

SDR 56/2014

27 March 2014

### Financial Contingency Funds in Wales, 2012/13

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 the academic year 2012/13. The release is based on data provided by education institutions throughout Wales.

FCFs 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. 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.

It was proposed in our recent consultation "Proposals concerning the publication of official statistics" that these data will not in future be published as official statistics. We are considering the responses to the consultation and will publish details of our plans shortly.

#### Key Results for Financial Contingency Funds in Welsh HEIs:

- The number of applications for financial assistance from Financial Contingency Funds fell by 6 per cent to 5,735 compared with the previous year. The number of successful applications fell to 4,860 (a 3 per cent decrease compared with the previous year) (*Table 1*).
- 5,055 individual awards were funded in 2012/13, compared with 5,225 in the previous year (a decrease of 3 per cent) (*Table 3*). On average, applicants were awarded an FCF award of £410 in 2012/13, compared with £395 in 2011/12
- The total amount allocated to institutions was £2.1m (*Table 1*).

#### Key Results for Financial Contingency Funds in Welsh FEIs:

- The number of applications for financial assistance from Financial Contingency Funds fell by 20 per cent to 15,550 compared with the previous year. The number of successful applications fell to 13,825 (a 19 per cent decrease compared with the previous year) (*Table 5*).
- 23,055 individual awards were funded in 2012/13, compared with 25,870 in the previous year (a decrease of 11 per cent). On average, applicants were awarded an FCF award of £300 in 2012/13, compared with £265 in 2011/12 (*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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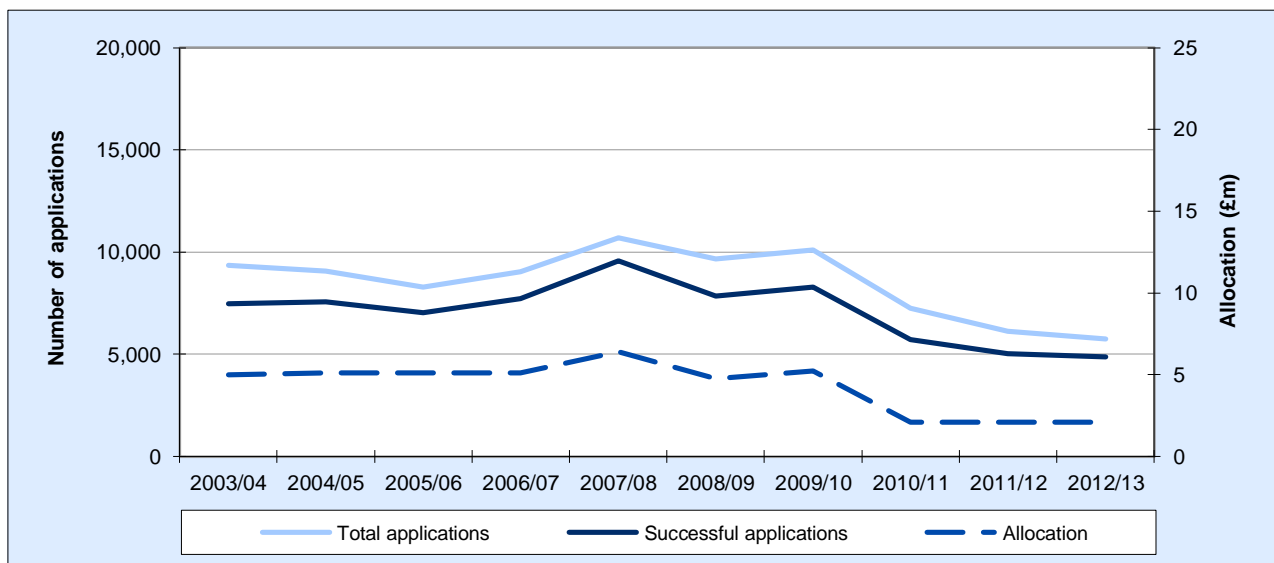
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# Financial Contingency Funds in Welsh Higher Education Institutions<sup>1</sup>

