

SDR 50/2012

28 March 2012

Financial Contingency Funds in Wales, 2010/11

This Statistical First Release presents information on the number of Financial Contingency Funds (FCFs) awarded to students in Further Education Institutions (FEIs), Welsh for Adult Centres (WfA), and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Wales in academic year 2010/11. The release is based on data provided by education institutions throughout Wales.

FCF provides funding to HE and FE institutions in Wales for the purpose of establishing discretionary funds to be used to provide financial assistance to those students who need extra help to meet costs which are not already being met from other sources of funding; to provide emergency payments in respect of unexpected crises; and to assist in cases where a student may be considering leaving their course of study because of financial problems. A student can apply to their university or college at the start of their course, or during their course, if financial problems arise. Support may be in the form of a discretionary award or a repayable loan.

Key Results:

In 2010/11, the total FCF budget allocated to HEIs was reduced to £2.1m as a result of enhancements in the package of other support available to HE students. In past years, this has been relatively consistent at around £5m. Therefore care should be taken when making direct comparisons between 2010/11 and previous years' figures with regard to total expenditure. Applications to FEIs rose compared with the previous year although the number of individual awards given out decreased by 7 per cent.

Financial Contingency Funds in Welsh HEIs:

- The number of applications for financial assistance from Financial Contingency Funds fell by 28 per cent to 7,260 compared with the previous year. The number of successful applications fell to 5,730 (31 per cent decrease) compared with the previous year (*Table 1*).
- 6,055 individual awards were funded in 2010/11, compared with 9,000 in the previous year (a decrease of 33 per cent) (*Table 3*).
- The total amount allocated to institutions was £2.1m (*Table 1*).

Financial Contingency Funds in Welsh FEIs:

- The number of applications for financial assistance from Financial Contingency Funds rose slightly by 1 per cent to 21,115 compared with the previous year. The number of successful applications fell to 18,815 (3 per cent decrease) compared with the previous year (*Table 5*).
- 23,580 individual awards were funded in 2010/11, compared with 25,405 in the previous year (a decrease of 7 per cent) (*Table 7*).
- The total amount allocated to institutions was £7.0m (*Table 5*).

Applications and Awards: An individual may make multiple applications for funds, and a single successful application may lead to multiple awards of funds under different categories (for example, childcare and transport). Therefore the number of awards may exceed the number of applications.

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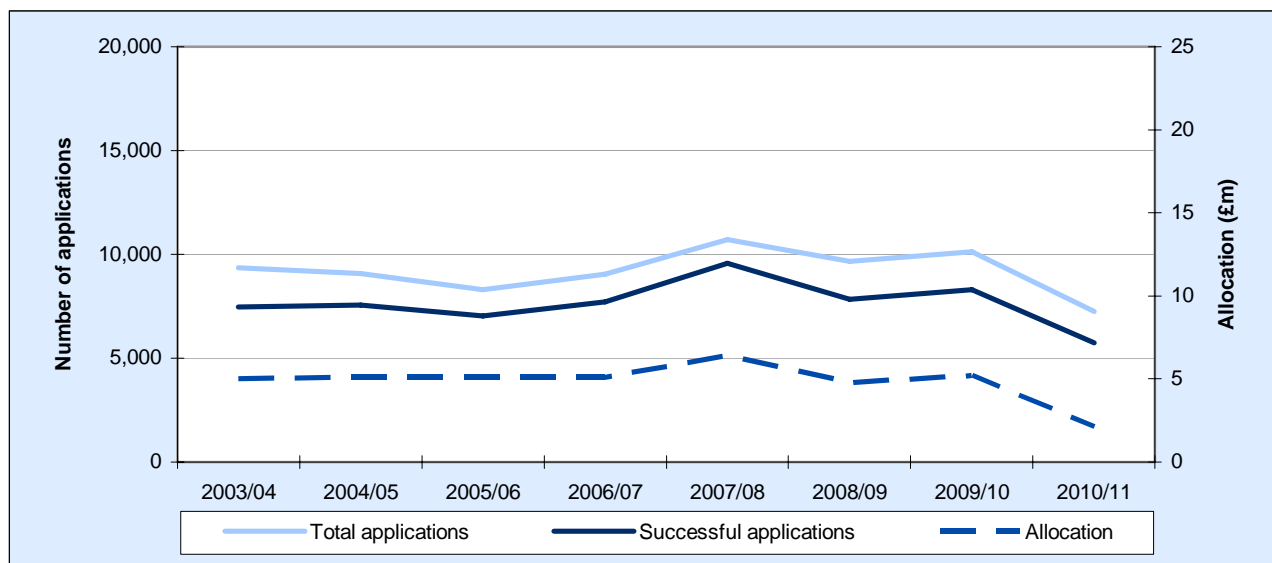
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Llywodraeth Cymru
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Financial Contingency Funds in Welsh Higher Education Institutions¹

Chart 1: FCF applications from students at Welsh HEIs (a)

