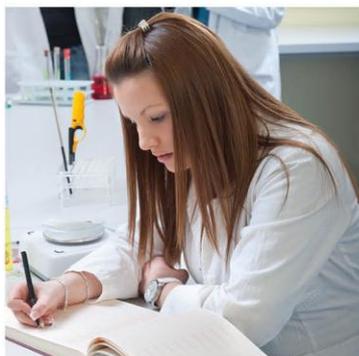


Student Services Annual Report for the Financial Year 2015/16



Contents

1. Purpose and Scope.....	4
2. General Overview.....	4
3. Performance Summary	8
4. Client and Stakeholder Engagement.....	9
5. NHS Student Bursaries	18
6. Social Work Bursaries	33
7. Education Support Grant.....	43
8. Fraud, Error and Debt (FRED)	45
9. Audit.....	48

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 2015/16 financial year, detailing all bursary expenditure and transactions for NHS Student Bursaries (SB), Social Work Bursaries (SWB) and the Education Support Grant (ESG).

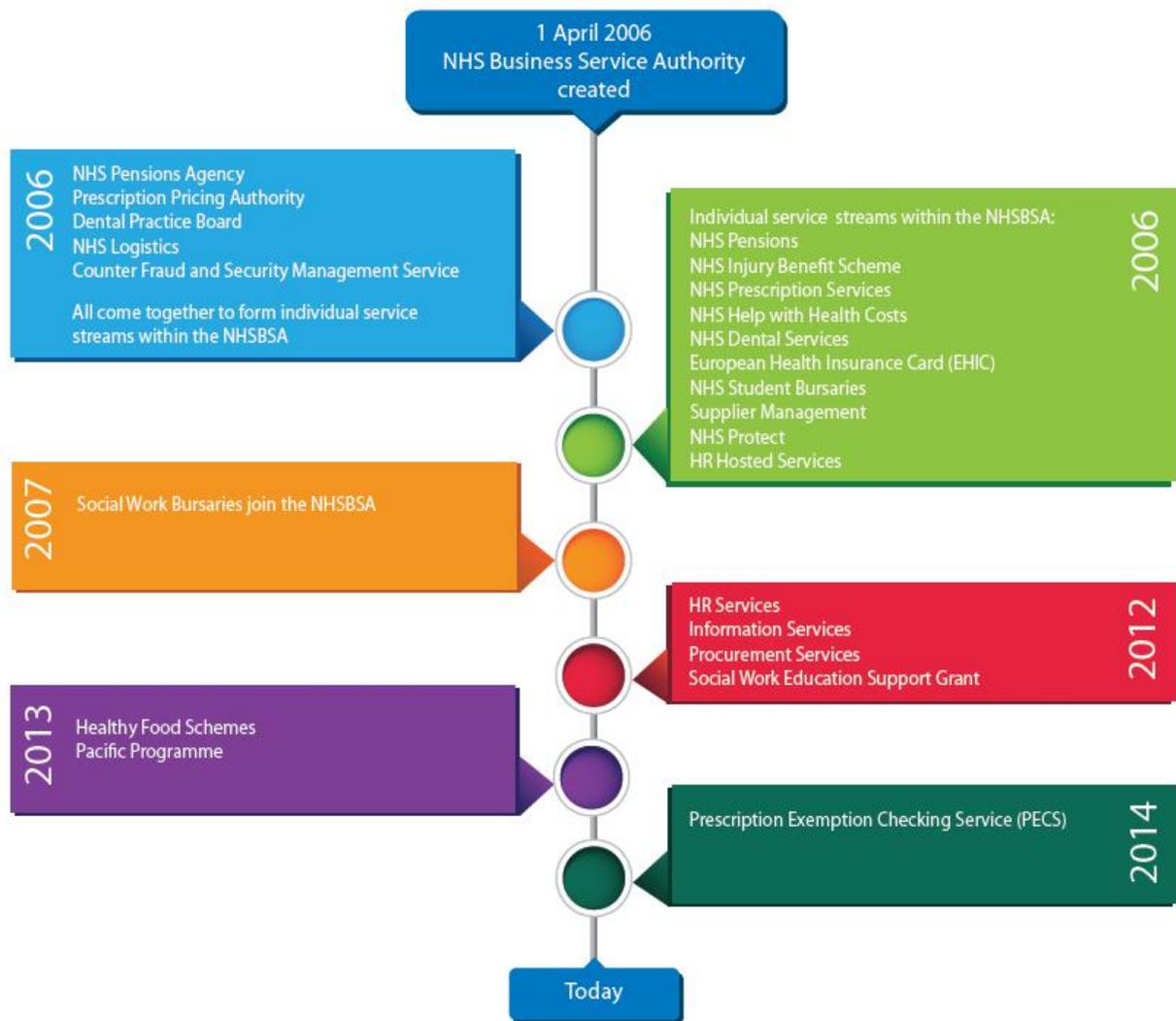
2. General Overview

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 Vision

The NHSBSA has set itself a challenging set of strategic goals, with the primary aim of making its services as customer focused and efficient as possible. Compelling visions have been developed for each service which offer the potential to deliver significant benefits to customers, patients and the wider NHS.

The strategic goals, underpinned by the organisational purpose and values, are summarised in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2

Our purpose:

We are a business services organisation. We use insight to deliver improvements that matter

Our goals:

1

We will collaborate to create £1 billion for patients

2

We will reduce our unit costs by 50%

3

We will always improve service and deliver great results for customers

4

We will digitise 80% of customer and supplier interactions

5

We will derive insight from data to drive change

6

We will invest time in our people, and we will recognise them for their commitment, contribution and passion

Our values:

Ambition | Integrity | Innovation | Respect | Teamwork | Quality | Accountability

Student Services

There are three key service streams within Student Services:

NHS Student Bursaries Assessing and paying bursaries totalling approximately £441 million ¹ to over 105,000 health students in the financial year and over 80 Higher Education Institutions.	Social Work Bursaries Assessing and paying bursaries totalling approximately £57 million to around 12,800 social work students in the financial year.	Education Support Grant Making payments of around £18.5 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 £516.5 million to over 117,000 students and over 80 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in 2015/16 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.