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

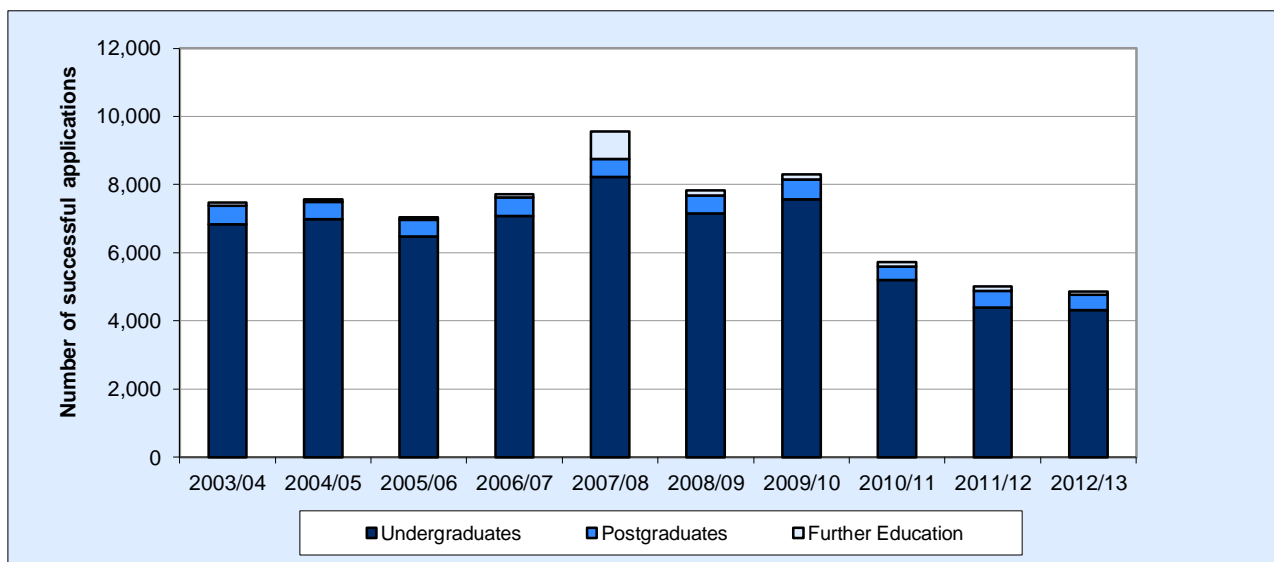


(a) Data from 2006/07 onwards were collected by the Welsh Government. Earlier data were supplied by HEFCW.

In 2012/13, the total FCF budget allocated to HEIs was £2.1m, the same as in 2011/12 and 2010/11. Prior to academic year 2010/11, the budget to HEIs had been relatively consistent at around £5m. Therefore care should be taken when making direct comparisons between figures from academic year 2010/11 onwards and previous years' figures with regard to total expenditure (*Table 1*).

There were 5,735 applications for FCFs in 2012/13, a fall of 6 per cent compared with the previous academic year. The number of successful applications fell to 4,860, a 3 per cent decrease compared with the previous year.

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

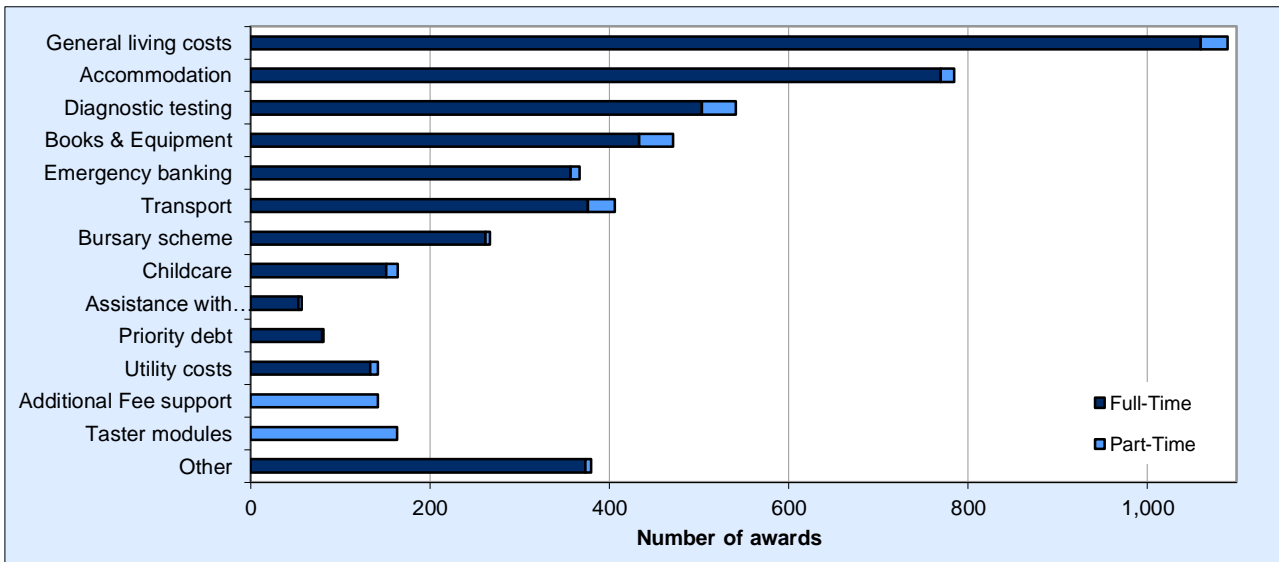


(a) Data from 2006/07 onwards were collected by the Welsh Government. Earlier data were supplied by HEFCW.  
 (b) See Notes for explanation on increase in successful applications in 2007/08 relating to FE.