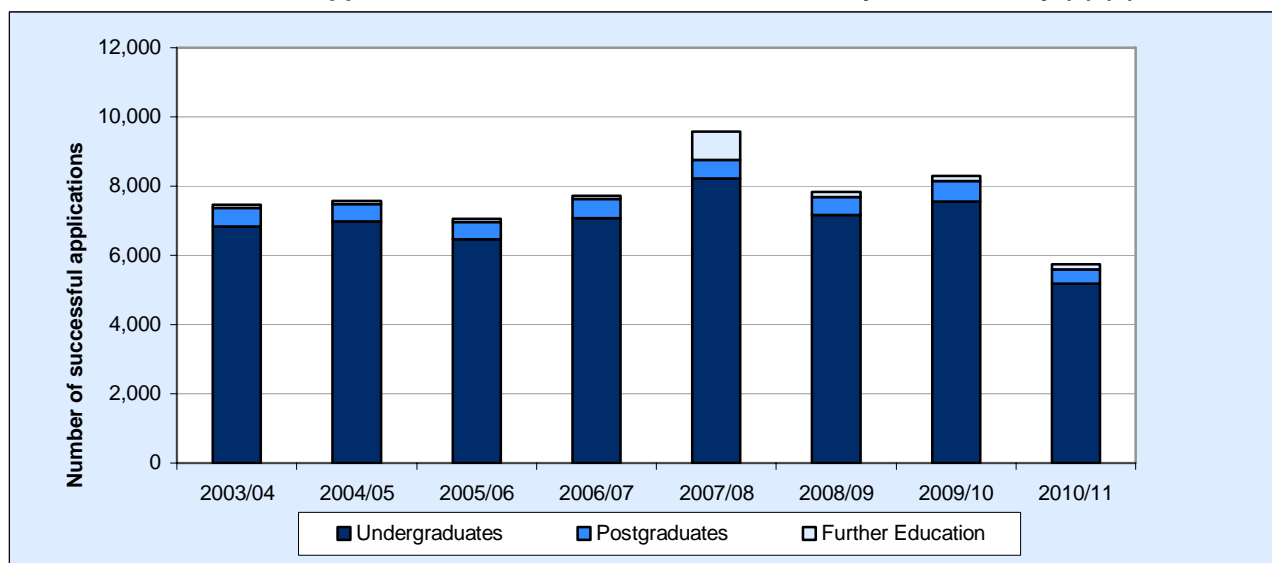


(a) Data from 2006/07 onwards were collected by the Welsh Government. Earlier data were supplied by HEFCW.

In 2010/11, the total FCF budget allocated to HEIs was £2.1m, compared to £5.2m in 2009/10 (a decrease of 60 per cent) (*Table 1*).

Within the context of reduced allocation, there were 7,260 applications for FCFs in 2010/11, a fall of 28 per cent compared with the previous academic year. The number of successful applications fell to 5,730, a 31 per cent decrease compared with the previous year.

Chart 2: Successful FCF applications from students at Welsh HEIs by level of study (a) (b)



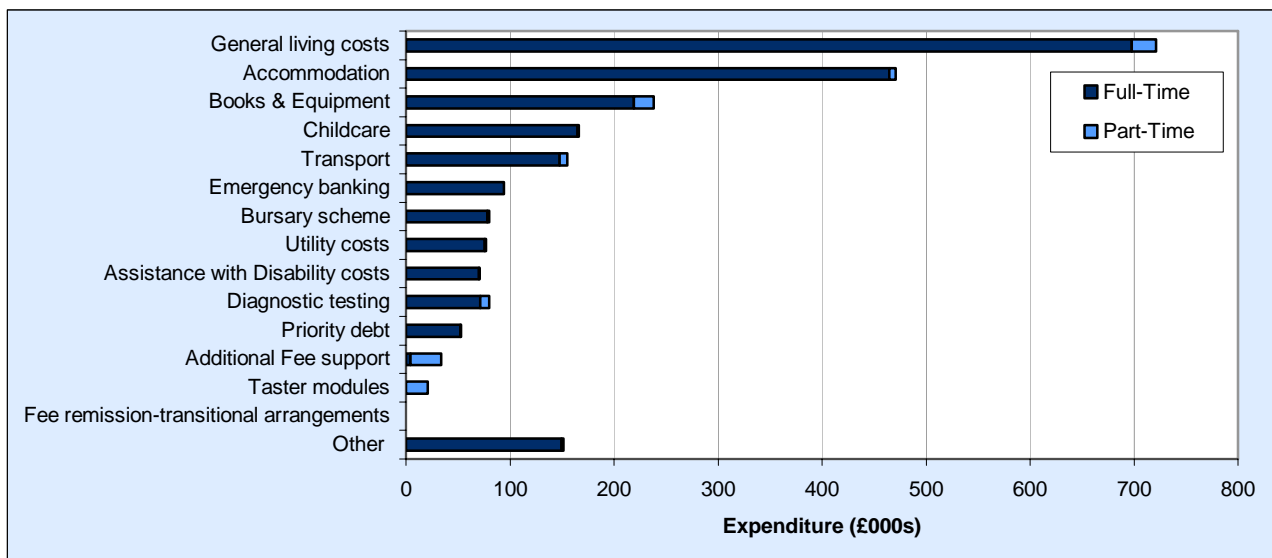
(a) Data from 2006/07 onwards were collected by the Welsh Government. Earlier data were supplied by HEFCW.

(b) See notes for explanation on increase in successful applications in 2007/08 relating to FE.

There were 6,520 applications for financial assistance from undergraduates, of which 5,195 (80 per cent) were successful. Similarly, there were 580 applications from postgraduates, of which 400 (69 per cent) were successful. There were 160 applications from FE students, of which 135 (84 per cent) were successful (*Table 1*).

¹ Includes awards by FEIs delivering franchised higher education courses on behalf of a HEI. FCFs were allocated to 12 HEIs and 6 FEIs in 2010/11.

