Educational Support Grant (ESG) in accordance with [their guidance](#). Accountability for these two service streams is directly to the DH. The Social Work Bursary Scheme covers bursary awards as set out in Table 16.

**Table 16**

<b>Postgraduate students:</b>	
<p>A. <u>Non-means tested assistance:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Grant (including Placement Travel Allowance)</li> <li>• Disabled Students Allowances</li> <li>• Tuition Fee Contributions</li> <li>• Placement Travel Allowance (for eligible students who fall outside of capping numbers)</li> </ul>	<p>B. <u>Means tested assistance:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance Grant</li> <li>• Childcare Allowance</li> <li>• Adult Dependents Allowance</li> <li>• Parents Learning Allowance</li> </ul>
<b>Undergraduate students:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Grant (including Placement Travel Allowance)</li> <li>• Placement Travel Allowance (for eligible students who fall outside of capping numbers)</li> </ul>	

The following sections provide a detailed account of activity across the service streams for the 2016/17 financial year. SWB supports around 8,700 students in training in any one academic year. However, across the financial year the number of students supported is around 12,500. This is due to the crossover between the financial year and the academic year, where essentially four cohorts of students are in our systems in any financial year.

The application window for SWB ran from 1 March to 1 November in 2016/17, with a deadline of 14 February for January starters.

The majority of bursary applications are received prior to September courses starting and therefore May through to the end of August is the busiest assessing period for the team. Childcare Allowance and Disabled Students Allowances applications can be received at any time throughout the year, but the majority also tend to be submitted prior to September.

## Social Work Bursary rates

Table 17 details the gross annual bursary rates for the 2016/17 academic year.

**Table 17**

	Studying in London	Studying outside London
<b>Undergraduate students: Courses starting on or after 1 September 2013</b>		
Basic bursary	£5,262.50	£4,862.50
Basic bursary: Part-time courses	Pro-rata rate based on duration of course	
Placement Travel Allowance (included in Basic Grant where students are within 'cap')	£862.50	
<b>Postgraduate students:</b>		
Basic bursary	£3,762.50	£3,362.50
Maintenance grant	£4,201	£2,721
Placement Travel Allowance (included in Basic Grant where students are within 'cap')	£862.50	
Adult Dependants Allowance	£2,757	
Parents Learning Allowance	£1,573	
Childcare Allowance – One child (maximum weekly rate)	£155.24	
Childcare Allowance – Two or more children (maximum weekly rate)	£266.15	
Part-time courses	All elements of postgraduate bursary received at pro rata rate based on duration of course	
Disabled Students Allowance – Non-Medical Helper	£20,725	
Disabled Students Allowance – Specialist Equipment	£5,212	
Disabled Students Allowance – Other	£1,741	
Postgraduate course Tuition Fees	Up to £4,052	
Part-time postgraduate course Tuition Fees	Up to £2,026	

## Social Work Bursary activity

In total Student Services made a payment to 12,422 students in the 2016/17 financial year.

Of these, there were:

- 4,382 postgraduate bursary recipients
- 361 postgraduate Placement Travel Allowance (PTA) only recipients
- 7,209 undergraduate bursary recipients
- 470 undergraduate PTA only recipients

The total volume of new and continuing students and other application types received are detailed in the Table 18 below.

**Table 18**

<b>Award Element/Transaction Type</b>		
Postgraduate students		4,743
	Of which, bursary in payment	4,382
	Of which, PTA only	361
Undergraduate students		7,679
	Of which, bursary in payment	7,209
	Of which, PTA only	470
Childcare Allowance applications		584
Disabled Student Allowance applications		346
Number of BACS payments		25,040
Number of new student debtors (withdrawal calculations)		516
Reassessments due to provisional awards		148
Tuition fee invoices processed		2,711

Table 19 below illustrates a strong correlation between the capping of social work bursaries and student bursary applications. The number of students in receipt of a bursary has reduced from 13,607 in the 2012/13 academic year to 7,635 in the 2016/17 academic year. Figures exclude students getting the Placement Travel Allowance only.

