

Student Services Annual Report for the Financial year 2017/18



Our aim is:

'to ensure our customers are paid correctly and on time, every time'

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1. Purpose and scope

The primary purpose of this report is to provide an overview of Student Services' performance during the 2017/18 financial year, detailing all bursary expenditure and transactions for NHS Student Bursaries (SB), Social Work Bursaries (SWB), Education Support Grant (ESG) and the Learning Support Fund (LSF).

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 and Social Care (DHSC). 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.

Our strategy

We have updated our strategy for 2018-2021. It outlines our exciting and ambitious plans for the next three years as well as our commitment to continuing to deliver high quality business support services to the NHS and other organisations.

Last year we seized a number of new opportunities to make improvements for the wider healthcare system. We made it easier for customers to get what they need through digitising our services, for example introducing an online tool for people to check whether they can get help with their health costs, which has greatly simplified a complex process.

Our track record as a delivery partner of choice is going from strength to strength thanks to our people. Our purpose is to be a catalyst for better health – improving our services and delivering great results for our customers means we can have a positive impact on the health of the nation.

Our drive to do more is highlighted in our plans for growth, through expanding our existing services and taking on new ones. Our recent acquisition of NHS Jobs and the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) completes our 'hire to retire' portfolio for the NHS, to support people all the way through their career pathway.

There is much more to achieve across the digital agenda, particularly keeping pace with new developments and exploring the use of artificial intelligence. Our growth plans also include using our data and insight to add value to the wider healthcare system and we intend to influence national discussions on mental health and respiratory conditions. We will proactively promote our data, expertise and analytics in pursuit of our goal to add wider social value. The pace of change in technology is unprecedented and is often likened to 'the fourth industrial revolution'. You will see our strategy majors on the use of data, insight, digitisation of services and the use of more advanced technology including artificial intelligence and robotics.

These operational changes, along with how the NHS and the wider world is changing, have provided the opportunity to reshape our strategy with a greater focus on our people and the

difference we make together to the wider health agenda.

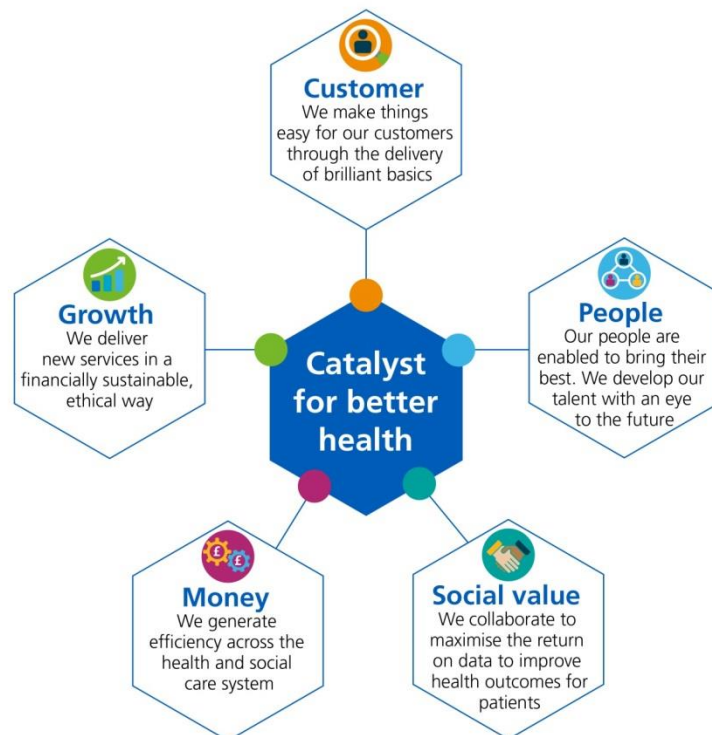
The benefit of being a national shared service means that we can provide greater value. As well as delivering the savings identified through the Pacific Team, we have estimated that if the NHS was to deliver our services locally, such as processing prescriptions and claim forms for NHS dental treatment, it would cost around £500 million per year. The comparative cost of operating the NHSBSA is £160 million, therefore saving another £340 million per year.

To be successful we must focus on collaborating more widely with our NHS colleagues, including other DHSC Arm's Length Bodies, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and NHS Trusts to become 'a catalyst for better health'. We are ready to take this already successful organisation, grounded in transactional national shared services, to the next level where we do great things for the wider health environment. To this end, we will deliver this new strategy as demonstrated in Figure 1 and our new strategic goals around:

- Customer
- People
- Social value
- Money
- Growth

You can find our more information about our strategy and vision by visiting www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk.