Chart 3: FCF expenditure in Welsh HEIs by category and mode of study, 2010/11

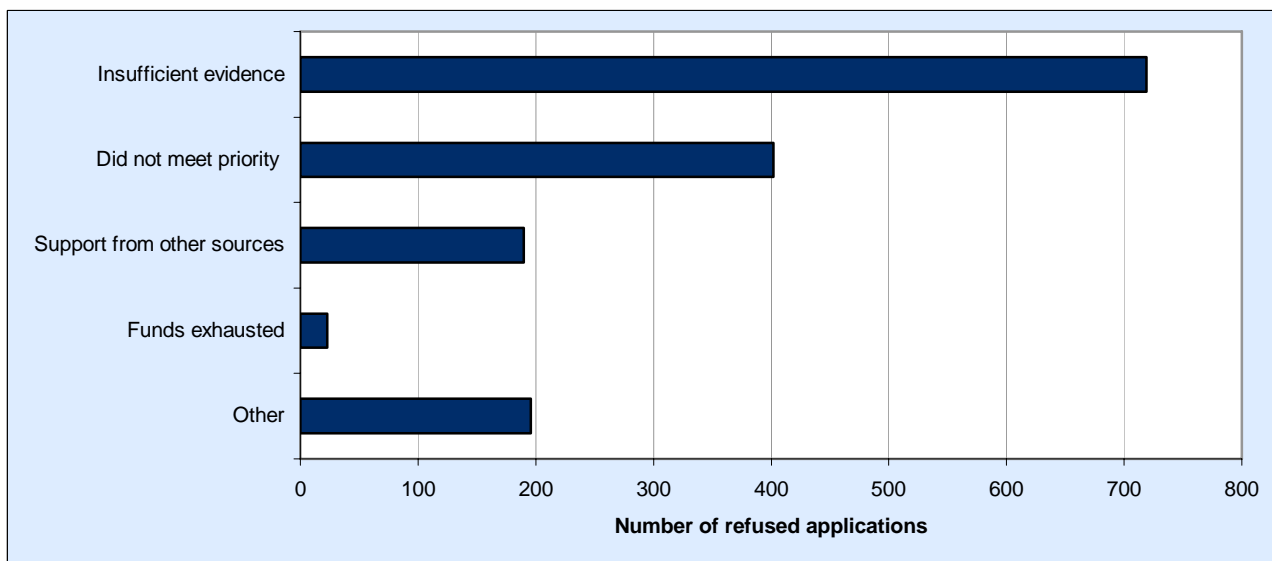


A total of 6,055 individual awards were funded (33 per cent less than in the previous year), which amounted to £2.4m (50 per cent less than in the previous year).

Two categories accounted for 49 per cent of expenditure on FCFs: general living costs (30 per cent) and accommodation (20 per cent). The average expenditure per award was greatest for accommodation costs (£620), followed by priority debt (£520) (Table 3).

95 per cent of expenditure was on awards for applicants studying full-time.

Chart 4: Reason for refused assistance with regard to FCF applications in Welsh HEIs, 2010/11



1,530 applications (21 per cent) for financial assistance were refused, 3 percentage points higher when compared with the previous year. The overall total of the number of reasons may be greater than the number of refused applications, since more than one reason may be given for any particular refusal. It is for each institution to consider applications and make payments to eligible students, subject to terms and conditions provided by the Welsh Government. However, the Welsh Government indicates that institutions should prioritise help to students who fall into certain priority groups (Notes section 2. Eligibility Criteria).

The most common reason for refusal of assistance (for 47 per cent of refusals) was that there was insufficient evidence of financial hardship. Only 2 per cent of refusals were due to funds being exhausted, with four institutions having to refuse assistance because of this.

Table 1: Numbers of FCF applications and successful applications in Welsh HEIs

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Numbers applied for funds	10,705	9,670	10,120	7,260
Numbers allocated funds				
Undergraduates (UG)	8,215	7,160	7,565	5,195
Postgraduates (PG)	535	525	585	400
Further Education (FE)	815	150	150	135
Total	9,565	7,835	8,295	5,730
<i>Numbers refused assistance</i>	<i>1,140</i>	<i>1,835</i>	<i>1,820</i>	<i>1,530</i>
Total amount distributed (£000s)	6,220	4,693	4,798	2,413
<i>Total allocated to institutions (£000s) (a)</i>	<i>6,403</i>	<i>4,774</i>	<i>5,224</i>	<i>2,103</i>

Source: Welsh Government

(a) Amount distributed may exceed allocation since it may include interest earned and monies carried forward from the previous academic year. See notes for further information on the allocations.

Although there was a decrease in the number of applicants applying for FCFs in 2010/11, the proportion of successful applications has remained relatively consistent with that of last year, with approximately 80 per cent of applications being successful.

Table 2: Numbers of successful applications for FCFs from students in Welsh HEIs by age and mode of study

	Full-time				Part-time			
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Under 21	2,710	2,505	2,210	1,605	20	20	60	10
21-24	2,960	2,430	2,835	1,860	75	70	85	50
25 and over	2,565	2,155	2,545	1,575	1,235	655	565	630
Total	8,235	7,090	7,590	5,040	1,330	745	705	690

Source: Welsh Government

88 per cent of successful applications were from full-time students. 1,620 successful applications (28 per cent) came from students aged under 21, 1,910 (33 per cent) from students aged between 21 and 24 and 2,205 (38 per cent) from students aged 25 or over. These are similar proportions to those seen last year.

Table 3: Awards from FCFs and expenditure in Welsh HEIs by category of award, 2010/11

	Number of awards	Expenditure (£000s)	Average Expenditure (£)
Assistance with Disability costs	185	71	390
Fee remission-transitional arrangements	0	0	0
Books & Equipment	880	238	270
Accommodation	760	471	620
Childcare	350	166	480
Transport	445	155	350
Utility costs	185	77	410
General living costs	1,385	721	520
Bursary scheme	170	80	470
Priority debt	100	53	520
Diagnostic testing	320	80	250
Additional Fee support	135	34	250
Taster modules	345	21	60
Emergency banking	305	94	310
Other	480	151	310
Total (a)	6,055	2,413	400

Source: Welsh Government

(a) Total number of awards may not match total number of successful applications (as shown in Table 1, Table 2 and Table 4) since more than one category can be applied for on a single application.

Although awards for childcare saw a 2 per cent increase compared with 2009/10, there was a 49 per cent decrease in the actual expenditure, to £166k. Expenditure on transport more than halved as a result of a similar decrease in the number of awards when compared with the previous year.

