

SDR 175/2012

18 October 2012

Assembly Learning Grants Awarded to Welsh Domiciled Students in Further Education, 2011/12

This Statistical First Release presents information on the number of Assembly Learning Grants (ALGs) awarded in 2011/12 to Further Education (FE) students, as at the end of July 2012. The release is based on data provided by the Student Loans Company (SLC) and is correct as at 6 August 2012. Statistics on ALGs for Higher Education (HE) students are published separately by SLC.

The ALG FE is an income-assessed grant that was introduced to encourage people aged 19 or over and living in Wales to continue with their education. Students can receive payments of up to £1,500 if they are in full-time education or up to £750 if they are in part-time education.

Key results:

There was an increase in the number of successful applications in 2011/12 compared with 2010/11 and previous years. This resulted in £8.3 million being paid out in ALGs to FE students in 2011/12, compared to the £7.7 million that was paid out in 2010/11.

- In total, 8,885 students in FE applied for an ALG in 2011/12 and of these 7,825 applications were successful; an increase of 3 per cent and 7 per cent respectively when compared with 2010/11 and a continuation of the increases seen each year since 2006/07.
- The breakdown of applications across full-time and part-time students was similar to recent years. 6,655 (85 per cent) of successful applications were from full-time students and 775 (10 per cent) of successful applications were from part-time students.
- The proportion of applications made that are successful is increasing, driven by an increase in the proportion of successful applications from part-time students. Successful applications* for 2011/12 equate to 88 per cent of applications received. This proportion has increased steadily from 79 per cent in 2008/09 and for part-time students the rate has increased from 74 per cent in 2008/09 to 88 per cent in 2011/12. The proportion of successful applications from full-time students remains very high at around 98 per cent.-
- 5,455 (82 per cent) of successful full-time applications and 680 (88 per cent) of successful part-time applications were from students with a residual income of £6,120 or less, and were therefore awarded the full grant amounts of £1,500 and £750 respectively. These proportions have changed little since 2008/09, however the residual income bands have changed over time. [See Notes section 1.2]
- 2,855 (43 per cent) of successful full-time applications and 135 (18 per cent) of successful part-time applications were from students aged 21 or under.

* 395 (5 per cent) of successful applications were from students where the mode of study was 'unknown'. [See Notes section 5.5]

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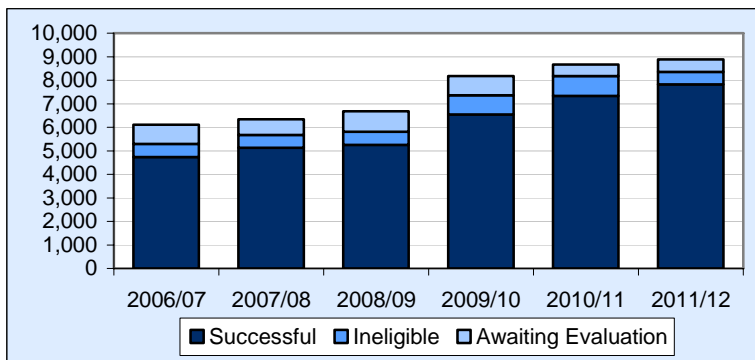
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Chart 1: Applications for ALG FE by application workstage

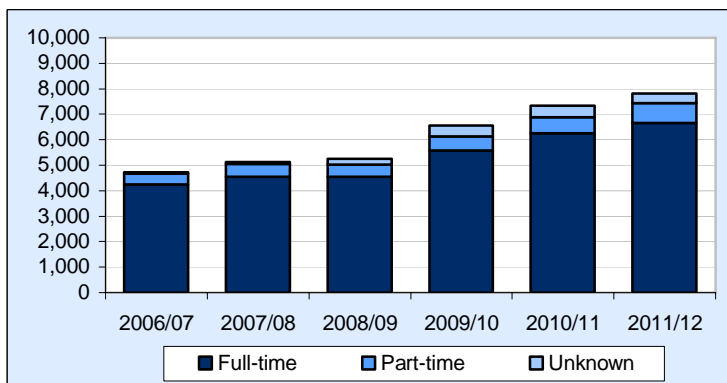


Source: Student Loans Company

In 2011/12 there were 8,885 applications for an ALG FE, a rise of 3 per cent compared with the previous academic year, following increases each year since 2006/07. The number of successful applications rose to 7,825, a 7 per cent increase compared with the previous year. [See Table 1]