Figure 1



3. Student Services

There are four key service streams within Student Services:

NHS Student Bursaries (SB)	Social Work Bursaries (SWB)	Education Support Grant (ESG)	Learning Support Fund (LSF)
Assessing and paying bursaries totalling approximately £450 million ¹ to over 91,000 health students in the financial year and over 80 Higher Education Institutions.	Assessing and paying bursaries totalling approximately £54 million to around 12,000 social work students in the financial year.	Making payments in excess of £18 million for social work placements to over 80 Higher Education Institutions.	Assessing and paying LSF elements totalling approximately £2 million to around 5,000 students in the financial year.

Student Services are provided from various NHSBSA sites:

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

Across the four service streams, we administered payments totalling approximately £524 million to over 108,000 students and over 80 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the 2017/18 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

¹ This includes tuition fees for medical and dental students.

4. Healthcare Education Funding Reforms

Following the government's announcement regarding changes to the way some healthcare courses are funded, the Learning Support Fund came into force on 1 August 2017.

Student Services implemented an online application system for new students to apply for the three elements of LSF which went live on 1 November in agreement with DHSC.

The three elements of financial support students can apply for from LSF are as follows:

- Child Dependants Allowance – this allows students who have parental responsibility for a child under 15 years, or under 17 years if registered with special educational needs, to claim a £1000 grant per academic year which is paid in three termly instalments.
- Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses – this lets students who have been on a practice placement to claim back travel and temporary accommodation costs incurred as part of the placement.
- Exceptional Support Fund – students who find themselves in financial difficulty can apply for a grant of up to £3000 per academic year to help bridge the shortfall between their income and expenditure to allow them to continue with their studies.

5. Client and stakeholder engagement

Student Services' clients are the DHSC 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 2 below provides an overview of all the formal client and stakeholder engagement activity undertaken during 2017/18.

Figure 2



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 October 2017 Stakeholder Events were held in London and Manchester to raise awareness of, and officially launch, the new Learning Support Fund.

The event centered on an introductory video to LSF intertwined with additional detail and a live demonstration of the new online application system for students. Participants were able to use an interactive online tool to ask questions and were provided with some materials to take away which included infographics, booklets and contact cards to hand to students. Both events were fully booked and attended by delegates from universities across England.

LSF on Tour

To maintain the momentum and continue raising awareness of this new funding stream, since February 2018 Student Services has been on tour visiting universities across the country to meet students and staff. The format has been adapted to suit the university being visited and has ranged from a timetabled slot during induction weeks, to drop-in sessions where the team went through a presentation or having a stand at an event.

We have implemented a continual package of support for universities in between visits including regular updates. We have also been closely monitoring student system activity to highlight any irregular activity which has enabled the team to proactively target groups of students where uptake was different than expected.

The first wave of events was successful with the number of applications at the universities visited rising by 39%. Informal feedback from staff and students indicated that the events were very well received, particularly from students who had not been aware of the funding available to them previously. There are plans to roll out wave 2 of the tour in 2018/19, focusing on induction weeks for September 2018 intakes.

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. Student Services has an excellent working relationship with the group.

Student Loans Company

We attended the annual Higher Education Student Loans Company support seminar in March 2018 and delivered two sessions covering the Healthcare Education Funding Reforms and the Learning Support Fund package now being administered by Student Services. Over 400 delegates consisting of representatives from universities across England were at this event and we gained new contacts who expressed an interest in us delivering our LSF on Tour event at their university to raise awareness for their staff and students.

National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA)

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

NASMA hold an annual conference for its members and in June 2017 the conference was held in Harrogate. Student Services supported the event by hosting a session on the new Learning Support Fund for over 40 delegates and a drop in session, which was well attended. The group were very keen to learn about the new funding and how it will provide additional support to preregistration Nurses, Midwives and healthcare professionals following the removal of the NHS Bursary.

We have also pro-actively engaged with the wider NASMA network in an effort to attend regional meetings and talk about and raise awareness of the different packages of funding that Student Services offer. We attended NASMA regional meetings for London and the

South East at the Royal Veterinary College in May 2017, North West at Liverpool John Moores University in September 2017, Bath Spa University in December 2017 and North East at Leeds Beckett University in February 2018. At these meetings we provided an overview of our activity, discussed the funding reforms in further detail and provided updates on progress with the new Learning Support Fund.

6. Policy updates

For the 2017- 2018 academic year, three sets of bursary rules were written to support the changes in funding following the Health Education Funding Reforms, in addition to these rules, information for HEI's and Students were produced for Social Work Education. The reforms affected new Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professional (AHP) courses. From 1 August 2017 these student groups were required to apply to the Student Loans Company (Student Finance England provisions) for their tuition fees and maintenance loan rather than an NHS Bursary.

NHS Bursary

The NHS Bursary Scheme New Rules is the sixth edition of the new rules which apply to:

- Medical and Dental students (bursary-eligible study years)
- Non-Medical students who started their course on or after 1 September 2012 but before 1 August 2017, including students that fall under the transitional arrangements.