Table 4: Expenditure on successful FCF applications in Welsh HEIs by award size, 2010/11

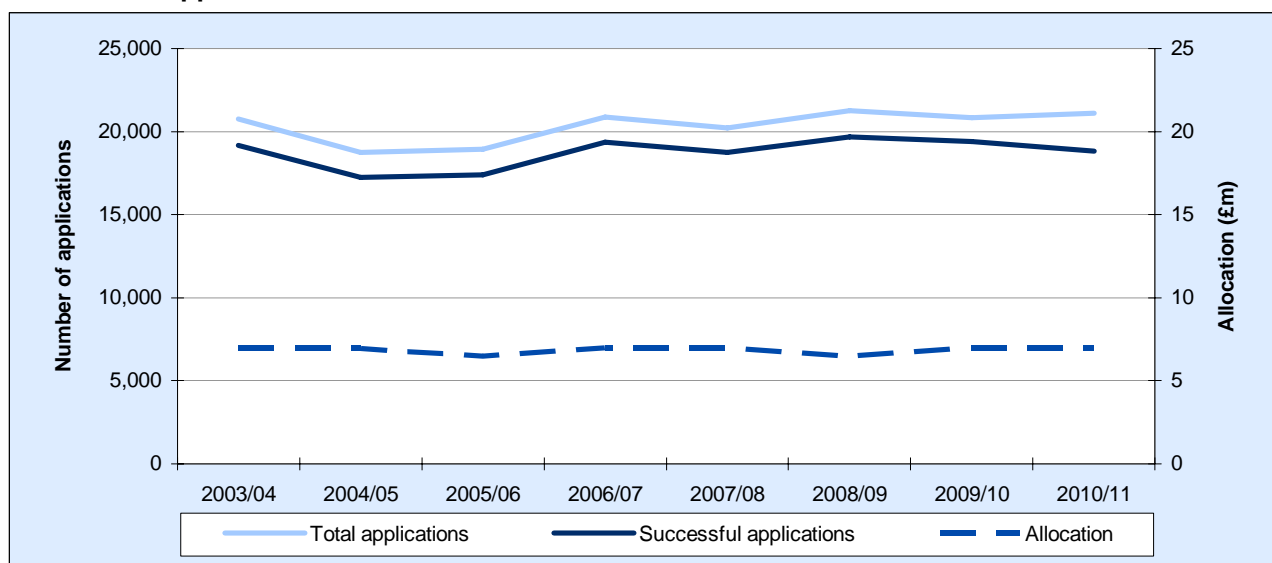
	Number of successful applications	Expenditure (£000s)	Average Expenditure (£)
Less than £100	720	38	50
£100 - £999	4,465	1,606	360
£1,000 - £3,499	545	751	1,380
£3,500 and over	5	18	3,630
Total	5,730	2,413	420

Source: Welsh Government

Of the 5,730 successful applications, 4,465 (78 per cent) of these were awarded FCF funding between £100 and £999, averaging £360 each. On average, successful applicants were each awarded FCF funding of £420 in 2010/11, compared to £580 awarded at the same point in the 2009/10 academic year.

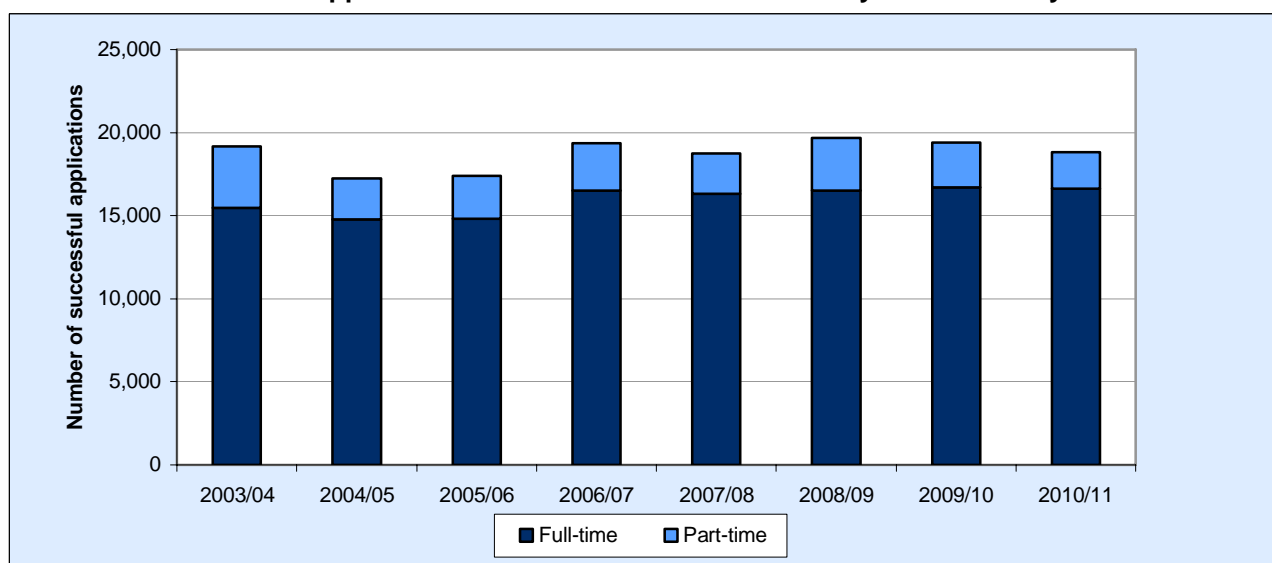
Financial Contingency Funds in Welsh Further Education Institutions²

Chart 5: FCF applications from students at Welsh FEIs



In 2010/11, there were 21,115 applications for FCFs, a slight increase of 1 per cent when compared with the previous academic year. The number of successful applications fell to 18,815, a 3 per cent decrease compared with the previous year (*Table 5*).