This continued rise in ALG FE applications should be considered in the context of declining learner numbers and the economic position. Whilst application numbers have been increasing, figures on post-16 learning for 2010/11¹ indicate a continuation of the gradual decline in total learner numbers seen since 2005/06, driven by a decline in part-time learners aged 19 and over. The effect of the recent recession on employment levels and household income may also have influenced numbers eligible for means-tested allowances.

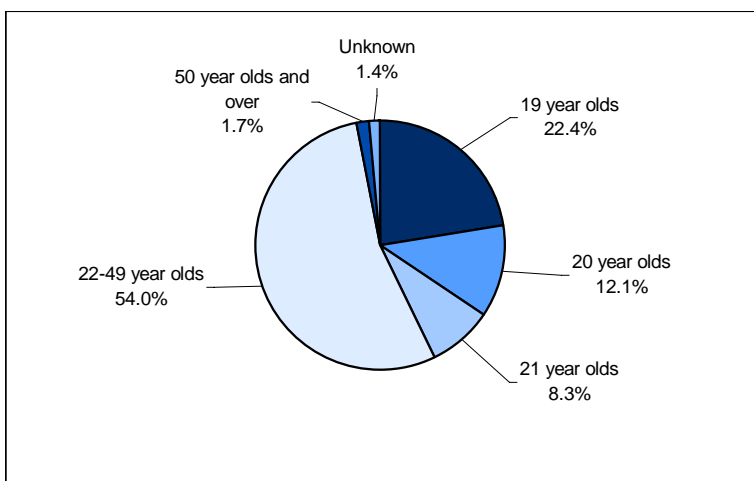
Chart 2: Successful applications by mode of study



Source: Student Loans Company

In 2011/12, 6,655 (85 per cent) of successful applications were from full-time students, an increase of 6 per cent compared with 6,260 in 2010/11. 775 (10 per cent) of successful applications were from part-time students; an increase of 25 per cent compared with 615 in 2010/11. [See Table 1]

Chart 3: Successful full-time applications by age, 2011/12

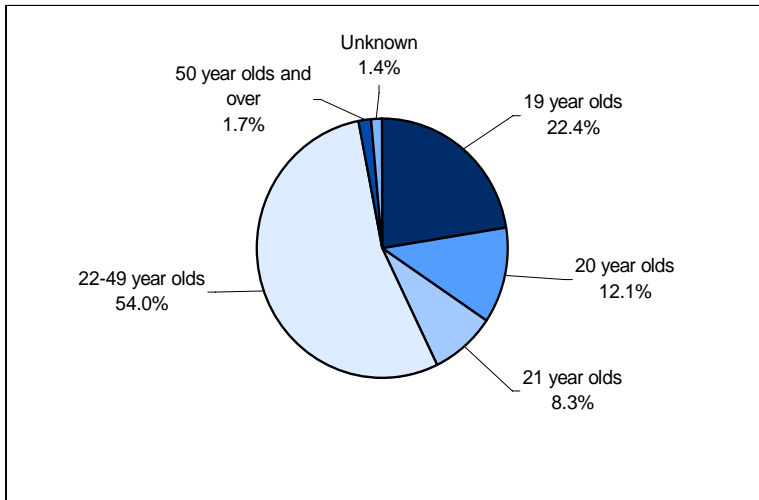


Source: Student Loans Company

1,490 (22 per cent) of the successful full-time applications were from 19 year olds, 805 (12 per cent) were from 20 year olds, 555 (8 per cent) were from 21 year olds, 3,595 (54 per cent) were from applicants aged between 22 and 49, and 115 (2 per cent) were from applicants aged 50 and over. Applicants whose age was 'unknown' made up the remaining number of successful full-time applications. [See Table 4]