There were 5,070 applications for financial assistance from undergraduates, of which 4,310 (85 per cent) were successful. Similarly, there were 560 applications from postgraduates, of which 460 (82 per cent) were successful. There were 110 applications from FE students, of which 95 (85 per cent) were successful (*Table 1*).

<sup>1</sup> Includes awards by FEIs delivering franchised HE courses on behalf of a HEI.

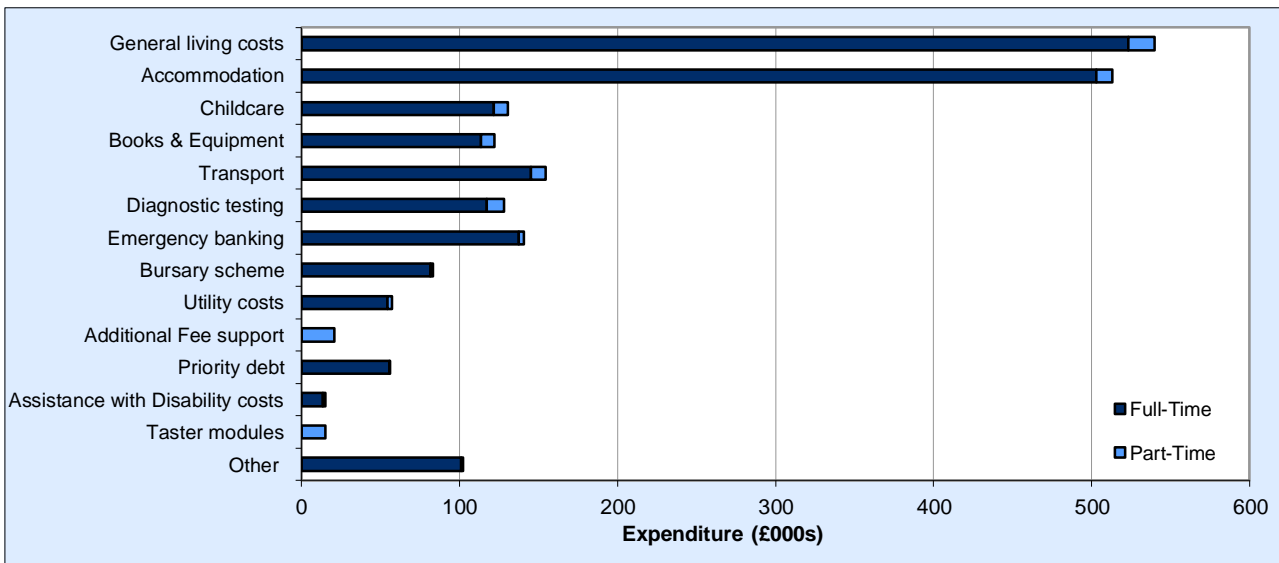
**Chart 3: Number of awards from FCFs in Welsh HEIs by category and mode of study, 2012/13**



A total of 5,055 individual awards were funded (3 per cent less than in the previous year), which amounted to £2.1m.

Of the 1,090 awards given out for general living costs, 1,060 (97 per cent) of these awards were given to full-time students. Conversely, all of the 140 awards given out for additional fee support were given to part-time students (*Table 3*).

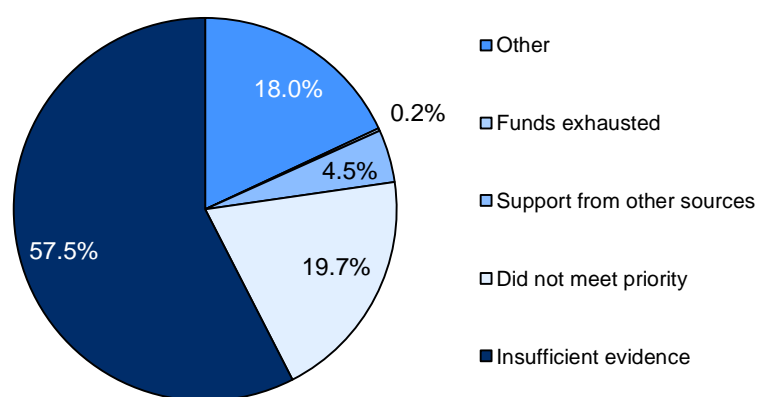
**Chart 4: FCF expenditure in Welsh HEIs by category and mode of study, 2012/13**



Two categories accounted for 51 per cent of expenditure on FCFs: general living costs (26 per cent) and accommodation (25 per cent). The average expenditure per award was greatest for childcare (£795), followed by priority debt (£690) (*Table 3*).

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

**Chart 5: Reason for refused assistance with regard to FCF applications in Welsh HEIs, 2012/13**



875 applications (15 per cent) for financial assistance were refused. 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 (*See Notes section 2: Eligibility Criteria*).