**Table 19**

		2012/13 (AY)		2013/14 (AY)		2014/15 (AY)		2015/16 (AY)		2016/17 (AY)	
		UGD	PGD	UGD	PGD	UGD	PGD	UGD	PGD	UGD	PGD
<b>Year of study</b>	<b>1</b>	3,187	1,858	34	1,457	0	1,525	0	1,449	0	1,421
	<b>2</b>	3,145	1,753	2,673	1,641	2,238	1,316	2,427	1,373	2,322	1,369
	<b>3</b>	2,979	157	2,898	213	2,445	232	2,069	120	2,229	116
	<b>4</b>	390	27	391	21	379	47	308	22	121	10
	<b>5</b>	69	11	58	7	61	7	59	6	32	3
	<b>6</b>	15	3	16	4	14	1	16	1	6	2
	<b>7</b>	9	4	6	2	9	1	6	0	4	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>9,794</b>	<b>3,813</b>	<b>6,076</b>	<b>3,345</b>	<b>5,146</b>	<b>3,129</b>	<b>4,885</b>	<b>2,971</b>	<b>4,714</b>	<b>2,921</b>
		<b>13,607</b>		<b>9,421</b>		<b>8,275</b>		<b>7,856</b>		<b>7,635</b>	

## Social Work Bursary cash payments

SWB cash payments in the 2016/17 financial year totalled just under £56m. Table 20 below summarises this by award element.

**Table 20**

<b>Non-Means Tested Scheduled Termly Payments</b>		
<b>Award element</b>	<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Amount paid (£000s)</b>
Undergraduate Basic Grant	7,209	22,699
Postgraduate Basic Grant	4,368	9,552
<b>Total (non-means tested termly payments)</b>	<b>11,577</b>	<b>32,251</b>
<b>Means Tested Scheduled Termly Payments</b>		
Maintenance Grant	4,099	7,518
Adult Dependent Allowance	359	533
Parents Learning Allowance	1,230	1,240
Childcare Allowance	584	1,993
<b>Total (means tested termly payments)</b>	<b>6,272</b>	<b>11,284</b>
<b>One-off Payments</b>		
<b>Award Element</b>	<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Amount Paid (£000s)</b>
Disabled Students Allowances	346	669
Placement Travel Allowance	1,179	1,027
Tuition Fees	2,711	10,594
<b>Total (one-off payments)</b>	<b>4,236</b>	<b>12,290</b>
<b>Grand Total – All Elements</b>	<b>22,085</b>	<b>55,825</b>

Table 21 below shows the gradual reduction of overall expenditure since 2012/13 due to the introduction of bursary capping.

**Table 21**

	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
<b>Student bursary spend (£000s)</b>	68,667	56,156	46,191	45,094	44,562
<b>DSAs supplier spend (£000s)</b>	1,125	674	756	676	669
<b>Tuition fee spend (£000s)</b>	13,578	13,883	12,348	11,303	10,594
<b>Total (£000s)</b>	<b>83,370</b>	<b>70,713</b>	<b>59,295</b>	<b>57,073</b>	<b>55,825</b>

## Other key Social Work Bursaries work items processed

Table 22 shows the number of work items processed for social work bursaries in 2016/17.

**Table 22**

Work Item	Processed
HEI Notification of Withdrawal, Resumption or Extension	941
Contact Centre Services (Student Helpline) Referrals	3,378
HEI Referrals (Emails and Correspondence)	411
General Correspondence	4,903
Integra Invoices (Tuition Fees and DSA)	3,860
Disabled Students Allowances claims or associated correspondence	2,692
Appeals	88
Stage 0 Complaints	61
Stage 1 Complaints	10
Stage 2 Complaints	3
Ombudsman Cases	0
High Level Correspondence	0
MP Queries	9
Parliamentary Questions	1

Table 23 details the volume of telephone calls, email and Facebook queries received into the Customer Contact Centre and email and correspondence received by the processing team in the 2016/17 financial year.