¹ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/post16education2012/1203281/?lang=en> and <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/post16education2012/120926/?lang=en>

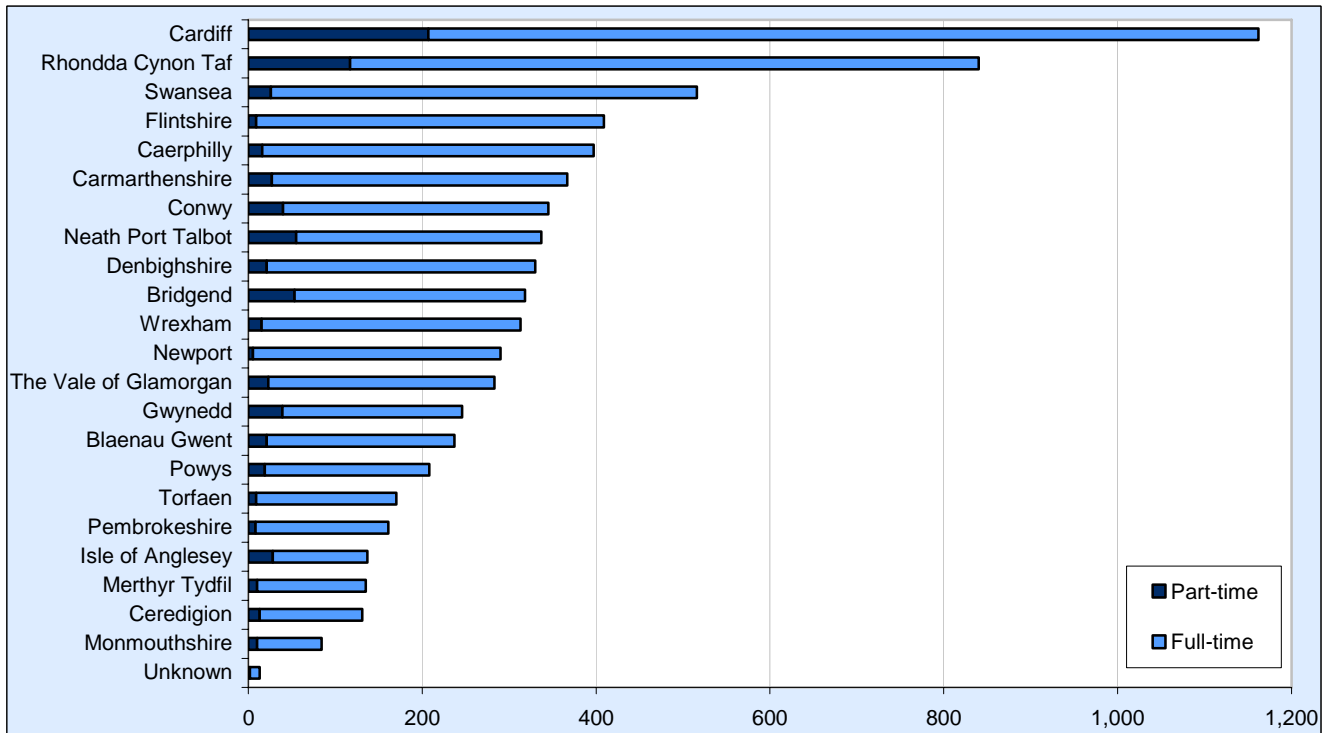
Chart 4: Successful part-time applications by age, 2011/12