Chart 6: Successful FCF applications from students at Welsh FEIs by mode of study

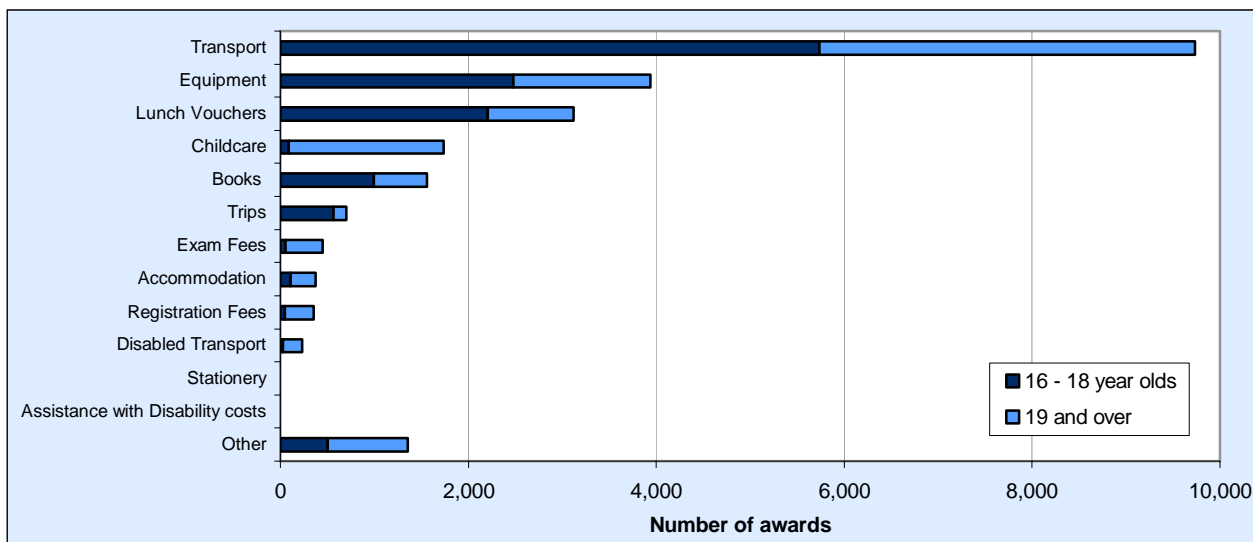


In 2010/11 the number of successful applications from full-time students slightly decreased by 1 per cent compared with the previous year. The number of successful applications from part-time students also decreased by 18 per cent compared with the previous year.

With regard to full-time students, 61 per cent of successful applications came from those aged between 16 and 18. For part-time students, only 5 per cent of successful applications were from this age group (*Table 6*).

² FCFs were allocated to 21 FEIs and 6 WfA Centres in 2010/11.

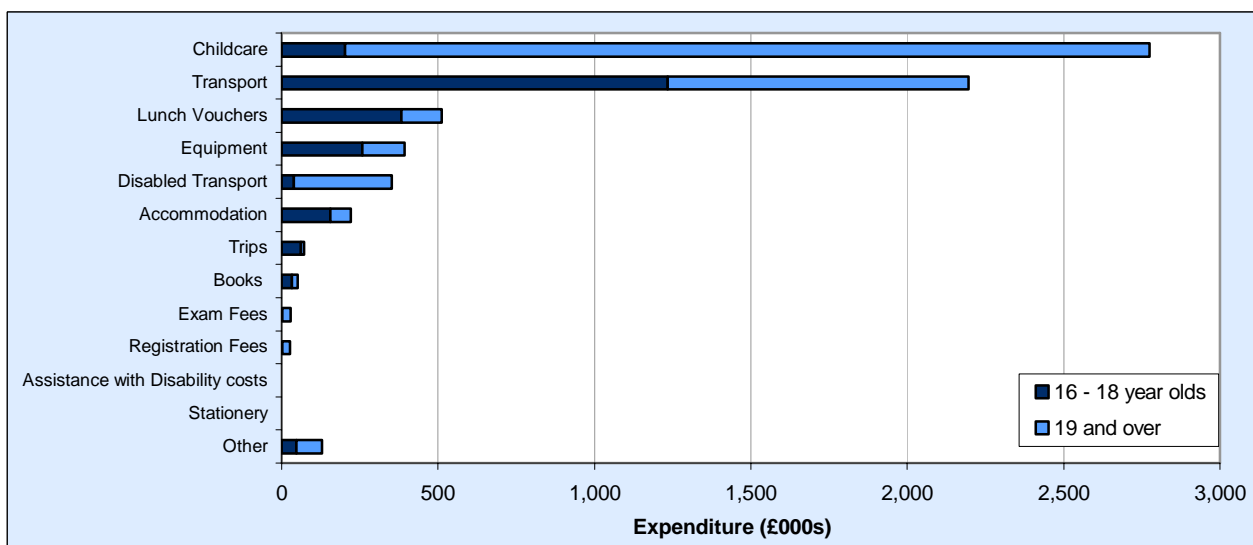
Chart 7: Number of awards from FCFs in Welsh FEIs by category and age of applicant, 2010/11



A total of 23, 580 individual awards were funded (7 per cent less than in the previous year), which amounted to £6.8m (a slight increase compared with the previous year).

Of the 9,735 awards given out for transport costs, 5,740 (59 per cent) of these awards were given to students aged between 16 and 18. Conversely, of the 1,735 awards given out for childcare costs, 1,650 (95 per cent) of these awards were given to students aged 19 and over (Table 8).