**Table 23**

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
<b>Calls to CCS</b>	2,308	1,953	1,954	1,951	3,662	5,356	5,455	2,707	1,060	1,551	928	1,204	<b>30,089</b>
<b>Emails to CCS</b>	172	138	126	110	454	558	505	402	185	285	220	286	<b>3,441</b>
<b>Facebook queries</b>	62	127	88	75	292	282	214	419	119	535	198	410	<b>2,921</b>
<b>Emails to SWB team</b>	292	344	335	298	481	591	561	406	349	444	504	460	<b>5,065</b>
<b>Other correspondence</b>	173	254	214	167	257	304	223	172	31	38	26	32	<b>1,891</b>



Table 24 below shows the percentage of the types of query the Customer Contact Centre received.

**Table 24**

Type of query	Percentage of overall queries
Bursary assessments	24.74
Other SWB	20.29
Payment query	11.41
Childcare Allowance	7.51
Funding capping	7.46
Form completion	5.88
Prospective students	4.92
DSA	4.66
Eligibility	3.85
Not SWB	2.59
Extended funding	2.34
Overpayments	1.72
Enrolment query	1.33
Change of address	0.86
Chancellor's speech	0.86
Provisional assessments	0.75
Reference number	0.72
Repeat funding	0.55
Language line transfer	0.15

## Social Work Bursaries Equal Opportunities Monitoring

An *Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form (EOMF)* is included in bursary application forms, and students are given the opportunity to complete and submit this.

Of the 8,919 bursary applications received in academic year 2016/17, 5,975 completed an EOMF which represents a response rate of 70%.

As not all students chose to complete the EOMF, or completed only certain sections of the form, the information summarised in Tables 25 - 27 below is not necessarily representative of the full student population.

**Table 25**

<b>Questions asked with % of respondents:</b>	
Age Group	92.54%
Gender	92.37%
Disability	89.91%
Ethnic Group	89.24%
Religion	83.78%
Sexual Orientation	81.52%

**Table 26**

What is your gender?		Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?	
Female	79.97%	Heterosexual/Straight	77.64%
Male	12.33%	Lesbian/Gay	2.19%
Prefer not to say	7.63%	Bisexual	1.69%
Transgender	0.07%	Prefer not to say	18.48%
Which age group applies to you?		Are you a disabled person as defined by the Equality Act 2010?	
18-24	34.69%	No	81.34%
25-34	30.36%	Yes	8.57%
35-44	18.71%	Prefer not to say	10.09%
45-54	8.18%		
55-64	0.59%		
65+	0.00%		
Prefer not to say	7.47%		

**Table 27**

What is your ethnic group?		What is your religion or belief?	
White	60.72%	Christianity	45.86%
Black or Black British – African	17.07%	No Religion	31.45%
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1.89%	Prefer not to say	16.22%
Prefer not to say	10.76%	Islam	4.54%
Mixed	3.55%	Other	0.52%
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2.24%	Hinduism	0.44%
Asian or Asian British – Other	0.38%	Sikhism	0.52%
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3.18%	Buddhism	0.28%
Other Ethnic Group	0.00%	Judaism	0.17%
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.01%	Jainism	0.02%
Asian or Asian British – Chinese	0.18%		
Black or Black British – Other	0.02%		

## 8. Education Support Grant

The Education Support Grant (ESG) is paid to HEIs to help fund social work placements and also to make a contribution to the costs of involving service users and carers in the development and delivery of social work education programmes.

### Education Support Grant rates

Table 28 details the ESG rates set for the 2016/17 academic year.

**Table 28**

<b>Daily fee per student</b>	
Standard daily fee per student per day in standard placement	£20
Daily fee per student per day where placement provider: Has charitable status Has registered private company status	£20
Skills Development Days	£10
<b>HEI administration fee</b>	
Admin fee per student	£2
<b>Funding for involvement of people who use the services and their carers</b>	
A one-off payment to each HEI per annum	£7,400

### Education Support Grant cash payments

Table 29 shows the number of HEIs that received the ESG in the first and second instalment and the number of students funded within these payments, including the number of audit checks undertaken.