Source: Student Loans Company

50 (7 per cent) of the successful part-time applications were from 19 year olds, 45 (6 per cent) were from 20 year olds, 40 (5 per cent) were from 21 year olds, 565 (73 per cent) were from applicants aged between 22 and 49, and 60 (8 per cent) were from applicants aged 50 and over. Applicants whose age was 'unknown' made up the remaining number of successful part-time applications. [See Table 4]

Chart 5: Successful applications by local authority and mode of study, 2011/12



Source: Student Loans Company

The number of successful applications by local authority, where mode of study is known, ranged from 85 in Monmouthshire to 1,160 in Cardiff. Cardiff accounted for 14 per cent of all full-time successful applications and 27 per cent of all part-time successful applications. [See Table 5]

The local authority with the highest proportion of successful applications being from full-time students was Newport, with 98 per cent, and the local authority with the lowest proportion was Isle of Anglesey with 80 per cent. [See Table 5]

Table 1: Applications by outcome and mode of study (a)(b)

Academic Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Full-time				
Successful applications	4,545	5,575	6,260	6,655
Ineligible	105	75	130	100
Awaiting Evaluation	20	15	10	5
Total	4,670	5,665	6,400	6,760
Part-time				
Successful applications	475	560	615	775
Ineligible	160	205	165	105
Awaiting evaluation	*	0	*	0
Total	640	765	785	880
Unknown				
Successful applications	225	415	455	395
Ineligible	295	525	555	330
Awaiting evaluation	855	800	470	520
Total	1,380	1,740	1,480	1,245
All Successful applications	5,250	6,550	7,330	7,825
All Applications	6,685	8,170	8,665	8,885

Source: Student Loans Company

(a) 2008/09 figures as at 31 July 2009, 2009/10 figures as at 31 July 2010, 2010/11 figures as at 31 July 2011, and 2011/12 figures as at 31 July 2012.

(b) A "*" denotes a number less than 5 (but not zero).

There were 6,760 applications for financial assistance from full-time students, of which 6,655 (98 per cent) were successful. Similarly, there were 880 applications from part-time students, of which 775 (88 per cent) were successful.

Table 2: Successful applications by residual income and mode of study, 2011/12 (c)

	Number (d)		Per cent		Amount Paid (£000s) (e)		
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Total (f)
£0 to £6,120	5,455	680	82	88	7,209	423	7,633
£6,121 to £12,235	725	55	11	7	481	20	501
£12,236 to £18,370	470	40	7	5	183	10	193
Total	6,655	775	100	100	7,872	452	8,326

Source: Student Loans Company

(c) As at 31 July 2012.

(d) Includes successful applications where no payment has been made.

(e) Includes payments to other applications (classed as 'successful' at time of payment).

(f) Includes payments made to successful applications where mode of study was "unknown".

Table 2 shows that an overall total of £8.3 million was paid out in ALGs to FE students in 2011/12, an increase of 8 per cent compared to the £7.7 million that was paid out in 2010/11.

5,455 (82 per cent) of successful full-time applications and 680 (88 per cent) of successful part-time applications were from students with a residual income of £6,120 or less, and were therefore awarded the full grant of £1,500 and £750 respectively.

Table 3: Successful applications by institution and mode of study (a)(g)

Per cent

	2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Welsh Institutions	100	99	99	99	99	98	99	99
<i>of which</i>								
FE Institutions (h)	98	86	98	85	97	79	98	75
HE Institutions	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1
Other Learning Centres	-	11	1	13	1	17	-	24
English Institutions	-	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Student Loans Company

(a) 2008/09 figures as at 31 July 2009, 2009/10 figures as at 31 July 2010, 2010/11 figures as at 31 July 2011, and 2011/12 figures as at 31 July 2012.

(g) A '-' denotes a percentage less than 0.5 (but not zero).

(h) Includes students on courses at the Workers Educational Association (WEA) and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA).

24 per cent of successful part-time applications were from students attending 'Other Learning Centres' in Wales (which include Community Colleges and Community Education Centres). This is higher than previous years due to an increase in number of applications for one particular Learning Centre.