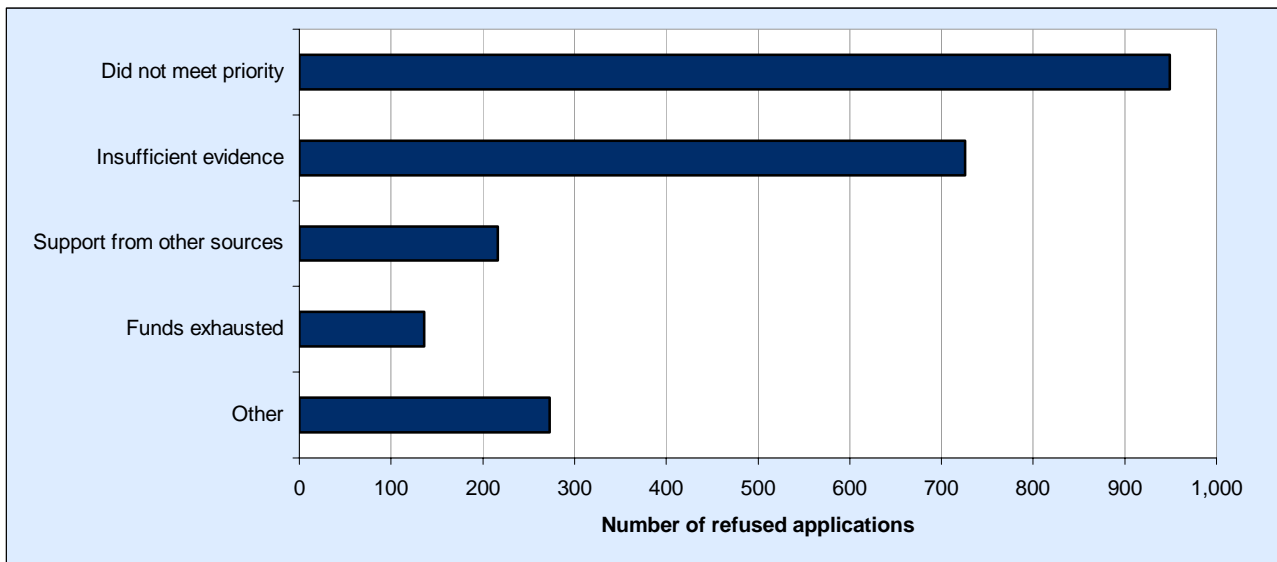
Chart 8: Expenditure of FCFs in Welsh FEIs by category and age of applicant, 2010/11



Two categories accounted for 74 per cent of expenditure on FCFs: childcare (41 per cent) and transport (33 per cent). The average expenditure per award was greatest for childcare costs (£1,600), followed by disabled transport (£1,500) (Table 7).

Despite only accounting for 7 per cent of all awards, childcare accounted for 41 per cent of overall expenditure. Amongst those aged 19 and over, childcare actually accounted for 59 per cent of all expenditure. Amongst 16 to 18 year olds, transport accounted for 51 per cent of all expenditure (Table 8).

Chart 9: Reason for refused assistance with regard to FCF applications in Welsh FEIs, 2010/11



2,300 applications for financial assistance were refused. On the data collection forms completed by FEIs, only the main reason for refusal is stated, even though there may actually have been more than one reason given. It is for each institution to consider applications and make payments to eligible students, subject to terms and conditions provided by the Welsh Government. However, the Welsh Government indicates that institutions should prioritise help to students who fall into certain priority groups (*Notes section 2. Eligibility Criteria*).

The most common reason for refused assistance was for applications not meeting institutions' priorities for the use of the funds, which accounted for 41 per cent of refused applications, while 32 per cent of refusals were due to insufficient evidence of financial hardship. Only 6 per cent of refusals were due to funds being exhausted, with five institutions having to refuse assistance because of this; one institution accounted for 73 per cent of this total.

Table 5: Numbers of FCF applications and successful applications in Welsh FEIs (a)(b)

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Numbers applied for funds	20,225	21,240	20,845	21,115
Numbers allocated funds				
FE 16 to 18	12,215	11,085	11,070	10,325
FE 19 and over	6,525	8,600	8,320	8,490
HE	0	0	0	0
Total	18,740	19,685	19,390	18,815
<i>Numbers refused assistance</i>	<i>1,490</i>	<i>1,555</i>	<i>1,455</i>	<i>2,300</i>
Total amount distributed (£000s)	7,018	6,341	6,738	6,753
<i>Total allocated to institutions (£000s) (b)</i>	<i>7,000</i>	<i>6,500</i>	<i>7,000</i>	<i>7,000</i>

Source: Welsh Government

(a) 2008/09 data onwards were collected by the Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services. Earlier data were collected by the Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills.

(b) Amount distributed may exceed allocation since it may include interest earned and monies carried forward from the previous academic year. See notes for further information on the allocations.

Of the 18,815 successful applications in 2010/11, 10,325 (55 per cent) of these were from students aged between 16 and 18, and 8,490 (45 per cent) were from students aged 19 and over.

Table 6: Numbers of successful applications for FCFs from students in Welsh FEIs by age group and mode of study (a)

	Full-time				Part-time			
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
FE aged 16 to 18	11,900	10,860	10,980	10,210	315	230	90	115
FE aged 19 and over	4,405	5,640	5,720	6,400	2,120	2,960	2,605	2,085
HE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	16,300	16,500	16,695	16,610	2,435	3,185	2,695	2,205

Source: Welsh Government

(a) 2008/09 data onwards were collected by the Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services. Earlier data were collected by the Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills.

88 per cent of successful applications were from full-time students. 10,210 (61 per cent) of these full time applications came from students aged between 16 and 18.

Table 7: Awards from FCFs and expenditure in Welsh FEIs by category, 2010/11 (a)

	Number of Awards	Expenditure (£000s)	Average Expenditure (£)
Assistance with Disability costs	5	2	220
Books	1,560	51	30
Equipment	3,940	393	100
Accommodation	380	221	580
Childcare	1,735	2,775	1,600
Transport	9,735	2,195	230
Disabled Transport	235	352	1,500
Stationery (b)	10	0	50
Exam Fees	450	28	60
Registration Fees	355	27	80
Trips	705	71	100
Lunch Vouchers	3,120	511	160
Other	1,355	128	90
Total	23,580	6,753	290

Source: Welsh Government

(a) Total number of awards may not match total number of successful applications (as shown in Table 5 and Table 6) since more than one category can be applied for on a single application.