The most common reason for refusal of assistance (for 58 per cent of refusals) was that there was insufficient evidence of financial hardship. "Other" reasons for refusal included incomplete applications and students had not taken out a student loan. 2 applications were refused due to funds being exhausted.

**Table 1: FCF applications for students in Welsh HEIs**

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Numbers applied for funds	10,120	7,260	6,110	5,735
Numbers allocated funds				
Undergraduates (UG)	7,565	5,195	4,395	4,310
Postgraduates (PG)	585	400	490	460
Further Education (FE)	150	135	130	95
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,295</b>	<b>5,730</b>	<b>5,015</b>	<b>4,860</b>
<i>Numbers refused assistance</i>	<i>1,820</i>	<i>1,530</i>	<i>1,095</i>	<i>875</i>
<b>Total amount distributed (£000s)</b>	<b>4,798</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>2,060</b>	<b>2,078</b>
<i>Total allocated to institutions (£000s) (a)</i>	<i>5,224</i>	<i>2,103</i>	<i>2,103</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 2012/13, the proportion of successful applications has remained relatively consistent with that of last year, with approximately 85 per cent of applications being successful.

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

	Full-time				Part-time			
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Under 21	2,210	1,605	1,465	1,375	60	10	25	10
21-24	2,835	1,860	1,590	1,515	85	50	55	60
25 and over	2,545	1,575	1,385	1,475	565	630	500	430
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,590</b>	<b>5,040</b>	<b>4,435</b>	<b>4,365</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>495</b>

Source: Welsh Government

90 per cent of successful applications were from full-time students. 1,380 successful applications (28 per cent) came from students aged under 21, 1,575 (32 per cent) from students aged between 21 and 24 and 1,905 (39 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, 2012/13**

	Number of awards	Expenditure (£000s)	Average Expenditure (£)
Assistance with Disability costs	55	15	265
Books & Equipment	470	122	260
Accommodation	785	513	655
Childcare	165	131	795
Transport	405	154	380
Utility costs	140	57	400
General living costs	1,090	540	495
Bursary scheme	265	83	310
Priority debt	80	56	690
Diagnostic testing	540	128	235
Additional Fee support	140	21	145
Taster modules	165	15	90
Emergency banking	365	141	385
Other	380	102	270
<b>Total (a)</b>	<b>5,055</b>	<b>2,078</b>	<b>410</b>

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 of award can be applied for on a single application.

Awards for childcare saw an 11 per cent decrease compared with 2011/12, and a 16 per cent decrease in the actual expenditure to £131k. Assistance with disability costs saw a 37 per cent decrease in expenditure in 2012/13 to £15k, from £24k in 2011/12. Awards for diagnostic testing saw an 8 per cent decrease in 2012/13 and expenditure decreased by 3 per cent to £128k from £132k in 2011/12.

On average, applicants were each awarded an FCF award of £410 in 2012/13, compared with £395 in 2011/12.

**Table 4: Expenditure on successful FCF applications in Welsh HEIs by award size, 2012/13**

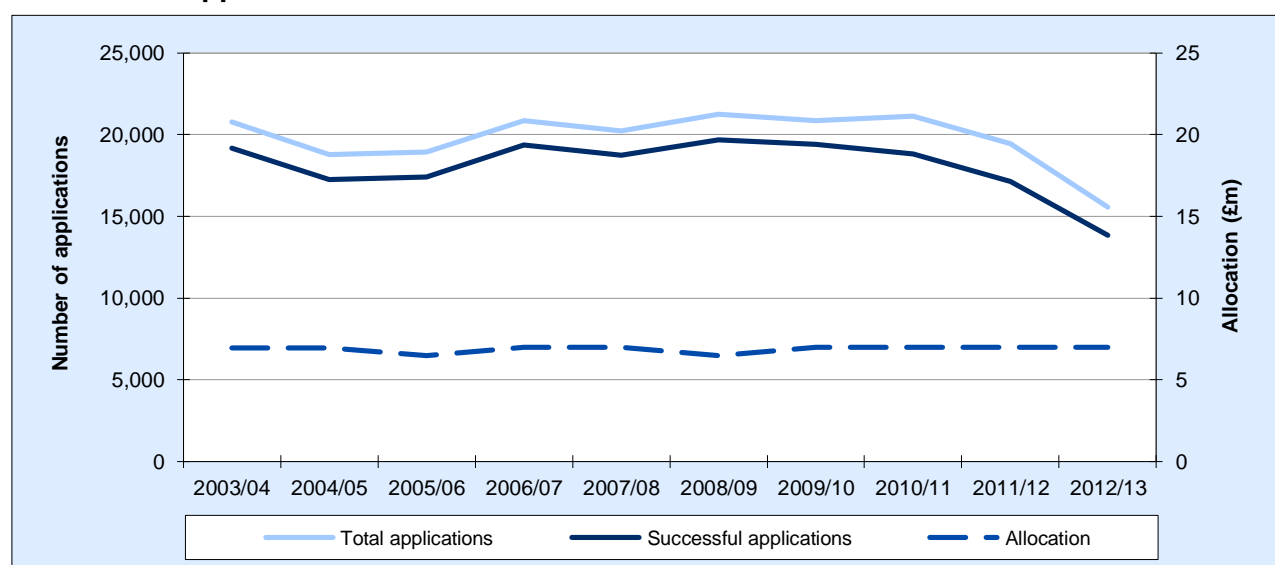
	Number of successful applications	Expenditure (£000s)	Average Expenditure (£)
Less than £100	655	38	55
£100 - £999	3,710	1,360	365
£1,000 - £3,499	490	667	1,355
£3,500 and over	*	15	3,650
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,860</b>	<b>2,078</b>	<b>430</b>