**Table 29**

<b>Payment of ESG to HEIs</b>	
First instalment	80
Second instalment	77
Students funded	12,741
Audit checks	1,933

The number of students funded and audit checks may be subject to change as there are four HEIs which have not responded.

Table 30 below details the expenditure paid through the ESG to HEIs.

**Table 30**

Education Support Grant expenditure								
Financial Year	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17	
	First instalment (£000s)	Second instalment (£000s)	First instalment (£000s)	Second instalment (£000s)	First instalment (£000s)	Second instalment (£000s)	First instalment (£000s)	Second instalment (£000s)
Placement Fees	11,241	11,563	9,513	8,817	6,523	8,463	7,143	8,500
HEI Admin Fees	1,082	1,154	951	882	694	846	764	850
Skills Development Days	58	1,158	1,050	866	670	790	767	702
Service User & Carer Funding	0	599	0	591	0	592	0	577
<b>Totals</b>	<b>12,381</b>	<b>14,474</b>	<b>11,514</b>	<b>11,156</b>	<b>7,887</b>	<b>10,691</b>	<b>8,674</b>	<b>10,629</b>

## 9. Fraud, Error and Debt (FRED)

One of the primary responsibilities of the NHSBSA is to ensure that transactional healthcare related services are undertaken in an efficient and effective way so as to optimise funding available for frontline health and social care services. Its stated purpose is to “*to provide business solutions that deliver service excellence and value for money*”. If fraud, error and debt are not tackled effectively, funding will haemorrhage out of the system and will ultimately be lost.

Student Services within the NHSBSA has established its strategic direction for tackling FRED and this is documented in the Student Services FRED strategy, which includes the drivers for change referring to key risks and issues. The strategy explains the types of fraud, error and debt levels in the service and the problems it creates as well as the costs.

### Fraud

There are four key categories of fraud in Student Services:

#### Fraud by false representation

This could include:

- identity exploitation; theft of genuine identity, use of forged documents, fraudulently obtained genuine documents
- forged income/expenditure
- misrepresentation of facts relating to childcare
- misrepresentation of facts relating to disability allowance

#### Fraud from failure to disclose information

This could include:

- misrepresentation of facts in applications, changes of circumstances or claims - in particular students not attending the funded course and both the HEI and student failing to notify the NHSBSA

#### Fraud by abuse of position

This could include:

- misrepresentation of facts presented by information suppliers, such as HEIs

## Corrupt professional/suppliers

This could include:

- misrepresentation of facts presented by those supplying services, such as assessment centres and suppliers of services for disabled students
- potential for internal fraud through system manipulation

## Case examples of NHS Bursary fraud

1. A student used a false French passport in order to obtain an NHS Bursary. In addition, the student was using an NI number that did not belong to her. The student went on to work in the NHS. The student admitted using false documents in support of their NHS Bursary application and offered to repay the monies owed (£3,777.00). A formal caution was issued instead of the case being heard before the Crown Court as the subject had already spent four weeks in custody in relation to the offences. It was agreed by the prosecuting body that a caution and repayment plan be approved.
2. A student provided false information in relation to their household income and living status when they applied for an NHS Bursary. The student claimed to be residing with their unemployed partner at their parent's house, but the student and partner had bought a property together which they both lived in with their daughter. In addition to this, it was discovered that the partner worked full-time. The subject repaid the NHS Student Bursary they had received of £25,726.19. The Crown \*Prosecution Service made a decision not to proceed with a prosecution.
3. A student submitted false invoices as part of the evidence for the childcare costs they had incurred. In November 2016 the subject appeared before Bristol Magistrates Court and pleaded Guilty. The subject was sentenced to a 12 month community order, 200 hours unpaid work, £85 costs and £85 Government surcharge.

Student Services has its own in-house team who assist the NHSBSA Fraud Team with investigations relating to bursary fraud providing witness statements and exhibits where suspected fraud has occurred.