(b) Expenditure is less than £500 but not zero.

Two categories accounted for 58 per cent of the awards made. 41 per cent of awards were related to transport and 17 per cent related to equipment. On average, applicants were each awarded a FCF award of £290 in 2010/11, compared to £270 awarded at the same point in the 2009/10 academic year.

Table 8: Expenditure on awards in Welsh FEIs by category and age group, 2010/11 (a)

	Aged 16 to 18		Aged 19 and over	
	Number of Awards	Expenditure (£000s)	Number of Awards	Expenditure (£000s)
Assistance with Disability costs	*	1	*	1
Books	995	32	565	19
Equipment	2,480	259	1,460	134
Accommodation	110	156	265	65
Childcare	85	203	1,650	2,572
Transport	5,740	1,234	3,995	961
Disabled Transport	25	40	210	312
Stationery (b)	5	0	*	0
Exam Fees	50	3	400	25
Registration Fees	45	2	310	25
Trips	565	62	140	9
Lunch Vouchers	2,210	382	910	129
Other	505	47	855	81
Total	12,820	2,421	10,760	4,332

Source: Welsh Government

(a) Total number of awards may not match total number of successful applications (as shown in Table 5 and Table 6) since more than one category of award can be applied for on a single application.

(b) Expenditure is less than £500 but not zero.

Of the 23,580 awards given out, 10,760 (46 per cent) of these were given to those aged over 19. The total amount awarded to those aged over 19 was £4.3m, nearly twice the amount that was paid out to those aged between 16 and 18.

Table 9: Expenditure on successful FCF applications in Welsh FEIs by award size, 2010/11

	Number of successful applications	Expenditure (£000s)	Average Expenditure (£)
Less than £100	4,845	193	40
£100 - £999	12,945	3,318	260
£1,000 - £3,499	635	1,355	2,130
£3,500 and over	390	1,888	4,870
Total	18,815	6,753	360

Source: Welsh Government

Of the 18,815 successful applications, 12,945 (69 per cent) were awarded FCF funding between £100 and £999, averaging £260 each. On average, successful applicants were each awarded FCF funding of £360 in 2010/11, compared to £350 awarded at the same point in the 2009/10 academic year.

Annex 1: Notes

1. Policy/Operational Context

The first bulletin on FCFs in Wales related to academic year 2003/04 and was published in July 2006 after the Rees Review³ into funding of higher education in Wales recommended the publication of annual statistics on the take-up of all the different elements of the student support system.

FCF provide funding to HE and FE institutions in Wales for the purpose of establishing discretionary funds to be used to provide financial assistance to those students who need extra help to meet costs which are not already being met from other sources of funding; to provide emergency payments in respect of unexpected crises; and to assist in cases where a student may be considering leaving their course of study because of financial problems. It provides institutions with information in respect of policy and the administrative arrangements of such funding, and imposes requirements in respect of those arrangements.

A student can apply to their university or college at the start of their course, or during their course, if financial problems arise. Support may be in the form of a discretionary award or a repayable loan. FCFs are one element of a package of financial support available to eligible students at FEIs and HEIs, including Assembly Learning Grants and other maintenance and fee support. It should be noted that separate strands of targeted support are available to HE students, such as Disabled Students' Allowance, Childcare Grant, Parents' Learning Allowance, Adult Dependents' Grants and Travel Grant, but not for FE students.

One difference between FCFs and other student support is that FCFs are available to students based on their institution of study and not their country of domicile.

2. Eligibility Criteria

The Welsh Government (WG) annually provides institutions with information in respect of policy and the administrative arrangements of such funding, and imposes requirements in respect of those arrangements. It is for each institution to consider applications and make payments to eligible students, subject to these terms and conditions. However, the Welsh Government indicates that institutions should prioritise help to students who fall into the following priority groups:

- Students with children, especially lone parents;
- Other mature students, especially those with existing financial commitments, including priority debts;
- Students who need extra help with childcare costs;
- Disabled students, in particular those where the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is unable to meet particular costs and the institution has no legal responsibility to do so;
- Care leavers;
- Final year students who are in financial difficulty (including those unable to work due to academic pressures);
- Foyer residents and other homeless students. FCF support may be provided to a third party (such as a childcare provider), through the provision of items or services or in cash direct to the students. It may be in the form of an award or a repayable loan.

Part-time students must be studying at least 50% of a full-time course in an academic year (e.g. 60 credit points, where the full-time equivalent is 120) to qualify for help. An exception to this limit can be made in the case of disabled students, whose disability prevents them from studying at least 50% of a full-time course. These students are not eligible for DSAs and may need some additional support. These students must be studying for at least 25% (30 credits) of a full-time course.

Eligibility to apply does not guarantee awards will be made.

³ Recommendation 14, "Fair and flexible funding: a Welsh model to promote quality and access in higher education: report for the independent study into the devolution of the student support system and tuition fee regime in Wales" (*The Rees Review*) (2005).

3. Allocations

In 2010/11, the total FCF budget allocated to HEIs was reduced to £2.1m as a result of enhancements in the package of other support available to HE students. Since 2002/03 the funding levels allocated to HEIs had remained relatively consistent at around £5m. In 2007/08 however this increased to £6.4m to enable the targeted groups identified by the “Graham Review” of part-time student funding to receive additional support on a discretionary basis, pending the extension of targeted support on a statutory basis from the 2008/09 academic year. Therefore, care should be taken when making direct comparisons between 2007/08 and later years (2008/09 and 2009/10) with regard to total expenditure, part-time provision or FE provision.