3. Performance Summary

Overall, Student Services has delivered high levels of performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) across SB, SWB and the ESG throughout 2015/16.

Copies of the March 2016 sponsor reports have already been provided to clients, but are also available on request.

NHS Student Bursaries (SB)

There are a few isolated incidences of failure to meet KPIs in 2015/16, all of which have been addressed and are being monitored on an ongoing basis to prevent further service failures. The incidences are as follows

- One principle report was missed in December 2015 due to the volume of data requests following the Health Education Funding Reforms (announced in the Government Spending Review 2015).
- SB calls were missed on two occasions. Firstly, in September 2015 due to a fault with suppliers and ongoing issues with the call management system, which impacted all call streams across the NHSBSA. Secondly, in March 2016 as a result of the transition to the new average speed of answer target that was implemented from 1 April 2016.
- The deadlines for two Stage 2 complaints were missed in November 2015 due to their complex nature.

Social Work Bursaries (SWB)

Overall the KPIs have been met with only two incidences of failure and both incidents are related to SWB calls.

- Firstly, in September 2015, due to a fault with suppliers and ongoing issues with the call management system, which impacted all call streams across the NHSBSA.
- Secondly, in March 2016, as a result of the transition to the new average speed of answer target that was implemented from 1 April 2016.

Both telephony issues were technical faults and the NHSBSA has worked closely with suppliers to resolve the issues and mitigate any further incidences.

Education Support Grant (ESG)

All KPIs were delivered on target during 2015/16.

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 2015/16.

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

During 2015/16 Student Services hosted two national stakeholder events. The first event was held at London Southbank University in April 2015. The event was attended by over 120 delegates from HEIs and stakeholders all over the country. The Department of Health supported Student Services at the event and gave a presentation about their role in student support for SB, SWB and the ESG.

The event was structured around feedback received from previous events with workshops on:

- bursary means testing (how the award is calculated including how income/expenditure can affect entitlement)
- student eligibility rules (in depth criteria around residency requirements)
- Confirmation of Student Attendance (COSA) form (guidance for HEIs about completion of the form and submission)
- absence rules (clarification about the 60 day sickness absence rule)

The Priory Rooms in Birmingham hosted the second national stakeholder event in November 2015. Over 130 delegates attended the event from HEIs and various stakeholder organisations. A strong team from Student Services supported the largest event to date.

The event included workshops on:

- general changes in NHS Student Bursaries (changes in personal circumstances, changes to course/ HEI and the process for students withdrawing, repeating extending training)
- fraud (case studies of fraud in the bursary system and process for reporting suspected fraud)
- the student journey (the journey a student follows from thinking about enrolling on a Health or Social Care programme through to graduation. This included the NHS Bursary / Social Work Bursary application process and the various interactions between Student Services, HEIs and students along the journey)
- Social Work Bursaries and the Education Support Grant (Overview of funding available)
- Practice Placement Expenses (overview of the funding available and the application process)
- independence/estrangement (clarification of the meaning and the evidence required to support the status)

Both events provided a forum for us to educate HEIs and improve their knowledge about SB and SWB and for HEIs to provide feedback on literature and supporting guidance that can help with their day to day queries from students. For example, case studies were published on our website, improvements were made to our Personal Eligibility calculator and a fraud awareness presentation and posters were provided to all HEIs for them to deliver themselves at their institutions.

Regional events

Following the popularity and positive feedback from national stakeholder events, Student Services piloted its first regional event in conjunction with Health Education Wessex. Student Services provided a series of presentations on various aspects of the NHS Bursary and discussed local issues and challenges HEIs are facing. The intention is to roll out further events across Local Offices, subject to service changes following Health Education Funding Reforms.

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. During 2015/16, ARC SAMS provided positive feedback to Student Services on its performance and contribution to the group.

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 2015 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.

NASMA provide numerous training events throughout the year for its members. Student Services were invited to host a training session on SB and SWB at Liverpool John Moore's University. The session focused on the eligibility criteria and the various elements of both SB and SWB. Positive feedback was provided to Student Services on both events attended.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

During 2015/16 Student Services launched two new SIGs: Medical and Dental and Social Work Bursaries. The idea of the SIGs is to establish a series of stakeholder groups to undertake engagement with, to form closer working relationships to work collaboratively to improve the service it delivers to students and related stakeholders.

The Medical and Dental SIG met on two occasions during 2015/16 and the key initiative that came from the joint working group was the introduction of bulk tuition fee invoicing. In 2015/16, 90 invoices were received for 8,459 students, reducing the overall number of invoices, resulting in significant administration and time saving benefits for both HEIs and Student Services. A small number of HEIs continued to submit individual invoices.

The Social Work Bursaries SIG met on one occasion during 2015/16. The session was an introductory session with Student Services providing an overview of its functions, the bursary and application process and provided the opportunity for HEIs to discuss and highlight any issues.

The current capping process presents challenges to both Student Services and HEIs; the intention is to work collaboratively with members of the SIG to review the process to identify improvement opportunities with the data transfer process from HEIs to Student Services.