The team is involved in the bi-annual National Fraud Initiative (NFI). Bursary data is uploaded and matched to data from the Home Office and this identifies students who are in receipt of a bursary but may not be eligible due to their leave status/immigration history. In addition, the team responds to requests for information from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Local Authorities and other bodies where benefit fraud is suspected.

## Error

- Monthly cash variance checks to support the accuracy of processed Student Bursary work items demonstrate a 99.28% global accuracy rate for the 12 months April 2016 to March 2017 across all work streams.
- Bursary payments totalling £2,450,000 were checked as part of this process. Underpayments totalling £12,600 and overpayments totalling £8,800 were highlighted and relevant amendments were made to the bursary awards affected.
- Less than 3% of assessed Social Work Bursary applications contain errors.
- Less than 1% of assessed Education Support Grant payments contain errors.

## Debt

Effective debt management and a recovery process that is fair and consistent is crucial to Student Services. Student Services recognises that students are not always in a position to have any means of earnings while they are in training, nor can they be reliant on other means of support to assist with repayment of any debt incurred. It is essential that students repay debt incurred and debt is recouped effectively and efficiently.

The debt position for NHS Bursaries as at 31 March 2017 was:

- £14,669,000 gross
- £11,865,000 provision for bad debt<sup>10</sup>
- £2,805,000 net
- £2,663,000 recovered

The debt position for Social Work Bursaries as at 31 March 2017:

- £1,823,000 gross
- £1,209,000 provision for bad debt
- £528,000 net
- £346,000 recovered

The key activities that support the Student Services FRED strategy are:

- Childcare Allowance reconciliation
- Monthly quality checks of processed work
- High risk checks (mainly high value awards and complex casework)
- Pre-payment checks
- Post-payment checks
- Annual confirmation of attendance at HEI exercise

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<sup>10</sup> The amount we estimate will not be recovered.



## 10. Audit

Health Group Internal Audit provides an objective and independent assurance, focussing on business priorities and key risks, delivering its service through three core approaches:

- **review** and evaluation of internal controls and processes
- **advice** to support management in making improvements in risk management, control and governance
- **analysis** of policies, procedures and operations against good practice

Health Group Internal Audit conducts accuracy testing for NHS Bursaries to verify that payments being made to students are correctly calculated based on evidence and declarations provided by the student in line with current NHS Bursary Scheme rules. A sample of 30 NHS Bursary payments paid to students are sampled during each audit and an overall report rating is applied. There are four report ratings:

**Substantial:** the framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective.

**Moderate:** some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control.

**Limited:** there are significant weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it could be or could become inadequate and ineffective.

**Unsatisfactory:** there are fundamental weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it is inadequate and ineffective or is likely to fail.

### Audit Approach

The objective of the audit was to review student bursary payments made in the period 1 April 2016 to 28 February 2017 to ensure that awards were in line with the NHS Bursary Scheme rules and that the appropriate supporting evidence had been provided by the student to support their application.

The audit approach in 2016/17 was different to previous years where sampling was tailored to adopt a risk-based approach, using data tools to provide a holistic view of the NHS Bursaries data and to inform sample selections. The samples were based on the following risk factors:

- All types of payments were selected, as it was recognised that differing payment types require differing levels of manual input and processing and greater error was most likely across more complex payments such as childcare allowance payments; and

- Payment types were selected based on the payment type proportion of total payment values processed.

A sample of 25 payments was selected from a population of bursary payments made between 1 April 2016 and 28 February 2017. Testing included inspecting the documentation supporting eligibility for each tested receiving a student bursary payment in the defined period, inspection of documentation to support any additional allowances claimed, and confirming the accuracy of the calculation.

## Summary of Findings

The overall rating for the report is **substantial** – in Health Group Internal Audit's opinion, the framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective.

In summary, the review did not identify any financial or processing errors within the sample of payments. The review made one recommendation to further strengthen the effectiveness of the management of risks within the service in relation to the process for requesting lodgings evidence.

The NHSBSA response to the recommendation was not to make changes to the current process as it was considered low risk and there was no evidence to support there is an issue with this particular area. There would be cost implications to updating the system and no evidence to support the benefits would be financially viable.