In 2010/11, the total allocated to FEIs was £7.0m. Since 2003/04 the funding levels allocated to institutions have remained relatively consistent at around £7m. However, in 2005/06 the budget was actually £7m but the Welsh Government only received bids from FEIs totalling around £6.5m. In 2007/08, the budget was reduced by £0.5m as a contribution to the cost of introducing the Foundation Phase.

From 2008/09 onwards, the approach to calculating the FCF allocations to FEIs differs from that taken in previous years in that allocations were provided in one single payment (as opposed to the previous “two tranche” approach), and the 6 newly established WfA Centres were also allocated FCFs for the first time.

4. Rounding

In this release, changes have been made to how the figures are rounded in order to provide more accurate data. Most figures in this release have been rounded to the nearest five. Due to rounding the sums of rows or columns may not add to the total figure given. Numbers that are less than 5, but not zero, are represented by ‘*’. Expenditure data have been rounded to the nearest £1,000. Average expenditure data have been rounded to the nearest £10.

5. Key Quality Information

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability.

5.1 Relevance

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor educational trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. Some of the key users are:

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- Officials in the Welsh Government;
- Other government departments;
- Higher Education Institutions, Further Education Institutions, Welsh for Adult Centres and other representative bodies;
- Students, researchers, and academics;
- Wales Audit Office
- Individual citizens, private companies, and the media.

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- General background and research;
- Inclusions in reports and briefings;
- Advice to Ministers;
- To inform the education policy development and decision-making process in Wales.

5.2 Accuracy

Before any data is published, Statisticians within WG review the data and query any anomalies with the education institution concerned, and with colleagues from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Also see Section 7 for details of the data collection and validation process.

5.3 Timeliness and Punctuality

Knowledge and Analytical Services were responsible for collecting FCF data for 2010/11. This was done between October 2011 and January 2012. Knowledge and Analytical Services produced this release in March 2012, meeting the planned and pre-announced date of publication.

5.4 Accessibility and Clarity

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website.

5.5 Comparability

Table 3 shows the total number of awards given to students, where an award may be given to a student for more than one category, whereas Table 1, Table 2 and Table 4 refer to the number of successful students receiving an award. Therefore, not all tables are directly comparable.

Similarly, Table 7 and Table 8 show the total number of awards given to students, where an award may be given to a student for more than one category, whereas Table 5 and Table 6 refer to the number of successful students receiving an award. Therefore, not all tables are directly comparable.

Table 1 includes the overall FCF allocation to all institutions with a provision for Higher Education, along with the amount distributed from FCFs by those institutions.

Similarly, Table 5 includes the overall FCF allocation to all institutions with a provision for Further Education, including the Welsh for Adult Centres, along with the amount distributed from FCFs by those institutions.

In both Tables 1 and Table 5 the total amount distributed by institutions may exceed the total amount allocated to institutions in a given academic year. This is due to the fact that institutions can carry over up to a maximum of 10 per cent of their allocation from the previous year and use the interest earned on their funds.

In 2007/08, an increased HE allocation of £6.4m enabled targeted groups identified by the "Graham Review" of part-time student funding to receive additional support on a discretionary basis, pending the extension of targeted support on a statutory basis from the 2008/09 Academic Year. Therefore, care should be taken when making direct comparisons between 2007/08 and later years with regard to total expenditure or part-time provision.

In 2010/11, the total FCF budget allocated to HEIs was reduced to £2.1m. In past years, this had been relatively consistent at around £5m. Therefore care should be taken when making direct comparisons between 2010/11 and previous years' figures with regard to total expenditure.

The Scottish Government publish statistics relating to a similar scheme, namely the [Higher Education Discretionary and Childcare funds](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/10/26114650/29), covering 45 institutions. This is a link to the latest publication: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/10/26114650/29> (table 14)

6. Coverage

The data in this release reflects the final position at the end of the academic year. "Other" costs in HEIs in 2010/11 were made up of emergency loan payments and payments made to students who had reached their limit on their overdrafts. "Other" costs in FEIs in 2010/11 were made up of Bursary Payments, Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks, medical costs, and general living expenses.

7. Data Collection

7.1 Data Processing Cycle

At the end of December each year, each institution is required to present audited accounts in respect of the previous academic year, showing how the grant for FCFs was used. The data provided is subject to each institution's interpretation of the guidance notes for each table in the auditing return.

Previously ELWa and HEFCW officers have analysed these returns and provided the Welsh Government with a report during the spring on the use of the FCF in the previous academic year. Following the merging of ELWa into the Welsh Government in April 2006 the returns from FEIs were

collected by the Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills (formally known as DCELLS) for academic years 2006/07 and 2007/08.

All returns (for HEIs and FEIs) are now collected by the Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services. Any queries on the statistics on FCFs for higher education and further education should be directed to post16ed.stats@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

7.2 Mode of Data Collection

Data is collected from FEIs, WfA Centres and HEIs via Excel spreadsheets which are provided by the Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services. Feedback from respondents suggests this method is the most useful. The spreadsheets allow respondents to validate some data before returning the spreadsheet back to Knowledge and Analytical Services. Respondents are also given an opportunity to include contextual information in the spreadsheet. This ensures that the data received by Knowledge and Analytical Services is already of a high quality. Examples of validation checks within the forms include cross checks with other tables within the form and checks to ensure data are within predefined tolerances.

7.3 Validation and Verification

Once data is received, it goes through further validation and verification checks, for example:

- Allocation given to education institution;
- Arithmetic consistency checks;
- Thorough tolerance checks;
- Cross checks with data from other sources, with regard to unspent allocations;
- Verification that data outside of tolerances are actually correct.

Knowledge and Analytical Service does not input any data into institutional spreadsheets and insists that the education institution make the relevant changes and resubmit the spreadsheet. This ensures local ownership of the data.

8. Further Information

Previously published releases can be found on the [Statistics for Wales](#) website.

Related articles

Statistical Releases on other strands of student support in Wales are available via the following link: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/theme/post16ed/student-finance/?lang=en>