The full NHS Bursary Rules can [be found here](#).

NHS Financial Support for Health Students (First Edition) - Transitional Arrangements 2017/18

Transitional funding arrangements were applied to a capped number of students on part-time courses, new pre-registration postgraduate students and new pre-registration dental hygiene and dental therapy courses, where they remained eligible for an NHS Bursary.

Unless specified in this document, the provisions of the NHS Bursary Scheme New Rules (Sixth Edition) apply to the Transitional Arrangements 2017/18 and should be read in conjunction with the NHS Bursary Scheme.

The full NHS Financial Support for Health Students (First Edition) - Transitional Arrangements 2017/18 can [be found here](#).

NHS Financial Support for Health Students (First Edition) - Learning Support Fund

The Learning Support Fund (LSF) provides supplementary funding to the higher education student loans support, for eligible new students attending pre-registration healthcare courses which started on or after 1 August 2017.

The LSF consists of three different award allowances:

- Child Dependants Allowance
- Exceptional Support Fund
- Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses

The full NHS Financial Support for Health Students (First Edition) - Learning Support Fund [can be found here](#).

Social Work Education in the 2017 academic year

Information on Social Work Education in the 2017 academic year sets out the capped number of bursaries and a summary of funding available for postgraduate and undergraduate students for the 2017/18 Academic year.

The full Social Work Education in the 2017 academic year can [be found here](#).

7. NHS Student Bursaries

The NHSBSA is directed by the DHSC 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 65,000 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 £450 million in the 2017/18 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

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

The following sections provide a detailed account of activity across the service streams for the 2017/18 financial year. SB supports around 65,000 students in training in any one academic year. However, across the financial year the number of students supported is in excess of 91,000. 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 2017/18.

These are:

- 2007-2012 Scheme
- 2012 Scheme

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.

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 2017/18 financial year for the purpose of this Annual Report, across the three different NHS Bursary Schemes.

Table 4

	2007-2012 Scheme	2012 Scheme
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		
Child 11 to 15 Dependants Rate	£549	£549
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 – 2014/15	£9,000	£9,250

Tuition Fees Standard Rate – 2014/15	£3,465	£3,715
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NHS Student Bursaries activity

Student Services assessed and approved (finalised for payment) 64,943 bursary applications in the 2017/18 academic year. The total volumes of new and continuing students, by profession, are detailed in Table 5.

Tables 5 to 8 also include Transitional Students.

Table 5

Profession	New Students ²	Continuing Students	Total
Chiropody	21	571	592
Dental Hygiene	22	21	43
Dental Hygiene & Dental Therapy	193	324	517
Dental Therapy	22	42	64
Dentistry	0	1,014	1,014
Dietetics	69	782	851
Medicine	0	10,139	10,139
Midwifery	75	4,149	4,224
Nursing	2,070	34,085	36,155
Occupational Therapy	394	2,534	2,928
Operating Department Practitioner	100	1,008	1,108
Orthoptics	0	141	141
Physiotherapy	269	2,644	2,913
Prosthetics & Orthotics	0	58	58
Radiography	84	2,142	2,226
Radiotherapy	35	424	459

² 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.

Speech & Language Therapy	268	1,243	1,511
Total	3,622	61,321	64,943

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.

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 2017 to 31 March 2018. 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
Medical & Dental	14,627	£27,804	15.92%	
<i>Of which:</i>				
Medicine	12,893	£25,328	14.04%	1,965

Dentistry	1,734	£2,475	1.89%	1,428
Nursing & Midwifery	58,520	£277,888	63.71%	
<i>Of which:</i>				
Nursing	52,310	£248,736	56.95%	4,755
Midwifery	6,210	£29,151	6.76%	4,694
Allied Health Professions	16,343	£50,219	17.79%	
<i>Of which:</i>				
Chiropody	889	£2,760	0.97%	3,105
Dietetics	1,070	£3,324	1.16%	3,107
Occupational Therapy	4,064	£13,246	4.42%	3,260
Orthoptics	201	£783,751	0.22%	3,899
Physiotherapy	4,170	£10,440	4.54%	2,504
Prosthetics & Orthotics	79	£287,838	0.09%	3,644
Radiography	3,009	£10,994	3.28%	3,654
Radiotherapy	830	£2,971	0.90%	3,581
Speech & Language Therapy	2,031	£5,408	2.21%	2,663
Professions Complementary to Dentistry	714	£2,163	0.78%	
<i>Of which:</i>				
Dental Hygiene	60	£167	0.07%	2,785
Dental Hygiene & Dental Therapy	594	£1,769	0.65%	2,980
Dental Therapy	60	£226	0.07%	3,775
Other Health Professions	1,649	7,239	1.80%	
<i>Of which:</i>				

Operating Department Practitioner	1,649	£7,239	1.80%	4,391
All Professions	91,853	£365,315	100.00%	

The 'average paid per student' figures in Table 6 relate to the number of students paid any bursary element in the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. As such, figures exclude nil award holders i.e. EU fees only students and students whose award was fully

Nursing (all branches combined) accounts for the largest proportion (56.95%) of cash payments and the highest average paid per student (£4,755).