Table 4: Successful applications by age and mode of study (a)(b)

	2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
19 years	930	25	1,215	50	1,360	65	1,490	50
20 years	510	35	645	35	750	30	805	45
21 years	325	20	465	30	525	30	555	40
22 - 49 years	2,680	360	3,140	405	3,525	455	3,595	565
50 years or older	100	35	105	35	90	35	115	60
Unknown	0	0	*	*	*	*	90	15
Total	4,545	475	5,575	560	6,260	615	6,655	775

Source: Student Loans Company

(a) 2008/09 figures as at 31 July 2009, 2009/10 figures as at 31 July 2010, 2010/11 figures as at 31 July 2011, and 2011/12 figures as at 31 July 2012.

(b) A '*' denotes a number less than 5 (but not zero).

Table 5: Successful applications by Local Authority and mode of study (a)(b)



	2008/09		2009/10 (i)		2010/11 (i)		2011/12 (i)	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Isle of Anglesey	75	20	90	25	115	20	110	30
Gwynedd	145	30	160	40	155	35	205	40
Conwy	240	20	315	30	335	45	305	40
Denbighshire	215	15	260	30	270	25	310	20
Flintshire	245	*	290	10	360	5	400	10
Wrexham	235	15	260	10	300	0	300	15
Powys	145	15	175	15	190	20	190	20
Ceredigion	110	10	120	20	125	15	120	15
Pembrokeshire	125	*	155	*	155	25	155	10
Carmarthenshire	220	20	310	20	305	15	340	25
Swansea	330	40	380	25	500	20	490	25
Neath Port Talbot	195	35	235	40	260	35	280	55
Bridgend	140	10	165	15	185	25	265	55
The Vale of Glamorgan	165	15	205	15	245	20	260	25
Cardiff	610	75	665	115	830	140	955	205
Rhondda Cynon Taf	445	30	615	60	695	70	725	115
Merthyr Tydfil	105	15	145	15	155	15	125	10
Caerphilly	320	35	400	20	415	25	380	15
Blaenau Gwent	155	35	175	25	185	15	215	20
Torfaen	115	*	130	*	150	10	160	10
Monmouthshire	55	*	75	10	80	10	75	10
Newport	160	10	225	10	245	15	285	5
Wales	4,545	475	5,575	560	6,260	615	6,655	775

Source: Student Loans Company

- (a) 2008/09 figures as at 31 July 2009, 2009/10 figures as at 31 July 2010, 2010/11 figures as at 31 July 2011, and 2011/12 figures as at 31 July 2012.
- (b) A '*' denotes a number less than 5 (but not zero).
- (i) For the 2009/10, 2010/11, and 2011/12 full-time total, also included are some (less than 10) applications where Local Authority is in England or unknown.

Annex 1: Notes

1. Context

1.1 Policy/operational context

Assembly Learning Grants (ALGs) were introduced by the Welsh Government from academic year 2002/03 to provide extra money for students who might otherwise experience financial difficulty when undertaking post compulsory or higher education undergraduate courses. The grant was available to full and part-time undergraduate students who started their courses in 2002/03 who were domiciled in Wales and studying at a publicly-funded college in the UK. For part-time students their course had to amount to at least 30 credits to be eligible.

The 2002/03 scheme only included students studying at Further Education Institutions or Higher Education Institutions. From 2003/04 the scheme was extended to include students at all learning centres (e.g. schools) providing Education and Learning Wales (ELWa) or Local Education Authority (LEA) facilitated courses. From 2006/07 responsibility for the administration of applications of ALGs for students at Further Education Institutions was transferred from Local Authorities (LAs) to the Student Loans Company (SLC).

The number of Assembly Learning Grants awarded is influenced by the overall numbers of learners in post-16 education and the effect of the recent recession on employment levels and household income may also have influenced numbers eligible for means-tested allowances.

Further information on Assembly Learning Grants can be found at www.studentfinancewales.co.uk.