Source: Welsh Government

Of the 4,860 successful applications, 3,710 (76 per cent) of these were awarded FCF funding between £100 and £999, averaging £365 each. On average, successful applicants were each awarded FCF funding of £430 in 2012/13, compared to £410 awarded in 2011/12.

## Financial Contingency Funds in Welsh Further Education Institutions<sup>2</sup>

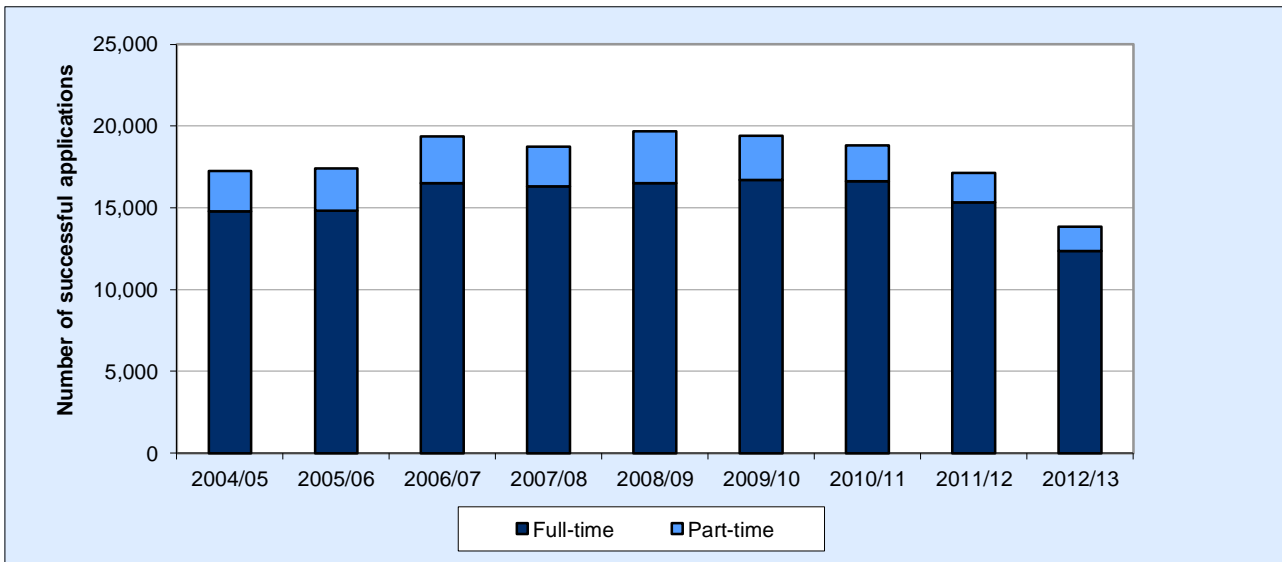
**Chart 6: FCF applications from students at Welsh FEIs**



In 2012/13, there were 15,550 applications for FCFs, a decrease of 20 per cent when compared with the previous academic year. The number of successful applications fell to 13,825, a 19 per cent decrease compared with the previous year (Table 5).

<sup>2</sup> FCFs were allocated to 19 FEIs and 5 WfA Centres in 2012/13.