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 63.71% of cash payments, or £277.8m.

In Table 7, the same professions grouped are analysed for the last 10 financial years; from April 2008 to March 2018.

Table 7

Financial Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Professional Group	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Medical & Dental	20,198	21,152	22,228	21,887	22,967	23,424	23,236	23,118	25,440	27,805
Nursing & Midwifery	369,762	385,721	399,366	385,371	349,453	320,586	301,307	309,436	323,074	277,888
Allied Health Professions	46,285	47,737	50,296	50,275	52,759	55,697	58,129	60,513	60,808	50,219
Professions Complementary to Dentistry	1,636	1,606	1,744	1,886	1,863	2,102	2,337	2,438	2,389	2,163
Other Health	16,766	19,270	20,262	19,692	16,735	10,114	8,780	8,905	9,137	7,240

Professions										
Total	454,647	475,486	493,896	479,111	443,777	411,923	393,789	404,410	420,848	365,315

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 2017/18 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 2017/18 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 2017/18 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

Scheduled Monthly Payments			
Award Element	Number	Total Cash Amount Paid³ (£000s)	Expenditure⁴ (£000s)
Basic Award ⁵	80,408	128,556	127,603
Childcare Allowance	7,176	26,696	23,643
Dependants Allowance	13,457	29,102	28,745
Extra Weeks Allowance	83,495	81,817	78,655
Non Means Tested Grant ⁶	106,234	70,000	69,112
Parent Learning Allowance ⁷	13,454	12,086	11,621
Older Student's Allowance	1		1
Total (Monthly Payments)	304,224	348,258	339,380

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

⁴ 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.

⁵ Covers the first 30 weeks of training.

⁶ 2012 Scheme students only.

⁷ 2007-2012 and 2012 Scheme students only.

Award Element			
Disabled Students Allowances	1,481	7,227	6,196
Practice Placement Expenses	15,811	15,905	16,410
Tuition Fees ⁸	10,272	78,764	72,685
Total (One-off Payments)	27,564	101,895	95,291
Overpayments and Debt Provision			2,723
Grand Total – All Elements	331,788	450,153	437,394

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

Table 9

Financial Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Award Element	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Basic Award	324,771	337,862	343,363	318,061	258,840	193,789	153,829	145,631	148,978	128,556
Childcare Allowance	26,009	29,039	32,724	33,838	33,507	32,174	29,993	28,586	30,632	26,696
Dependants Allowance	33,755	36,528	38,960	39,370	37,964	35,767	32,947	32,310	32,838	29,102
Extra Weeks Allowance	29,518	33,640	39,258	47,677	61,355	76,114	85,251	90,388	94,637	81,817
Older Students Allowance	10,896	4,524	1,001	256	57	17	5	3	2	0
Non-Means Tested	0	0	0	0	11,830	35,398	57,216	69,635	76,614	70,000

⁸ Medical and dental students only.

Grant										
Parent Learning Allowance	7,024	12,123	15,730	16,608	16,190	14,944	13,706	13,409	13,689	12,086
Single Parent Addition	4,023	1,842	145	92	17	1	0	0	0	0
Disabled Students Allowances	6,879	7,993	8,647	8,641	9,072	10,422	9,239	9,422	8,524	7,227
Extensions	1,714	1,639	1,738	2,056	2,088	838	0	0	0	0
Hardship Fund	6	4	8	7	6	4	0	0	0	0
Initial Expenses	904	878	805	326	29	0	0	0	0	0
Practice Placement Expenses	8,978	9,271	11,077	10,792	11,137	11,717	11,599	15,026	14,934	15,905
Tuition Fees	13,814	14,046	27,560	30,312	38,442	40,211	36,560	36,827	60,955	78,764
Other	162	141	145	1,386	1,684	738	4	0	0	0
Total	465,499	468,461	489,533	521,456	509,422	482,219	452,134	430,349	441,237	450,153

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 2017/18 was the first year that DHSC 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 2017/18. 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-imbursment 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 2017/18 financial year.

