

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT - RESULTS

Title of Policy	Care Experienced Bursary (CEB) increase to £8,100 and introduction in Further Education (FE)
Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy	<p>Relevant National Outcomes: "We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation" "Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens."</p> <p>At present, students in Higher Education (HE) can access a Care Experienced Bursary of £7,625. Students in FE currently access the maximum busray award of £4,185.</p> <p>The desired outcome is to increase the CEB to £8,100 and make it available to students in both HE and FE.</p>
Directorate: Division: team	<p>Advanced Learning and Science Directorate. Higher Education and Science: Student Support Review Team</p>

Executive summary

A review of the increase and extension of the CEB was carried out, of which this EQIA forms a part.

The EQIA identified that increasing the level of CEB in HE and introducing the CEB to FE, in general is seen as a positive change for all equality groups. It helps to break down the financial barriers faced by Care-Experienced

students throughout their education and beyond, and supports retention for those currently accessing a University place.

The EQIA identified a potential negative impact with regards to the protected characteristic of Age. Students above the age of 26 would not see an increase in the support available to them, as this group do not meet the eligibility criteria for the CEB. In addition, those aged 16-19 may be adversely affected due to a potential reduction in the funding received from their Local Authority.

The impact on this group of students was assessed as part of the Equality Impact Analysis and any outstanding risks were mitigated.

Background

At present, eligible care experienced HE students, aged 26 and under, can access a non-repayable bursary of £7,625. Those care experienced students in HE above the age threshold can access the standard student support package of bursary and loan. In FE, care experienced students currently access the maximum available bursary award of £4,185.

The Independent Review of Student Support provided recommendations to Ministers on 20th November 2017. Following the recommendations made by the Review, the First Minister announced on the 9th June 2018, that the £5.2m additional funding, committed in the 2018/19 budget, would be used to increase Further and Higher Education CEB to £8,100.

This was announced alongside other commitments, as a first step towards the Review's recommendation to have a minimum income of £8,100 in both Further and Higher Education.

This contributes to the following national outcomes:

- We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

The Scope of the EQIA

The policy has relevance to the protected characteristic of age.

As the introduction and increase of the CEB is intended as a positive change for all prospective care experienced students, it is considered a concise and focused Equality Impact Assessment is proportionate in these circumstances.

Data provided by SAAS shows that in the academic year 2017/18, 565 HE students are in receipt of the CEB. FES data provided by SFC shows there were 3,825 care experienced students in FE, 2,605 of those students were 26 and under.

The EQIA considered; key data regarding the age and gender of HE students in receipt of the CEB in the academic year 2017/18; key data regarding age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and religion/belief of the care experienced students in FE.

However, the increase to the CEB and introduction of the CEB into FE will apply to all eligible care experienced students, irrespective of the protected characteristics and is therefore seen as a positive change for all.

Key Findings

The EQIA identified that there are gaps in the information available relating to the protected characteristics of care experienced students both in HE and FE, and therefore the impact that the increased bursary level will have on those protected characteristics.

However, increasing the level of CEB in HE and introducing the CEB to FE, in general, is seen as a positive change for all equality groups.

The EQIA identified a potential negative impact with respect to the protected characteristic of Age. Students above the age of 26, would not see an increase in the support available to them, as this group do not meet the eligibility criteria for the CEB. In addition those aged 16-19 may be adversely affected due to a potential reduction in the funding received from their Local Authority.

The impact on this group of students was assessed as part of the Equality Impact Analysis, which highlighted that for those over 26, the position was justified. This was on the basis that the age cut off for eligibility was given careful consideration and was based on a range of evidence and discussions with stakeholders, which highlighted that the age 26 cap aligns with related legislation for care leavers to provide 'continuing care' to care leavers up to

the age of 26 – a provision that received cross-party support in the Scottish Parliament.

Section 30 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 gives Local Authorities the power to provide financial assistance towards the education or training expenses of young care experienced people. As section 30 gives Local Authorities a power rather than a duty to provide financial assistance, the Scottish Government is limited as to how it can direct Local Authorities in their implementation of this legislation.

However, the risk of students aged 16-19 receiving a reduction in funding offered by their Local Authority was mitigated by sending a Policy Note from the Deputy First Minister, to Local Authority Chief Executives, explaining that the policy intention of the CEB was not to replace any other financial support given to this group, rather to add value to the existing support provided by Local Authorities and asked that this was cascaded to front line practitioners.

In addition, the Scottish Government, COSLA and CELCIS also collaborated to produce a FAQs document on the CEB, to be issued to front line practitioners. The FAQ provides clear and concise information on the CEB policy, including the policy rationale, the overall policy intention and our corporate parenting duties towards students with experience of care.

Recommendations and Conclusion

In conclusion, positive impacts as a result of increasing and extending the CEB, have been identified for care experienced students in all equality groups. Any adverse impacts have been mitigated by the distribution of the Policy note from the Deputy First Minister and the CEB FAQ document produced by COSLA, CELCIS and Scottish Government officials.

SAAS and SFC will continue to gather statistical data on student applications for bursaries and we will be able to monitor the impact of the changes to the CEB on relevant groups going forward.

The HE and FE student support package in Scotland will be subject to ongoing monitoring by the Colleges, Young Workforce and SFC Sponsorship division and the Higher Education and Science division.