**Chart 7: Successful FCF applications from students at Welsh FEIs by mode of study**

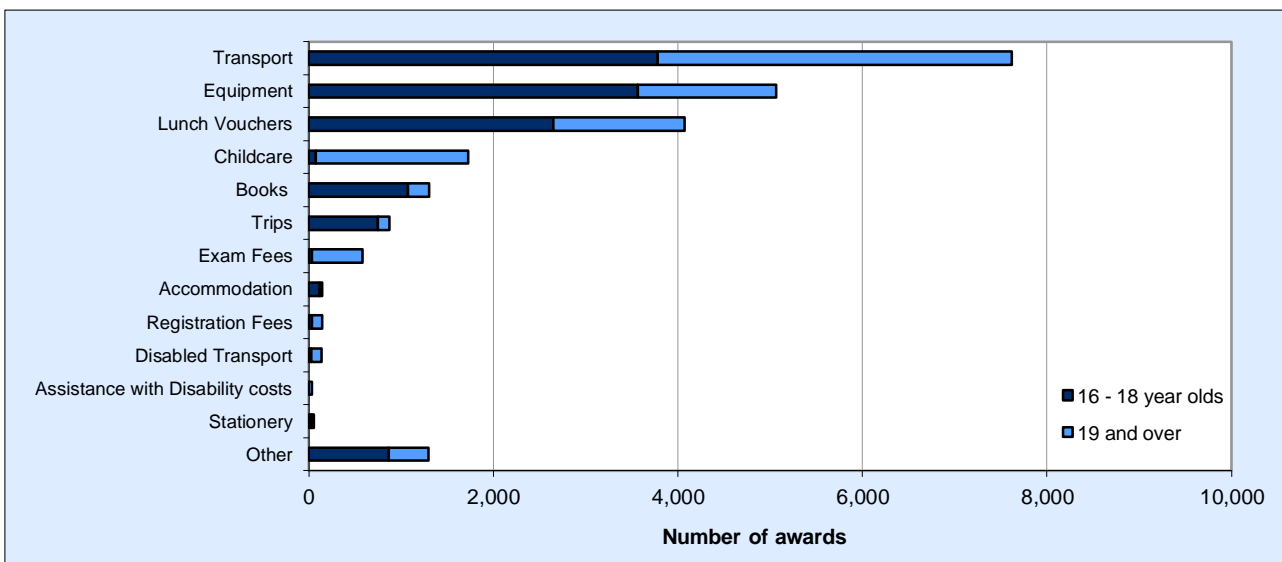


In 2012/13, the number of successful applications from full-time students decreased by 19 per cent compared with the previous year. The number of successful applications from part-time students also decreased by 19 per cent compared with the previous year.

With regard to full-time students, 60 per cent of successful applications came from those aged between 16 and 18. For part-time students, only 6 per cent of successful applications were from this age group (Table 6).

There were 13,945 applications for financial assistance from full-time students, of which 12,350 (89 per cent) were successful. The number of successful applications from full-time students decreased by 19 per cent compared with the previous year. There were 1,605 applications for financial assistance from part-time students, of which 1,475 (92 per cent) were successful. The number of successful applications from part-time students decreased by 19 per cent compared with the previous year.

**Chart 8: FCF awards in Welsh FEIs by category and age of applicant, 2012/13**

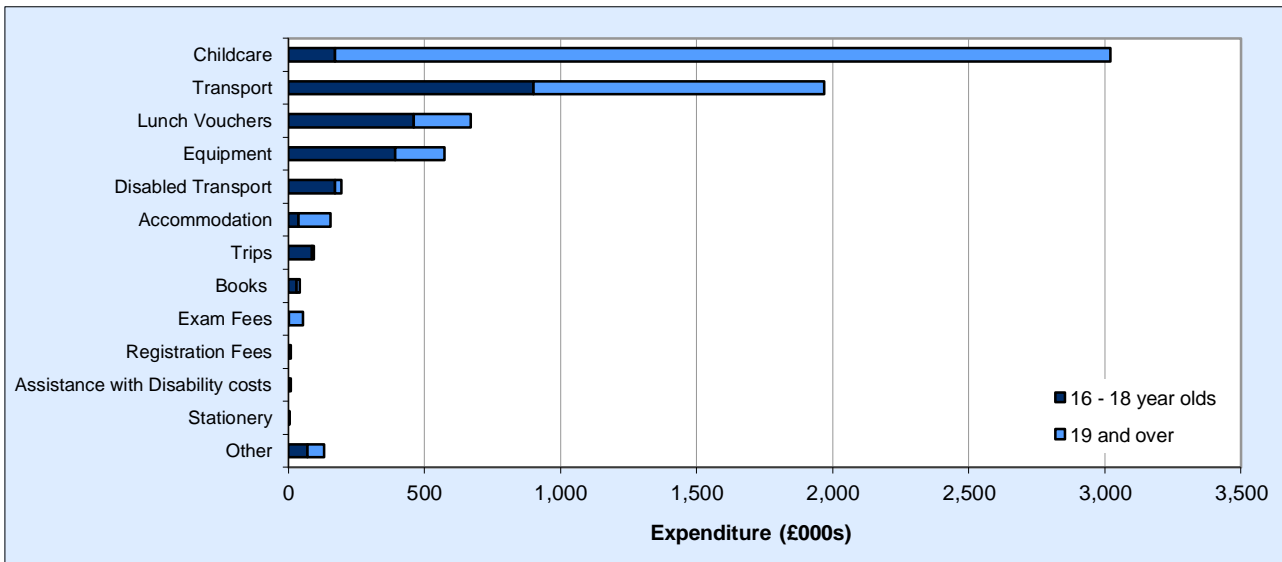


A total of 23,055 individual awards were funded (11 per cent less than in the previous year), which amounted to £6.9m (a slight increase compared with the previous year).