Table 10

Work Item	Processed
HEI Notification of Withdrawal, Resumption or Extension	15,239
Contact Centre Services (Student Helpline) Referrals	18,811
HEI Referrals (Emails and Correspondence)	3,412
Student Change of Circumstances	10,468
General Correspondence	27,420
Integra Invoices (Tuition Fees and DSA)	19,644
Practice Placement Expenses claims	71,733
Disabled Students Allowances claims or associated correspondence	9,690
Appeals	440
Stage 0 Complaints	194
Stage 1 Complaints	9
Stage 2 Complaints	4
Ombudsman Cases	1
High Level Correspondence ¹⁰	0
MP Queries	1
Parliamentary Questions	0

¹⁰This classification no longer used.

Compared with financial year (FY) 2016/17 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 2017/18 financial year.

Table 11

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Calls to CCS	1332 2	1556 1	1665 8	1458 8	1457 1	1790 2	1357 3	1225 1	7416	1132 2	8779	1010 2	15604 5
Emails to CCS	2342	1776	2519	2026	1848	1779	1588	1401	946	1300	902	530	18957
Facebook queries	1737	1710	1241	1528	1524	1630	1204	1175	856	1085	866	878	15434
Twitter queries	89	68	80	144	127	154	85	95	73	124	92	121	1252
Emails to SB team	436	160	386	241	344	341	433	277	220	369	296	290	3793
Other correspondence	1994	3852	4530	3284	2413	1975	1251	1178	619	1988	1580	1394	26058

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 12 - 14. Although the form is mandatory, students have the option not to disclose the information being asked under each question.

Table 12

Questions asked with % of respondents:	
Gender	100%
Age Group	100%

Ethnic Group	100%
Religion	100%
Sexual Orientation	100%
Disability	100%

Table 13

What is your gender?		Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?	
Female	82.01%	Heterosexual	88.49%
Male	15.87%	Prefer not to say	7.66%
Prefer not to say	2.06%	Bisexual	1.49%
Other	0.06%	Gay	1.13%
		Lesbian	0.80%
		Other	0.43%
Which age group applies to you?		Are you a disabled person as defined by the Equality Act 2010?	
16-24	54.09%	No	91.51%
25-34	30.21%	Prefer not to say	4.29%
35-44	11.86%	Yes	1.17%
45-54	3.63%	Yes, limited a little	2.62%
55-64	0.21%	Yes, limited a lot	0.41%
65+	0.00%		

Table 14

What is your ethnic group?		What is your religion or belief?	
White - British	66.85%	Christianity	40.99%
Black or Black British – African	10.02%	No Religion	38.30%
Prefer not to say	3.26%	Prefer not to say	8.79%
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3.09%	Islam	6.29%
White – any other background	2.76%	Other	2.36%
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2.50%	Hinduism	1.66%
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2.40%	Sikhism	0.65%
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1.69%	Buddhism	0.63%
White - Irish	1.58%	Judaism	0.28%
Other Ethnic Group – any other ethnic group	1.05%	Jainism	0.05%
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0.95%		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0.94%		
Mixed – Any other mixed background	0.81%		
Mixed – White and Asian	0.77%		
Other Ethnic Group – Chinese	0.52%		
Mixed – White and Black African	0.41%		
Black or Black British – any other black background	0.40%		

8. Social Work Bursaries

The NHSBSA is directed by the DHSC 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 DHSC. The Social Work Bursary Scheme covers bursary awards as set out in Table 15.

Table 15

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

The following sections provide a detailed account of activity across the service streams for the 2017/18 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 2017/18, 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 16 details the gross annual bursary rates for the 2017/18 academic year.

Table 16

	Studying in London	Studying outside London
Undergraduate students: Courses starting on or after 1 September 2013		
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	
Postgraduate students:		
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		
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 12,577 students in the 2017/18 financial year.

Of these, there were:

- 4,325 postgraduate bursary recipients
- 570 postgraduate Placement Travel Allowance (PTA) only recipients
- 7,197 undergraduate bursary recipients
- 485 undergraduate PTA only recipients

The total volume of new and continuing students and other application types received are detailed in the Table 17.

Table 17

Award Element/Transaction Type		
Postgraduate students		4,895
	Of which, bursary in payment	4,325
	Of which, PTA only	570
Undergraduate students		7,682
	Of which, bursary in payment	7,197
	Of which, PTA only	485
Childcare Allowance applications		610
Disabled Student Allowance applications		235
Number of BACS payments		24,366
Number of new student debtors (withdrawal calculations)		621
Reassessments due to provisional awards		38
Tuition fee invoices processed		2,535

Table 18 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 9,421 in the 2013/14 academic year to 7,357 in the 2017/18 academic year. Figures exclude students getting the Placement Travel Allowance only.