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 2015 are as follows:

- 2,664 people completed the SB survey which was a response rate of 18%
- 1,021 people completed the SWB survey which was a response rate of 21%

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

- HEI is the main way students find out about SB and the website is the main source for finding out more information.
- Overall respondents are more positive about the application process through BOSS than in 2014. However, satisfaction with three of the five aspects remains amber. These were 'speed of BOSS', 'application form user friendly, clear, easy to understand' and 'process for providing supporting evidence'.
- Satisfaction with individual aspects of the NHS Bursary award have all seen statistically significant increases since 2014 and are all now green, with the exception of length of time from application to notification of award (amber 7.9).
- Customer contact ratings remain high (8.4 overall), and satisfaction with the automated greeting message and time taken to resolve query have both seen statistically significant increases from in 2014 levels.
- All aspects of the website receive green satisfaction ratings (8.5 overall).
- More than half of students are aware of "Ask Us" (54%, up from 34% in 2014), but only 15% have used it (up from 7% in 2014).
- Satisfaction with communication is significantly higher than in 2013, now at 8.1.
- Overall satisfaction has significantly increased to 8.4 from 8.0. Medical and dental students and students limited by a health problem or disability have lower satisfaction levels across all key satisfaction measures.

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).
- Simplify the application form and provide clearer guidance with more examples.
- Continue to improve the layout of the website so that information is easier to find.
- Clarify evidence what will be required at the outset of the application process.
- Wherever possible, make the process for providing evidence less onerous.
- Provide regular progress updates and reminders at key times during the application cycle.
- Identify any reasons for comparatively low satisfaction with the contact centre by those who contact using email.
- 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

- HEI/college remains the main way students find out about SWB and the website is the main source for finding out more information.
- Ease of finding out about the availability of the Social Work Bursary has significantly increased since last year.
- Satisfaction with the overall application process and several application aspects have significantly increased; Notification of Award (NOA) clear and understandable, time from application to NOA and payment made when expected.
- Mean satisfaction ratings are high green ratings for all elements of customer contact, although there are two significant decreases for time taken to answer call/acknowledge query and staff ability to resolve query.
- Satisfaction with communication is consistent with 2014.
- Overall satisfaction is comparable to 2014, with a high mean score of 8.7.

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, 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 why postgraduate students rate SWB lower than undergraduate students across all measures.

Policy updates

NHS Student Bursaries

The NHS Bursary Scheme New Rules apply to students starting on their courses on or after 1 September 2012. The fourth edition for the academic year from 1 September 2015 to 31 August 2016, published in February 2015, includes a number of changes from the third edition of the NHS Bursary Scheme Rules. The same changes also apply to the sixteenth edition of the NHS Bursary Scheme Old Rules. At a summary level the changes are:

- An additional paragraph included to clarify the responsibilities of the NHSBSA and the Higher Education Provider in determining a student's eligibility for an NHS Bursary.
- Reference to "Access to Learning Fund" replaced by "higher education provider's own hardship funds" to reflect that Access to Learning fund has discontinued.
- Tuition fee rate for medical and dental students studying in Northern Ireland increased by 3.22% from £3,686 to £3,805.
- Reference to voluntary payments included to add clarity.
- Bursary rates increased by 1%
- All allowances increased by 1%
- Made clear that joint custody is reflected.
- Motor vehicle up to 125cc and other motor vehicle rates amended in line with Agenda for Change.
- Tax free childcare included in the list of circumstances where no Childcare Allowance is payable.
- Additional clarity to the rules for the 60 day authorised absence period for illness or injury.
- Amendments to text to reflect the arrangements for medical and dental students.
- Health Education England and the relevant local offices added as organisations students should consent to the Department of Health sharing information with, in order to investigate an appeal or complaint.
- Glossary definition of family member includes an additional bullet in relation to a UK national

Social Work Bursaries

A summary of the bursary arrangements for the 2015/16 academic year, as published by the DH in May 2015, is detailed below:

- The number of whole-time equivalent bursaries for postgraduate students set at 1,500.
- The number of whole-time equivalent for undergraduate students set at 2,600.
- No changes to the bursary application process.
- 1% uplift applied to bursary rates and allowances.
- Revised inclusion criteria for HEIs for the shortlisting process.
- No change to ESG rates.
- No change for HEIs applying for ESG.

5. NHS Student Bursaries

The NHSBSA is directed by the DH to administer NHS Student Bursaries (SB) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/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 approximately 88,600 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 SB activity is around £441 million in the 2015/16 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:	
A. Non-Means Tested Allowances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-Means Tested Grant • Disabled Students Allowance • Practice Placement Expenses 	B. Means Tested Allowances: <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 2015/16 financial year. SB supports around 88,600 students in training in any one academic year. However, across the financial year the number of students supported is in excess of 105,000. 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 three NHS Bursary Schemes which students were assessed under in 2015/16.

These are:

- Pre-2007 Scheme (45 students)
- 2007-2012 Scheme (10,627 students)
- 2012 Scheme (95,231 students)

This needs to be considered when comparing the data in this report.

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	
Audiologist ¹	Occupational Therapist
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
¹ Only applicable for students commencing training before 1 September 2012	

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

In the financial year 2015/16, Student Services assessed awards and paid bursaries under the provisions of three different NHS Bursary Schemes depending on the start date of the student's course.

Bursary rates are published annually by the Department of Health and are aligned to a standard academic year (i.e. September to August the following year), so for the reporting period relevant to this Annual Report, many students straddle two periods of bursary rates.

Table 4 lists the gross annual bursary rates applicable for the 2015/16 academic year and therefore payable for the months April 2015 – August 2015 for the purpose of this Annual Report, across the three different NHS Bursary Schemes.