Of the 870 awards given out for the cost of trips, 750 (86 per cent) were given to students aged between 16 and 18. Conversely, of the 1,725 awards given out for childcare, 1,645 (95 per cent) were given to students aged 19 and over (Table 8).



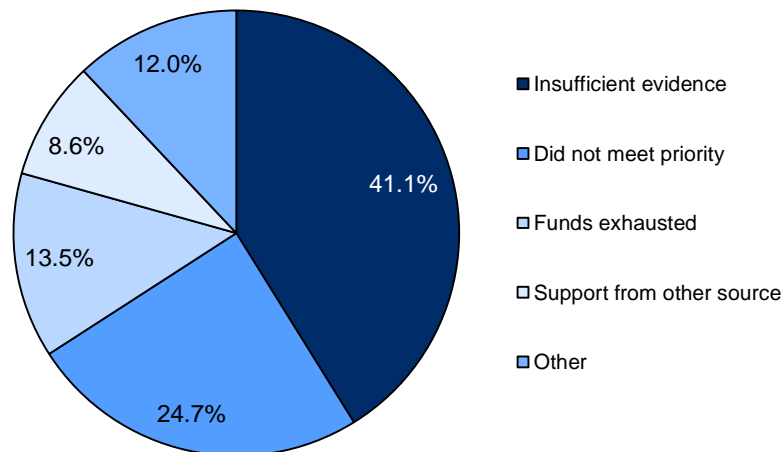
**Chart 9: FCF expenditure in Welsh FEIs by category and age of applicant, 2012/13**



Two categories accounted for 72 per cent of expenditure on FCFs: childcare (44 per cent) and transport (28 per cent). The average expenditure per award was greatest for childcare (£1,750), followed by accommodation (£1,365) (Table 7).

Despite only accounting for 7 per cent of all awards, childcare accounted for 44 per cent of overall expenditure. Amongst those aged 19 and over, childcare actually accounted for 62 per cent of all expenditure. Amongst those aged between 16 and 18, transport accounted for 39 per cent of all expenditure (Table 8).

**Chart 10: Reason for refused assistance with regard to FCF applications in Welsh FEIs, 2012/13**



1,725 applications (11 per cent) 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 (See Notes section 2: Eligibility Criteria).

The most common reason for refusal of assistance was that applications had insufficient evidence. This accounted for 710 (41 per cent) of refusals, while 425 (25 per cent) of refusals were due to applications not meeting institutions' priorities for the use of the funds.

**Table 5: FCF applications for student in Welsh FEIs**

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Numbers applied for funds	21,240	20,845	21,115	19,460	15,550
Numbers allocated funds					
FE 16 to 18	11,085	11,070	10,325	10,085	7,495
FE 19 and over	8,600	8,320	8,490	7,060	6,330
HE	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,685</b>	<b>19,390</b>	<b>18,815</b>	<b>17,145</b>	<b>13,825</b>
<i>Numbers refused assistance</i>	<i>1,555</i>	<i>1,455</i>	<i>2,300</i>	<i>2,315</i>	<i>1,725</i>
<b>Total amount distributed (£000s)</b>	<b>6,341</b>	<b>6,738</b>	<b>6,753</b>	<b>6,804</b>	<b>6,929</b>
<i>Total allocated to institutions (£000s) (a)</i>	<i>6,500</i>	<i>7,000</i>	<i>7,000</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.

(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 13,825 successful applications in 2012/13, 7,495 (54 per cent) of these were from students aged between 16 and 18, and 6,330 (46 per cent) were from students aged 19 and over.

**Table 6: Number of successful applications for FCFs from students in Welsh FEIs, by age group and mode of study**

	Full-time				Part-time			
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
FE aged 16 to 18	10,980	10,210	9,960	7,400	90	115	125	95
FE aged 19 and over	5,720	6,400	5,370	4,945	2,605	2,085	1,690	1,380
HE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,695</b>	<b>16,610</b>	<b>15,330</b>	<b>12,350</b>	<b>2,695</b>	<b>2,205</b>	<b>1,815</b>	<b>1,475</b>

Source: Welsh Government

89 per cent of successful applications were from full-time students. 8,320 (60 per cent) of full-time applications came from students aged between 16 and 18.

**Table 7: Awards from FCFs and expenditure in Welsh FEIs by category, 2012/13**

	Number of Awards	Expenditure (£000s)	Average Expenditure (£)
Assistance with Disability costs	35	10	305
Books	1,300	42	30
Equipment	5,070	573	115
Accommodation	145	195	1,365
Childcare	1,725	3,022	1,750
Transport	7,620	1,969	260
Disabled Transport	140	156	1,105
Stationery	55	5	85
Exam Fees	580	55	95
Registration Fees	145	8	60
Trips	870	93	105
Lunch Vouchers	4,075	669	165
Other	1,295	131	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,055</b>	<b>6,929</b>	<b>300</b>

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.