Table 18

		2013/14 (AY)		2014/15 (AY)		2015/16 (AY)		2016/17 (AY)		2017/18 (AY)	
		UGD	PGD	UGD	PGD	UGD	PGD	UGD	PGD	UGD	PGD
Year of study	1	34	1,457	0	1,525	0	1,449	0	1,421	0	1,417
	2	2,673	1,641	2,238	1,316	2,427	1,373	2,322	1,369	2,105	1,326
	3	2,898	213	2,445	232	2,069	120	2,229	116	2,172	161
	4	391	21	379	47	308	22	121	10	131	14
	5	58	7	61	7	59	6	32	3	15	5
	6	16	4	14	1	16	1	6	2	1	2
	7	6	2	9	1	6	0	4	0	6	2
Total		6,076	3,345	5,146	3,129	4,885	2,971	4,714	2,921	4,430	2,927
		9,421		8,275		7,856		7,635		7,357	

Social Work Bursary cash payments

SWB cash payments in the 2017/18 financial year totalled just under £54m. Table 19 summarises this by award element.

Table 19

Non-Means Tested Scheduled Termly Payments		
Award element	Number of students	Amount paid (£000s)
Undergraduate Basic Grant	6,837	21,648
Postgraduate Basic Grant	4,307	9,569
Total (non-means tested termly payments)	11,144	31,217
Means Tested Scheduled Termly Payments		
Maintenance Grant	3,997	7,420

Adult Dependent Allowance	380	549
Parents Learning Allowance	1,311	1,271
Childcare Allowance	610	2,110
Total (means tested termly payments)	6,298	11,350
One-off Payments		
Award Element	Number of students	Amount Paid (£000s)
Disabled Students Allowances	235	876
Placement Travel Allowance	1,054	904
Tuition Fees	2,114	9,521
Total (one-off payments)	3,403	11,301
Grand Total – All Elements	20,845	53,868

Table 20 shows the gradual reduction of overall expenditure since 2013/14 due to the introduction of bursary capping.

Table 20

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Student bursary spend (£000s)	56,156	46,191	45,094	44,562	43,471
DSAs supplier spend (£000s)	674	756	676	669	876
Tuition fee spend (£000s)	13,883	12,348	11,303	10,594	9,521
Total (£000s)	70,713	59,295	57,073	55,825	53,868

Other key Social Work Bursaries work items processed

Table 21 shows the number of work items processed for social work bursaries in 2017/18.

Table 21

Work Item	Processed
HEI Notification of Withdrawal, Resumption or Extension	15,007
Contact Centre Services (Student Helpline) Referrals	17,440
HEI Referrals (Emails and Correspondence)	8,215
General Correspondence	25,418
Integra Invoices (Tuition Fees and DSA)	18,976
Disabled Students Allowances claims or associated correspondence	12,799
Appeals	71
Stage 0 Complaints	23
Stage 1 Complaints	2
Stage 2 Complaints	2
Ombudsman Cases	0
High Level Correspondence	-
MP Queries	1
Parliamentary Questions	0

Table 22 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 2017/18 financial year.

Table 22

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Calls to CCS	1,259	1,345	1,278	1,539	2,530	3,826	4,636	1,576	802	1,307	898	1,067	22,063
Emails to CCS	178	156	190	178	276	288	336	191	133	201	161	146	2,434
Facebook	408	273	272	694	705	1,41	1,34	375	209	359	246	473	6,771

queries						1	6						
Twitter queries	15	23	29	94	98	91	96	47	25	45	42	67	672
Emails to SWB team	326	336	462	460	552	509	653	1060	661	271	352	264	5,906
Other correspondence	90	90	110	119	173	166	248	105	153	118	26	24	1,422

CCS unable to provide figures.

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 2017/18, 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 23 - 25 are not necessarily representative of the full student population.

Table 23

Questions asked with % of respondents:	
What is your gender?	93.37%
Is your gender the same as birth?	93.11%
Age Group	93.32%
Marital Status	93.15%
What is your ethnic group?	91.38%
Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?	84.48%
What is your religion or belief	86.27%
Are your day to day activities limited by health?	89.34%
Do you have caring responsibilities?	100%
Who is cared for?	100%
Are you a registered carer?	100%
Are you currently pregnant?	98.56%
Have you given birth in the last 26 weeks?	96.42%

Table 24

What is your gender?		Marital Status	
Female	81.14%	Civil partnership	0.20%
Male	12.15%	Cohabiting	8.37%
I would rather not say	6.63%	Divorced	3.40%
Other	0.08%	I would rather not say	6.85%
Is your gender the same as birth?		Married	20.14%
Yes	92.81%	Separated	3.28%
No	0.30%	Single	57.38%
I would rather not say	6.89%	Widowed	0.38%
Age Group		Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?	
16-24	32.89%	Hetrosexual/Straight	79.99%
25-34	29.56%	I would rather not say	15.52%
35-44	19.76%	Bisexual	2.02%
45-54	9.68%	Lesbian	1.31%
55-64	1.44%	Gay	1.08%
I would rather not say	6.68%	Other	0.08%