Table 4

	Pre-2007 Scheme	2007-2012 Scheme	2012 Scheme
Basic Award – Parental Home	£2,151	£2,446	£2,185
Basic Award – Lodgings Rate	£2,630	£2,929	£2,617
Basic Award – London Lodgings Rate	£3,230	£3,536	£3,159
Extra Weeks Allowance – Parental Home	£54	£54	£54
Extra Weeks Allowance – Lodgings Rate	£82	£82	£82
Extra Weeks Allowance – London Lodgings Rate	£106	£106	£106
Non-Means Tested Grant	-	-	£1,000
Spouse or First Child Dependants Rate			
Spouse or First Child Dependants Rate	£2,666	£2,666	£2,424
Child Under 11 Dependants Rate	£558	£544	£544
Child 11 to 15 Dependants Rate	£1,115		
Child 16 to 17 Dependants Rate	£1,483		
Child Over 18 Dependants Rate	£2,134		
Standard PLA Rate	-	£1,316	£1,192
Standard OSA Rate	-	-	-
Standard OSA Rate – Aged 26	£452	-	-
Standard OSA Rate – Aged 27	£785	-	-
Standard OSA Rate – Aged 28	£1,164	-	-
Standard OSA Rate – Aged 29	£1,539	-	-
Standard SPA Rate	£1,316	-	-
Childcare Allowance			
Childcare Allowance – One child (Maximum Weekly Rate)	£127.50	£127.50	£127.50
Childcare Allowance – Two or more children (Maximum Weekly Rate)	£189.55	£189.55	£189.55
Disabled Students Allowances			
Disabled Students Allowances – Non-Medical Helper	£20,725	£20,725	£20,725
Disabled Students Allowances – Specialist Equipment	£5,214	£5,214	£5,214
Disabled Students Allowances – Other	£1,741	£1,741	£1,741
Tuition Fees			
Tuition Fees Variable Rate – 2013/14	-	-	£3,465
Tuition Fees Standard Rate – 2013/14	-	-	£1,380

Table 5 lists the gross annual bursary rates applicable for the 2015/16 academic year and therefore payable for the months September 2015 – March 2016 for the purpose of this Annual Report, across the three different NHS Bursary Schemes.

Table 5

	Pre-2007 Scheme	2007-2012 Scheme	2012 Scheme
Basic Award – Parental Home	£2,151	£2,470	£2,207
Basic Award – Lodgings Rate	£2,630	£2,958	£2,643
Basic Award – London Lodgings Rate	£3,230	£3,571	£3,191
Extra Weeks Allowance – Parental Home	£54	£56	£56
Extra Weeks Allowance – Lodgings Rate	£82	£84	£84
Extra Weeks Allowance – London Lodgings Rate	£106	£108	£108
Non Means Tested Grant	-	-	£1,000
Dependants Rates			
Spouse or First Child Dependants Rate	£2,693	£2,693	£2,448
Child Under 11 Dependants Rate	£564	£549	£549
Child 11 to 15 Dependants Rate	£1,126		
Child 16 to 17 Dependants Rate	£1,498		
Child Over 18 Dependants Rate	£2,155		
Standard PLA Rate	-	£1,329	£1,204
Standard OSA Rate	-	-	-
Standard OSA Rate – Aged 26	£457	-	-
Standard OSA Rate – Aged 27	£793	-	-
Standard OSA Rate – Aged 28	£1,176	-	-
Standard OSA Rate – Aged 29	£1,554	-	-
Standard SPA Rate	£1,329	-	-
Childcare Allowance			
Childcare Allowance – One child (Maximum Weekly Rate)	£128.78	£128.78	£128.78
Childcare Allowance – Two or more children (Maximum Weekly Rate)	£191.45	£191.45	£191.45
Disabled Students Allowances			
Disabled Students Allowances – Non-Medical Helper	£20,725	£20,725	£20,725
Disabled Students Allowances – Specialist Equipment	£5,214	£5,214	£5,214
Disabled Students Allowances – Other	£1,741	£1,741	£1,741
Tuition Fees			
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) 88,614 bursary applications in the 2015/16 academic year. The total volumes of new and continuing students, by profession, are detailed in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Profession	New Students ²	Continuing Students	Total
AHP Foundation	0	15	15
Chiropody	337	612	949
Dental Hygiene	21	20	41
Dental Hygiene & Dental Therapy	205	328	533
Dental Therapy	21	35	56
Dentistry	0	1,094	1,094
Dietetics	378	706	1,084
Medicine	0	9,785	9,785
Midwifery	2,449	3,954	6,403
Nursing	20,629	31,640	52,269
Occupational Therapy	1,624	2,428	4,052
Operating Department Practitioner	935	836	1,771
Orthoptics	85	147	232
Physiotherapy	1,683	2,575	4,258
Prosthetics & Orthotics	34	65	99
Radiography	1,251	1,921	3,172
Radiotherapy	336	472	808
Speech & Language Therapy	740	1,253	1,993
Total	30,728	57,886	88,614

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.

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 Business Innovation and Skills.

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 2015 to 31 March 2016. 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.
- 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).

In total SB made a payment to 105,903 students in the 2015/16 financial year. Of these:

- 45 (0.00%) fell under the Pre-2007 Scheme
- 10,627 (10.03%) fell under the 2007-2012 Scheme
- 95,231 (89.92%) fell under the 2012 Scheme

Table 7 lists a national summary of cash payments to students by profession.