Two categories accounted for 55 per cent of the awards made. 33 per cent of awards were related to transport and 22 per cent related to equipment. On average, applicants were each awarded a FCF award of £300 in 2012/13, compared to £265 awarded in the 2011/12 academic year.

**Table 8: Expenditure on awards in Welsh FEIs by category and age group, 2012/13 (a)**

	Aged 16 to 18		Aged 19 and over	
	Number of Awards	Expenditure (£000s)	Number of Awards	Expenditure (£000s)
Assistance with Disability costs	*	0	30	10
Books	1,075	30	230	11
Equipment	3,565	392	1,505	181
Accommodation	120	172	25	23
Childcare	80	171	1,645	2,851
Transport	3,785	902	3,835	1,068
Disabled Transport	25	38	115	118
Stationery (b)	30	2	30	3
Exam Fees	35	3	545	52
Registration Fees	30	1	115	8
Trips	750	86	120	7
Lunch Vouchers	2,645	460	1,425	209
Other	870	71	430	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,005</b>	<b>2,328</b>	<b>10,050</b>	<b>4,601</b>

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.

Of the 23,055 awards given out, 10,050 (44 per cent) of these were given to those aged over 19. The total amount awarded to those aged over 19 was £4.6m, nearly twice the amount that was paid out to those aged between 16 and 18.

**Table 9: Expenditure in successful FCF applications in Welsh FEIs by award size, 2012/13**

	Number of successful applications	Expenditure (£000s)	Average Expenditure (£)
Less than £100	3,690	148	40
£100 - £999	9,090	3,510	385
£1,000 - £3,499	630	1,269	2,010
£3,500 and over	415	2,002	4,835
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,825</b>	<b>6,929</b>	<b>500</b>

Source: Welsh Government

Of the 13,825 successful applications, 9,090 (66 per cent) were awarded FCF funding between £100 and £999, averaging £385 each. On average, successful applicants were each awarded FCF funding of £500 in 2012/13, compared to £395 in 2011/12.

## 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 Review<sup>3</sup> into funding of HE in Wales recommended the publication of annual statistics on the take-up of all the different elements of the student support system.

FCFs provide funding to HE and FE institutions in Wales for 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. The Welsh Government provides institutions with discretionary FCF schemes outlining high level policy and the administrative arrangements and sets out the terms and conditions of the Fund. Individual awards are determined by the institution at which the student studies on a case by case basis.

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

Further Education students aged 16 -18 from low income households are also offered help via the Education Maintenance Allowance. Those aged 19 and over from low income households are able to apply for an Assembly Learning Grant (Further Education). Higher Education students are eligible for a range of statutory products dependent on their personal circumstances. The products include tuition fee grants and loans, maintenance support and targeted grants such as Disabled Students' Allowance and Childcare Grant.

### 2. Eligibility Criteria

The high level eligibility criteria are published by the Welsh Government (WG) annually in the FCF Scheme for the relevant year. It is for each institution to consider applications and make payments to eligible students, subject to these terms and conditions. However, in 2011/12 the Welsh Government indicated 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.

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<sup>3</sup> 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 2012/13, the total FCF budget allocated to HEIs was £2.1m, the same as in 2011/12 and 2010/11. This budget has been reduced 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 2012/13, 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 calculated and 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**

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.

### **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;
- 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 2012/13. This was done between November 2013 and February 2014. Knowledge and Analytical Services produced this release in March 2013, meeting the planned and pre-announced date of publication. FCF data for 2013/14 will be collected in November 2014.

### 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, 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. However, Table 1, Table 2, Table 4, 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/2013/10/1120). This is a link to the latest publication: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/10/1120> (table 16)

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

## 6. Coverage

The data in this release reflects the final position at the end of the academic year. "Other" costs in HEIs in 2012/13 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 2012/13 were made up of Bursary Payments, Criminal Records 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 have audited accounts in respect of the previous academic year, showing how the grant for FCFs was used. The data 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. 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 should be directed to [post16ed.stats@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:post16ed.stats@wales.gsi.gov.uk).

### **7.2 Mode of Data Collection**

Data is collected from HEIs, FEIs and WfA Centres 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.

It was proposed in our recent consultation “Proposals concerning the publication of official statistics” that these data will not in future be published as official statistics. We are considering the responses to the consultation and will publish details of our plans shortly.

### **Related articles**

Statistical Releases on other strands of student support in Wales are available via the following link: <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/?topic=Education+and+skills&lang=en#/statistics-and-research/?topics=Education+and+skills&subtopics=Student+finance&view=Search+results&lang=en>