Table 25

What is your ethnic group?		What is your religion or belief?	
British	56.80%	Christianity or Christian Denominations	45.41%
African	19.18%	Atheism/No Religion	32.56%
I would rather not say	8.62%	Prefer not to say	13.73%
Caribbean	3.96%	Islam	4.54%
Pakistani	2.32%	Other	2.02%
White & Black Caribbean	2.32%	Hinduism	0.45%
Any Other White Background	1.69%	Sikhism	0.58%
Indian	1.21%	Buddhism	0.55%
Irish	0.96%	Judaism	0.13%
Bangladeshi	0.68%	Jainism	0.03%
Any Other Asian Background	0.60%		
White & Asian	0.45%		
Any Other Black Background	0.40%		
White & Black African	0.35%		
Any Other Mixed Background	0.25%		
Chinese	0.13%		
Any Other Ethnic Background	0.08%		

Are your day to day activities limited by health?		Are you currently pregnant?	
No	80.59%	No	97.89%
I would rather not say	10.66%	I would rather not say	1.44%
Yes, limited a little	7.61%	Yes	0.67%
Yes, limited a lot	1.13%	Have you given birth in the last 26 weeks?	

Do you have caring responsibilities?		No	95.24%
No	60.11%	I would rather not say	3.58%
Yes	39.89%	Yes	1.18%
Who is cared for?			
Adult(s)	6.76%		
Child(ren)	88.44%		
Both	4.79%		
Are you a registered carer?			
No	93.73%		
Yes	6.27%		

9. 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 26 details the ESG rates set for the 2017/18 academic year.

Table 26

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

Education Support Grant cash payments

Table 27 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 27

Payment of ESG to HEIs	
First instalment	75
Second instalment	76
Students funded	11,720
Audit checks	1,366

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

Table 28 below details the expenditure paid through the ESG to HEIs.

Table 28

Education Support Grant expenditure								
Financial Year	2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	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	9,513	8,817	6,523	8,463	7,143	8,500	7,134	8,160
HEI Admin Fees	951	882	694	846	764	850	741	816
Skills Development Days	1,050	866	670	790	767	702	693	714
Service User & Carer Funding	0	591	0	592	0	577	7	562
Totals	11,514	11,156	7,887	10,691	8,674	10,629	8,575	10,252

10. Learning Support Fund

Prior to students making an application they are required to register an account on the system. As at the date of publication there were 12,367 accounts registered.

Learning Support Fund rates

Table 29 details the LSF rates set out for the 2017/18 academic year.

Table 29

LSF Rates	
Award Element	Amount
Child Dependant Allowance	£1,000
Exceptional Support Funding	Up to £3,000
Travel & Dual Accommodation – Travel	Up to 28p per mile (in excess of daily travel)
Travel & Dual Accommodation - Accommodation	£25 per night (non-commercial) £55 per night (commercial)

Student Services assessed and approved (finalised for payment) 7,044 applications in the 2017/18 academic year. The total volumes of students, by profession are detailed in Table 30.

Table 30

LSF Applicants By Profession	
Profession	No of Students
Dietetics	19
Midwifery	1,183
Nursing	4,524
Nursing/Social Work (Joint)	61
Occupational Therapy	243
Operating Department Practitioner	206
Orthoptics	48

Physiotherapy	137
Podiatry	25
Prosthetics & Orthotics	3
Radiography (Diagnostic)	97
Speech & Language Therapy	52
Total	7,044

Learning Support Fund cash payments

LSF cash payments in the 2017/18 financial year totalled just over £2m. Table 31 summarises payments by profession, number of students paid and the total value.

Table 31

LSF Cash Payments To Students By Profession		
Profession	No of Students Paid	Total Paid
Dietetics	15	£7,500
Midwifery	783	£358,018
Nursing	3119	£1,378,095
Nursing/Social Work (Joint)	45	£22,239
Occupational Therapy	179	£80,03
Operating Department Practitioner	133	£66,670
Orthoptics	30	£7,588
Physiotherapy	98	£33,734
Podiatry	19	£9,500
Prosthetics and Orthotics	2	£153
Radiography (Diagnostic)	238	£134,509
Radiography (Therapeutic)	72	£27,731
Speech & Language Therapy	42	£11,540

Total	4775	£2,137,312
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Table 32 summaries the overall expenditure by award element

Table 32

LSF Cash Payments To Students By Element Type		
Element Type	No of Students Paid	Total Paid
Child Dependants Allowance	3,467	£1,633,375
Travel & Dual Accommodation – Travel	1,438	£320,948
Travel & Dual Accommodation - Accommodation	272	£136,971
Exceptional Support Fund	23	£46,018
Total	5200	£2,137,312

Table 33 details the volume of calls, email, Facebook and Twitter queries received into the Customer Contact Centre and email and correspondence received by the processing team in 2017/18 financial year.