1.2 Assembly Learning Grant (Further Education) eligibility criteria

The grant is available to eligible students studying in Wales or elsewhere in the UK. For a grant to be awarded both the student and course criteria must be satisfied. For the 2011/12 ALG scheme the student and course criteria included the following:

Student criteria

1. **Residence:** To be eligible for a grant the first condition is that a student must be ordinarily resident in Wales on the first day of the first academic year of the course. The second condition is that the student must have been ordinarily resident, for the three years prior to that date, in either (a) the UK or (b) the European Economic Area (EEA), depending on nationality status.
2. **Age:** 19 or over at the start of the academic year for further education courses. There are no age criteria for ALG higher education courses.

Course criteria

Further Education: The course is supported through DfES (or equivalent) which requires regular attendance at a Further Education Institution or Other Learning Centre and involves at least 275 taught hours in each academic year.

Assembly Learning Grant available to students in Further Education

Support available	Who is eligible?	Administered by:
<i>Further Education Institutions – Full-time students:</i>		
Up to £1,500 Assembly Learning Grant	Full-time students aged 19 or over on the first day of the academic year 2011/12.	SLC
<i>Further Education Institutions – Part-time students:</i>		
Up to £750 Assembly Learning Grant	Part-time students aged 19 or over on the first day of the academic year 2011/12. The amount paid relates to the number of terms in the students' course.	SLC

Calculation of level of award in 2011/12 is based on the residual household income of the student or student's family. Residual household income is calculated by taking gross income (before tax and National Insurance) and deducting certain allowances.

For all FE students, where a student is on an eligible course, awards are calculated on the following basis:

Value of Assembly Learning Grant, by mode of study and residual income 2011/12

Further Education	Residual household income			
	Between £0 - £6,120	Between £6,121 - £12,235	Between £12,236 - £18,370	£18,370 or over
Cumulative contact hours in the academic year 2011/12				
275 – 499	£750	£450	£300	Nil
500 or more	£1,500	£750	£450	Nil

The residual income bands for previous years are:

2010/11 and 2009/10: £0-£5,895, £5,896-£11,790, £11,791-£17,700 and £17,701 or over;

2008/09: £0-£5,745, £5,746-£11,490, £11,491-£17,250 and £17,251 or over.

2. Data source

ALG FE applications and payments are administered by the SLC. Data held on ALG FE students is entered by SLC staff onto an administrative database for the purpose of assessing and paying ALG FE to students. This data is also stored in a management information data warehouse for the purpose of management reporting, operational performance reporting, audit of processes, statistics, future policy planning and forecasting. Further details of SLC's administrative sources will be published on [SLC's web page](#) later this year. Processes and systems which enable customer and application assessment data to be held electronically are subject to periodic audit and integrity checks. SLC Internal Audit ensures that the processes governing data entry and application assessment are adhered to. Data integrity validation rules are used to identify and correct errors in data. Management Information extracted from SLC systems are subject to quality assurances prior to distribution.

The data in this release were collected via the SLC management information system and were extracted on 6 August 2012. All information is based on applications received by 31 July 2012.

Prior to the academic year 2006/07 data on applications for ALG by Welsh domiciled students at FE was collected from Local Authorities. From 2006/07 all data on students at Further Education institutions have been obtained from the SLC.

Further information including numbers of ALGs administered by the SLC can be found on the [StatsWales](#) website.

3. Definitions

3.1 Students who have withdrawn

The data represented in this release on successful applications refer to applicants who have been approved for an ALG during the course of the academic year. Students who have withdrawn from their course are not removed from the analysis. Furthermore, figures on successful applications represent the total value of the approved ALG and have not been adjusted for unpaid or recovered instalments.

4. Rounding strategy

Figures in this release have been rounded to the nearest 5. Due to rounding, the sums of some rows or columns may not add to the total figure given. Numbers less than 5, but not zero, are represented by '*'. A '^' denotes a percentage less than 0.5 (but not zero).