Table 7

Profession	No of Students Paid	Total Paid (£000s)	% of All Professions Paid	Average Paid per Student (£000s)
Medical & Dental	10,690	£23,117,143	5.72%	
<i>Of which:</i>				
Medicine	9,580	£20,877,515	5.16%	£2,179
Dentistry	1,110	£2,239,628	0.55%	£2,018
Nursing & Midwifery	71,563	£309,435,859	76.52%	
<i>Of which:</i>				
Nursing	63,518	£273,558,288	67.64%	£4,307
Midwifery	8,045	£35,877,571	8.87%	£4,460
Allied Health Professions	20,642	£60,513,465	14.96%	
<i>Of which:</i>				
AHP Foundation	43	£92,320	0.02%	£2,147
Chiropody	1,165	£3,546,732	0.88%	£3,044
Dietetics	1,280	£3,738,486	0.92%	£2,921
Occupational Therapy	5,141	£16,447,590	4.07%	£3,199
Orthoptics	278	£858,241	0.21%	£3,087
Physiotherapy	5,336	£12,707,481	3.14%	£2,381
Prosthetics & Orthotics	113	£371,593	0.09%	£3,288
Radiography	3,863	£13,110,136	3.24%	£3,394
Radiotherapy	992	£3,191,905	0.79%	£3,218
Speech & Language Therapy	2,431	£6,448,981	1.59%	£2,653
Professions Complementary to Dentistry	721	£2,438,113	0.60%	
<i>Of which:</i>				
Dental Hygiene	58	£212,535	0.05%	£3,664
Dental Hygiene & Dental Therapy	603	£1,973,194	0.49%	£3,272
Dental Therapy	60	£252,385	0.06%	£4,206
Other Health Professions	2,287	£8,905,084	2.20%	
<i>Of which:</i>				
Audiology	38	£40,461	0.01%	£1,065
Operating Department Practitioner	2,249	£8,864,623	2.19%	£3,942
All Professions	105,903	£404,409,665	100.00%	

The 'average paid per student' figures in Table 7 above relate to the number of students paid any bursary element in the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. 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 (67.64%) of cash payments and is second only to midwifery in terms of the average paid per student (£4,307).

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 76.52% of cash payments, or £309.4m.

In Table 8 below, the same professions grouped are analysed for the last 10 financial years; from April 2006 to March 2015.

Table 8

Financial Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Professional Group	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Medical & Dental	17,306	19,215	20,198	21,152	22,228	21,887	22,967	23,424	23,236	23,118
Nursing & Midwifery	370,664	370,858	369,762	385,721	399,366	385,371	349,453	320,586	301,307	309,436
Allied Health Professions	48,778	47,800	46,285	47,737	50,296	50,275	52,759	55,697	58,129	60,513
Professions Complementary to Dentistry	1,558	1,675	1,636	1,606	1,744	1,886	1,863	2,102	2,337	2,438
Other Health Professions	11,934	14,714	16,766	19,270	20,262	19,692	16,735	10,114	8,780	8,905
Total	450,240	454,262	454,647	475,486	493,896	479,111	443,777	411,923	393,789	404,410

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 2015/16 when compared to 2014/15, but this can be attributed to an increase in student nurses paid, from 60,247 in the 2014/15 financial year to 63,518 in the 2015/16 financial year.

Cash payments for Allied Health Professions (AHP) have increased significantly over the last five financial years from £50.3m at the end of financial year 2011/12 to £60.5m at the

end of financial year 2015/16. This is due to a steady yearly increase in the number of students receiving a bursary – 17,412 AHP students received a bursary in the 2011/12 financial year and this has risen to 20,642 in 2015/16.

The 2015/16 financial year was the first 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 9 does this.

Table 9

Scheduled Monthly Payments			
Award Element	Number	Total Cash Amount Paid³ (£000s)	Expenditure⁴ (£000s)
Basic Award ⁵	88,087	145,631	144,697
Childcare Allowance	9,182	28,586	25,338
Dependants Allowance	16,656	32,310	31,947
Extra Weeks Allowance	91,298	90,388	89,605
Non Means Tested Grant ⁶	94,833	69,635	69,224
Older Students Allowance ⁷	5	3	3
Parent Learning Allowance ⁸	16,670	13,409	13,240
Total (Monthly Payments)	316,731	379,962	374,053
One-off Payments			
Award Element	Number	Amount Paid	
Disabled Students Allowances	4,777	9,422	9,764
Practice Placement Expenses	30,165	15,026	15,213
Tuition Fees ⁹	10,628	36,827	37,637
Total (One-off Payments)	45,570	61,275	62,614
Overpayments and Debt Provision			4,350
Grand Total – All Elements	362,301	441,237	441,017

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

⁴ This is the actual amount paid after any adjustments for overpayments or cancelled payments.

⁵ Covers the first 30 weeks of training.

⁶ 2012 Scheme students only.

⁷ Pre-2007 Scheme students only.

⁸ 2007-2012 and 2012 Scheme students only.

⁹ Medical and dental students only.

In Table 10, the same award elements are analysed for the last 10 financial years; from April 2006 to March 2016.

Table 10

Financial Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Award Element	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Basic Award	323,824	322,994	324,771	337,862	343,363	318,061	258,840	193,789	153,829	145,631
Childcare Allowance	22,589	26,249	26,009	29,039	32,724	33,838	33,507	32,174	29,993	28,586
Dependants Allowance	30,506	32,101	33,755	36,528	38,960	39,370	37,964	35,767	32,947	32,310
Extra Weeks Allowance	26,176	27,690	29,518	33,640	39,258	47,677	61,355	76,114	85,251	90,388
Older Students Allowance	22,209	18,245	10,896	4,524	1,001	256	57	17	5	3
Non-Means Tested Grant	0	0	0	0	0	0	11,830	35,398	57,216	69,635
Parent Learning Allowance	0	2,227	7,024	12,123	15,730	16,608	16,190	14,944	13,706	13,409
Single Parent Addition	7,272	6,429	4,023	1,842	145	92	17	1	0	0
Disabled Students Allowances	6,178	6,684	6,879	7,993	8,647	8,641	9,072	10,422	9,239	9,422
Extensions	1,633	1,665	1,714	1,639	1,738	2,056	2,088	838	0	0
Hardship Fund	0	4	6	4	8	7	6	4	0	0
Initial Expenses	949	888	904	878	805	326	29	0	0	0
Practice Placement Expenses	8,691	8,920	8,978	9,271	11,077	10,792	11,137	11,717	11,599	15,026
Tuition Fees	11,141	11,237	13,814	14,046	27,560	30,312	38,442	40,211	36,560	36,827
Other	197	156	162	141	145	1,386	1,684	738	4	0
Total	461,380	465,499	468,461	489,533	521,456	509,422	482,219	452,134	430,349	441,237

The Non-Means Tested Grant and Parent Learning Allowance were introduced from 2012 so the value of cash payments has steadily increased each year.