Table 33

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Calls to CCS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	92	32	42	56	64	244
Emails to CCS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	105	71	37	47	53	313
Facebook queries	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	51	56	61	58	50	276
Twitter queries	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	37	28	19	29	46	159
Emails to LSF team	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	53	2	12	19	54	140
Other correspondence	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	15	2	3	1	4	23

Note: prior to launch date any email queries/calls students were emailing and calling Student Services and these numbers for LSF callers would be incorporated in those figures.

11. 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

The majority of suspected offences under the Fraud Act 2006 within Student Services are:

Fraud by false representation (Section 2)

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 (Section 3)

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

Possession of articles for use in fraud (Section 6)

This could include:

- knowingly obtaining forged / false documents (such as passport, driving licence) to use in support of an application and / or change in circumstances.

Making or supplying articles for use in fraud (Section 7)

This could include:

- Creating or altering a document (such as a Tenancy Agreement, passport, visa stamp) to use in support of an application and / or change in circumstances.

Case examples of NHS Bursary fraud

1. A student provided false information stating that they were a Dutch National, and signed a declaration form to that effect, and also provided a Dutch Identity card to support their application. It was also discovered that the subject had submitted a false National Insurance number. The subject received a three year NHS bursary award of £23,481.00 as a result of the false information. The subject appeared at Bromley Magistrates Court on the 5 March 2018 and pleaded guilty. The subject was sentenced to 26 weeks custody (Suspended for 24 months), and sentenced to do 150hrs unpaid work. victim surcharge of £115 and costs of £85.
2. The subject was awarded an NHS Student Bursary claiming to be born in the UK, providing the required documentation to meet the NHS bursary criteria. Information received suggested the Home Office requested the subject return to Nigeria as she does not qualify for settlement in the UK. The subject was interviewed under caution as a voluntary attender where she denied being dishonest in her actions concerning her declarations. The subject pleaded guilty to offence at first hearing at Bromley Magistrates Court on 19 January 2018 and was sentenced to 12 months Community Order; 80 hours unpaid work; compensation of £1140.00.
3. The subject applied for a NHS Student Bursary to support her in undertaking a 3 year NHS funded course and was successful being awarded monthly bursary payments of £625. It was subsequently discovered that the subject had withdrawn from the course but had failed to notify NHS Student Bursaries. The amount of money paid when the subject did not attend was £14,324.98 and the subject was suspected of being dishonest in receiving this money. On the 4 October 2017 the subject appeared at Birmingham Magistrates Court and pleaded guilty to offences under the Fraud Act 2006 (Section 3 Fraud by failure to disclose information). The subject was sentenced by the court and received a Community order 12 months with supervision, fined £76, victim surcharge £85, compensation £14324.98 (to be paid back to NHS Student Bursaries)

Student Services has its own dedicated 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 an NHS 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 99.20% global accuracy rate for the 12 months April 2017 to March 2018 across all work streams.
- Bursary payments totalling £2,589,835 were checked as part of this process. Underpayments totalling £2,112 and overpayments totalling £18,477 were highlighted and relevant amendments were made to the bursary awards affected.
- Less than 3.4% of assessed Social Work Bursary applications contain errors.
- No 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 2018 was:

- £13,871,714 gross
- £12,002,665 provision for bad debt^[1]
- £1,869,049 net
- £5,181,282 recovered

The debt position for Social Work Bursaries as at 31 March 2018:

- £1,308,000 gross
- £937,000 provision for bad debt
- £371,000 net
- £255,000 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

^[1] The amount we estimate will not be recovered.

12. Audit

Learning Support Fund

Following the introduction of the LSF, Health Group Internal Audit performed an independent review on the controls established by the NHSBSA to administer claims under the LSF.

Health Group Internal Audit provides an objective and independent assurance, focusing 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 testing to verify that payments being made to students are correctly calculated based on evidence and declarations provided by the student. 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.

Health Group Audit performed the following:

- Reviewed the training and documented procedures in place to confirm comprehensive guidance to staff.
- Reviewed the procedures established to validate LSF applications to ensure they are appropriately validated in line with the eligibility criteria and payment is correctly calculated.
- Inspected a sample of processed applications to confirm they have been validated in line with the agreed procedures, the correct outcome has been reached and the payment has been correctly calculated.
- Reviewed the quality control and assurance process implemented to ensure the agreed procedures are followed and applications are correctly validated.
- Inspected a sample of quality assurance reports to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and the agreed level of sample checking is performed.

- Reviewed the management information produced covering operational performance such as complaints, workflow and rejection rates to ensure there is efficient oversight of service delivery.

Summary of Findings

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