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;
- Further Education Institutions, Work-Based Learning providers, schools and local authorities;
- Wales Audit Office;
- Students, researchers, academics and universities;
- 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, articles and briefings;
- advice to Ministers;
- to inform and monitor the education policy development and decision-making process in Wales;
- to forecast future expenditure of student support schemes in Wales.

5.2 Accuracy

Statisticians within the Welsh Government review the data and query any anomalies with the SLC before tables are published. The figures in this release reflect the final position as at the end of the 2011/12 academic year (31 July 2012), and are correct as at 6 August 2012.

5.3 Timeliness and Punctuality

This release has met the previously 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. It is accompanied by more detailed tables on StatsWales, a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data.

5.5 Comparability

When the ALG was introduced for Further Education institutions, the grant was available to students aged 18 and over at the start of the academic year. From 2006/07, the student eligibility criterion for ALGs for Further Education institutions was changed to students aged 19 and over at the start of the academic year due to the extension of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) to include 18 year olds. As a result, figures on applications and awards for students at Further Education institutions for years from 2006/07 onwards will be lower than for previous years and are not directly comparable. Further information on EMAs was published in September in the statistical first release '[Education Maintenance Allowances Awarded in Wales, 2011/12](#)'.

The breakdown provided in Table 3 of this release is based on the learning centre details entered by the student on their application form. From 2006/07 the ALG FE application form only requested the details of the learning centre at which the student would be attending. Prior to 2006/07 the application form requested details of the learning centre providing the course and, where applicable, details of the learning centre to which the course was franchised out. As a result, prior to 2006/07 there may have been some inconsistency across Local Authorities (LAs) regarding which learning centre they provided information for on the ALG data collection form.

2011/12 FE data includes approximately 525 applications which, as at the 31 July 2012, were deemed to be awaiting evaluation. These are applications which are incomplete, missing either information from the

application or supporting evidence In 2010/11, 480 applications were deemed to be awaiting evaluation. In 2009/10, this figure was around 815 applications, with 875 applications in 2008/09, 665 applications in 2007/08 and 825 applications in 2006/07. Due to the transfer of administration of the ALG FE from LAs to the SLC in 2006/07 it is possible that in the past applications with missing information or evidence were treated differently, with some LAs cancelling an application after a certain period of time.

Data provided by the SLC on applications for ALGs from students at Further Education institutions showed approximately 395 successful applications in 2011/12 where the mode of study was 'unknown' and are included in Table 1 (and within the 'Total Amount Paid' column of Table 2) but are excluded in other tables showing figures by mode of study. Data also showed a few successful applications (less than 10 in 2011/12) where the mode of study was 'below threshold of taught hours'. These have been included in the 'part-time' group.

The data in this release presents information on applications by mode of study for students in Further Education. Previous releases have included information on Assembly Learning Grants awarded to students entering Higher Education prior to 2006/07. This data was collected from each Welsh Local Authority. Following the introduction of the new £2,700 (£5,600 in 2011/12) Assembly Learning Grant in 2006/07, very few applications for ALGs from Higher Education students have been processed by LAs and the numbers will continue to decrease in future years. Therefore it was decided before the 2007/08 publication, to discontinue the provisional data collection in line with the National Assembly protocol on Managing Respondent Load adopted in 2002 as part of the National Statistics Code of Practice. See below for information on ALG HE.

6. Further Information

Further detailed information on ALG FE applications (similar to Table 5 of this Release) can be found in [StatsWales table 001996](#).

Further information about the ALG FE scheme can be found at www.studentfinancewales.co.uk.

Information on ALG HE is published by the Student Loans Company in the SFR 'Student Support for Higher Education in Wales'. The latest publication, for academic year 2011/12, can be found at www.slc.co.uk/statistics.

Information on Educational Maintenance Allowances (for younger FE learners) was published in September 2012 in the statistical first release '[Education Maintenance Allowances Awarded in Wales, 2011/12](#)'.