In contrast, Older Student Allowance and Single Parent Addition were removed from the NHS Bursary Scheme from September 2012 and have been gradually phased out each year as eligible students have completed their training, with only a few students in receipt in the 2015/16 financial year.

Practice Placement Expenses (PPE) have increased by £3.4m from the 2014/15 financial year to the 2015/16 financial year.

There was a significant increase in claim forms received (65,393 compared to 58,406 in 2014/15) which accounts towards the large increase in cash payments.

Other key NHS Student Bursaries work items processed

Table 11, extracted from Student Services divisional plans, provides a summary of all other key work items processed in the 2015/16 financial year.

Table 11

Work Item	Processed
HEI Notification of Withdrawal, Resumption or Extension	17,111
Contact Centre Services (Student Helpline) Referrals	23,152
HEI Referrals (Emails and Correspondence)	8,469
Student Change of Circumstances	11,491
General Correspondence	28,282
Integra Invoices (Tuition Fees and DSA)	24,879
Practice Placement Expenses claims	65,393
Disabled Students Allowances claims or associated correspondence	18,972
Appeals	648
Stage 0 Complaints	304
Stage 1 Complaints	24
Stage 2 Complaints	9
Ombudsman Cases	3
High Level Correspondence	265
MP Queries	19
Parliamentary Questions	4

HEI referrals have reduced significantly from 12,987 in the 2014/15 financial year to 8,469 in the 2015/16 financial year. Increased communication products and bi-annual stakeholder events had a positive impact, with feedback from both extremely positive.

Complaints received increased from 258 in financial year 2014/15 to 337 in the 2015/16 financial year. The main reason for this was the childcare reconciliation exercise where students have to post evidence of their childcare costs each quarter so they can be reconciled against the Childcare Allowance paid to them which was based on their estimated costs. This exercise resulted in some students incurring an overpayment debt.

Table 12 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 2015/16 financial year.

Table 12

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Calls to CCS	21,432	25,571	24,627	26,573	25,115	32,567	22,939	17,395	12,773	16,257	14,806	20,210	26,0265
Emails to CCS	3,130	1,672	1,946	2,082	1,544	1,646	1,769	927	675	879	876	894	18,040
Facebook queries	1,693	2,055	1,018	789	791	1,207	604	627	319	564	529	607	10,803
Emails to SB team	508	399	394	464	321	462	481	691	477	306	433	552	5,488
Other correspondence	3,749	1,096	1,369	3,600	5,280	3,919	1,878	1,203	1,464	1,748	1,773	1,203	28,282

Table 13 below shows the percentage of the types of query the Customer Contact Centre received.

Table 13

Type of query	Percentage of overall queries
Progress of application	8.4%
Childcare Allowance	11.8%
Disabled Students Allowances	4.5%
Practice Placement Expenses	5%
Change of circumstance	7.7%
BOSS issues	10.8%
Payment	10.5%
HEI call	2.8%
Invite	0.2%
Help with application	3.8%
COSA	1%
Documents/evidence	16.1%
Notification of Award request	0.6%
Third party authorisation	0.7%
Eligibility	2.6%
Referral/call back not received	1.3%

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 14 - 16 below. Although the form is mandatory, students have the option not to disclose the information being asked under each question.

Table 14

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

Table 15

What is your gender?		Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?	
Female	83.40%	Heterosexual/Straight	90.53%
Male	15.01%	Prefer not to say	6.81%
Prefer not to say	1.59%	Lesbian/Gay	1.67%
		Bisexual	0.99%
Which age group applies to you?		Are you a disabled person as defined by the Equality Act 2010?	
16-24	61.03%	No	93.37%
25-34	25.77%	Yes	3.63%
35-44	10.47%	Prefer not to say	3.00%
45-54	2.62%		
55-64	0.10%		
65+	0.00%		

Table 16

What is your ethnic group?		What is your religion or belief?	
White	74.12%	Christianity	45.38%
Black or Black British – African	9.27%	No Religion	36.04%
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2.52%	Prefer not to say	7.53%
Prefer not to say	2.56%	Islam	5.64%
Mixed	2.80%	Other	2.54%
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2.29%	Hinduism	1.44%
Asian or Asian British – Other	2.12%	Sikhism	0.57%
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1.73%	Buddhism	0.54%
Other Ethnic Group	0.94%	Judaism	0.27%
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.76%	Jainism	0.03%
Asian or Asian British – Chinese	0.50%		
Black or Black British – Other	0.38%		

6. Social Work Bursaries

The NHSBSA is directed by the DH to administer SWB <https://www.gov.uk/social-work-bursaries/overview> and the ESG. Accountability for these two service streams is directly to the DH. The Social Work Bursary Scheme covers bursary awards as set out in Table 17.

Table 17

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 	<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 2015/16 financial year. SWB supports around 8,758 students in training in any one academic year. However, across the financial year, the number of students supported is around 12,800. 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 May to 30 November in 2015/16, with a delayed 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 are 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 18 details the gross annual bursary rates for the 2015/16 academic year.

Table 18

	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 Dependents 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 12,780 students in the 2015/16 financial year.

Of these, there were:

- 4,450 postgraduate bursary recipients
- 192 postgraduate PTA only recipients
- 7,686 undergraduate bursary recipients
- 452 undergraduate PTA only recipients

The total volume of new and continuing students and other application types received are detailed in the Table 19 below.

Table 19

Award Element/Transaction Type		
Postgraduate students		4,642
	Of which, bursary in payment	4,450
	Of which, PTA only	192
Undergraduate students		8,138
	Of which, bursary in payment	7,686
	Of which, PTA only	452
Childcare Allowance applications		567
Disabled Student Allowance applications		313
Number of BACs payments		32,238
Number of new student debtors (withdrawal calculations)		123
Reassessments due to provisional awards		96
Tuition fee invoices processed		2,961

The profile of application receipts is summarised in Table 20 below. This highlights the seasonal nature of application receipts as the bulk (7,134 or 77%) were received in the months May to August 2015.

Table 20

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Bursary applications	0	2,119	2,220	1,530	1,265	655	455	192	81	135	104	515	9,271
DSAs applications	5	33	62	23	49	12	38	13	15	0	0	6	256
Childcare applications	2	19	65	91	66	49	80	33	39	44	34	9	531
Correspondence	10	40	113	140	148	29	76	32	73	14	35	54	764

Table 21 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 14,541 in the 2011/12 academic year to 8,758 in the 2015/16 academic year.

Table 21

		2011/12		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
		UGD	PGD	UGD	PGD	UGD	PGD	UGD	PGD	UGD	PGD
Year of study	1	3,833	1,968	3,299	1,943	35	1,843	0	1,660	0	1,587
	2	3,561	1,583	3,265	1,801	2,778	1,948	2,561	1,448	2,677	1,496
	3	2,925	166	3,082	196	2,982	230	2,527	260	2,339	145
	4	373	34	445	42	406	34	422	56	363	32
	5	66	6	84	12	61	10	75	11	74	8
	6	16	4	19	6	17	10	20	2	20	3
	7	6	0	13	4	11	5	13	3	12	2
Total		10,780	3,761	10,207	4,004	6,290	4,080	5,618	3,440	5,485	3,273
		14,541		14,211		10,370		9,058		8,758	

Social Work Bursary cash payments

SWB cash payments in the 2015/16 financial year totalled just over £57m. Table 22 below summarises this by award element.

Table 22

Non-Means Tested Scheduled Termly Payments		
Award element	Number of students	Amount paid (£000s)
Undergraduate Basic Grant	7,686	23,243
Postgraduate Basic Grant	4,531	9,874
Total (non-means tested termly payments)	12,217	33,117
Means Tested Scheduled Termly Payments		
Maintenance Grant	4,218	7,719
Adult Dependent Allowance	348	510
Parents Learning Allowance	1,144	1,135
Childcare Allowance	567	1,840
Total (means tested termly payments)	6,277	11,204
One-off Payments		
Award Element	Number	Amount Paid
Disabled Students Allowances	313	676
Placement Travel Allowance	899	773
Tuition Fees	2,961	11,303
Total (one-off payments)	4,173	12,752
Grand Total – All Elements	22,667	57,073

Table 23 below shows the gradual reduction of overall expenditure due to the introduction of bursary capping.

Table 23

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Student bursary spend (£000s)	68,008	68,667	56,156	46,191	45,094
DSAs supplier spend (£000s)	459	1,125	674	756	676
Tuition fee spend (£000s)	13,114	13,578	13,883	12,348	11,303
Total (£000s)	81,581	83,370	70,713	59,295	57,073

Other key Social Work Bursaries work items processed

The volumes for all other work items processed for Social Work Bursaries are estimated for 2015/16 and are detailed in Table 24. This is due to the data not previously being collected and actual volumes will be provided in the 2016/17 report.

Table 24

Work Item	Processed
HEI Notification of Withdrawal, Resumption or Extension	239
Contact Centre Services (Student Helpline) Referrals	3,216
HEI Referrals (Emails and Correspondence)	200
General Correspondence	762
Integra Invoices (Tuition Fees and DSAs)	3,172
Disabled Students Allowances claims or associated correspondence	1,690
Appeals	17
Stage 0 Complaints	18
Stage 1 Complaints	0
Stage 2 Complaints	0
Ombudsman Cases	3
High Level Correspondence	11
MP Queries	1
Parliamentary Questions	0

Table 25

Table 25 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 2015/16 financial year.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Calls to CCS	1,331	2,087	1,734	1,897	2,033	3,889	3,828	1,544	994	1,921	1,531	1,382	24,171
Emails to CCS	174	243	247	263	255	421	431	221	159	258	238	221	3,131
Facebook queries	143	221	165	130	142	181	139	52	23	85	61	75	1,417
Emails to SWB team	292	583	849	1,104	1,003	1,360	1,193	523	550	728	101	54	8,340
Other correspondence	173	40	113	140	148	29	76	63	73	14	35	179	1,083

Table 26 below shows the percentage of the types of query the Customer Contact Centre received.

Table 26

Type of query	Percentage of overall queries	Breakdown of query	Percentage of overall queries
Bursary assessments	16%	Application progress	16%
Childcare Allowance	15%	When will I be paid my Childcare Allowance?	12%
		Am I eligible to apply for Childcare Allowance?	3%
DSA	8%	How to apply	1%
		DSA evidence	6%
		Do I need to reapply?	1%
Eligibility	4%		
Extended funding	4%		
Repeat funding	1%		
Provisional assessments	0.5%		
Overpayments	2.5%	Method of repayment	2%
		Resuming debtor	0.5%
Funding capping	5%	Am I on the list?	4%
		What is the criteria?	1%
Form completion	3%		
Change of address	1%		
Other SWB	13.5%		
Reference number	0.5%		
Payment query	13.5%	When are payments made?	13.5%
Enrolment query	4%	Have we got the confirmation?	3.5%
		When will we receive the confirmation?	0.5%
Prospective students	5%	What might I be entitled to?	3.5%
		When can I apply?	1.5%
Not SWB	3%		
Call backs	0.15%		
Chancellor's speech	0.25%		
Language line transfer	0.1%		

Social Work Bursaries Equal Opportunities Monitoring

An *Equal Opportunities monitoring form* is included in bursary application forms, and students are given the opportunity to complete and submit this. The information is compiled anonymously and below is a summary of a high level analysis.

- Of the 9,271 bursary applications received, 5,324 contained completed *Equal Opportunities monitoring forms*, which is 57.24%.
- Of these, 4,899 (92.02%) stated that they wished to declare information.
- Of these, 431 (8.08%) did not wish to declare information.

Not all students choose to complete the *Equal Opportunities monitoring form* and therefore the information gathered does not represent the full population of students each year.

The results collected from the *Equal Opportunities monitoring form* are summarised in Tables 27-29 below.

Table 27

Questions asked with % of respondents:	
Gender	87.48%
Age Group	86.39%
Ethnic Group	91.23%
Religion	89.95%
Sexual Orientation	92.16%
Disability	89.69%

Table 28

What is your gender?		Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?	
Female	79.70%	Heterosexual/Straight	83.40%
Male	12.25%	Lesbian/Gay	2.16%
Prefer not to say	7.98%	Bisexual	1.69%
Transgender	0.08%	Prefer not to say	12.75%
Which age group applies to you?		Are you a disabled person as defined by the Equality Act 2010?	
18-24	33.83%	No	81.50%
25-34	30.84%	Yes	8.81%
35-44	19.55%	Prefer not to say	9.69%
45-54	7.89%		
55-64	0.53%		
65+	0.02%		
Prefer not to say	7.34%		

Table 29

What is your ethnic group?		What is your religion or belief?	
White	0.21%	Christianity	43.41%
Black or Black British – African	16.30%	No Religion	39.95%
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1.01%	Prefer not to say	10.05%
Prefer not to say	8.77%	Islam	4.24%
Mixed	0.11%	Other	0.79%
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2.07%	Hinduism	0.36%
Asian or Asian British – Other	0.00%	Sikhism	0.45%
Black or Black British – Caribbean	5.60%	Buddhism	0.60%
Other Ethnic Group	65.31%	Judaism	0.13%
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.51%	Jainism	0.02%
Asian or Asian British – Chinese	0.11%		
Black or Black British – Other	0.00%		

The answer boxes for the ethnic groups in Table 29 above were in free text format and the responses that did not match the specific ethnic groups have been recorded as 'Other'. From the 2016/17 academic year, tick boxes were introduced to capture these answers, following the ONS standard.

7. 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 30 details the ESG rates set for the 2015/16 academic year.

Table 30

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 Has registered private company status	£20
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 31 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 31

Payment of ESG to HEIs	
First instalment	75
Second instalment	80
Students funded	11,590
Audit checks	1,387

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

Table 32 below details the expenditure paid through the ESG to HEIs.

Table 32

Education Support Grant expenditure								
Financial Year	2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
	First instalment (£000s)	Second instalment (£000s)						
Placement Fees	13,160	14,084	11,241	11,563	9,513	8,817	6,523	8,463
HEI Admin Fees	1,151	1,251	1,082	1,154	951	882	694	846
Skills Development Days	0	198	58	1,158	1,050	866	670	790
Service User & Carer Funding	0	607	0	599	0	591	0	592
Totals	14,311	16,140	12,381	14,474	11,514	11,156	7,887	10,691

8. Fraud, Error and Debt (FRED)

The NHSBSA exists 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 made a false claim on their application for an NHS Bursary, claiming for their son as dependant. However, the son had not been in the country since 2006. The amount of bursary the student was paid prior to the fraud being reported was £9,667.
2. 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 and sanctions are being progressed.
3. 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.
4. A student submitted false invoices as part of the evidence for the childcare costs they had incurred. The student admitted the offences and offered to repay the money owed (just under £7000) and the file has been submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to explore criminal sanction.

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 are 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 respond to requests for information from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Local Authorities and other bodies where benefit fraud is suspected.

Error

The average error rates identified through the current quality assurance processes are:

- 14.6% of assessed NHS Bursary applications contain errors of which 7.43% had a financial impact on awards. Of the 7.43%, 1% of these have a financial value of £15 or less. The financial impact of errors is within a 1% variance of the total bursary expenditure.
- Less than 2% 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 2016 was:

- £12.9m gross
- £10m provision for bad debt¹⁰
- £2.9m net
- £3.4m recovered

The debt position for Social Work Bursaries as at 31 March 2016:

- £1.8m gross
- £1m provision for bad debt
- £770,00 net
- £307,00 recovered

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

- Childcare Allowance reconciliation
- Bursary data exchange with the Home Office
- Monthly quality checks of processed work
- High risk checks (mainly high value awards and complex casework)
- Pre-payment checks
- Post-payment checks

¹⁰ The amount we estimate will not be recovered.

9. 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 student 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 1

During the period 1 April to 30 June 2015, a sample of 30 NHS Bursary payments to students were tested. The total value of sampled bursary payments tested within this period was £17,099.31. There were five observations noted and there were no monetary errors identified, giving an accuracy rate within the period of 100%.

The overall rating for the period was moderate - the control environment assures delivery of objectives.

Audit 2

During the period 1 July to 30 September 2015, a sample of 30 NHS Bursary payments made to students were tested. The total value of sampled bursary payments tested within this period was £15,772.21. Three observations were noted during the course of the work,

of which one observation found two monetary errors, giving an accuracy rate within the period of 99.94%.

The overall rating for the period was moderate - the control environment assures delivery against objectives.

Audit 3

During the period of 1 October 2015 to 31 December 2015, a sample of 30 NHS Bursary payments paid to students were tested. The total value of sampled bursary payments tested within this period was £12,852.02. Six observations were noted during the course of the work, of which one observation found a monetary error, giving an accuracy rate within the period of 97.64%.

The overall rating for the period was moderate - the control environment assures delivery against objectives.