This briefing discusses the student support funding that is available to those on courses of non-advanced study ("further education") at Scotland’s publicly-funded colleges. It specifically considers how colleges manage delivery of the cash-limited student support fund that is allocated by the Scottish Funding Council to college regions. As well as explaining the policy context, the briefing draws on key messages from discussions with college officials about management and delivery of this cash-limited budget.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks go to all the officials from the colleges that spoke with us and provided valuable information to assist with producing this briefing. Thanks also to officials at the Scottish Funding Council who gave their time to assist us with this briefing. All were very helpful in ensuring accuracy and providing a lot of useful information on how the student support system operates in Scotland.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Students at Scotland’s 25 publicly funded colleges could potentially receive student support funding from one of a variety of sources while participating in college education. The amount the student receives and the conditions attached to any funding provided vary by which public body is responsible for the fund.

The focus of this briefing is on the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) budget that is allocated to colleges for student support, much of which is bursary funding to support students on programmes of non-advanced study (further education). It is colleges that are responsible for the assessment, award and payment of available SFC funds to eligible students.

The student support funding that the SFC allocates to colleges is cash-limited. This has led NUS Scotland to argue that there is an issue with unmet demand for student support funds. NUS Scotland has called for the SFC bursary funding to become an entitlement (rather than colleges having to manage a cash-limited pot of funding).

Depending on how it was administered, an entitlement to bursary funding could be problematic for those students that can currently access welfare benefits while studying full-time. The result could be that these students lose access to welfare benefits while studying if mechanisms are not put in place to avoid this.

Discussions with officials from Scotland’s colleges about how the SFC student support budget is managed locally highlighted the following issues:

- A number of colleges reported issues with managing the available SFC student support funding. Some said that demand on the budget was larger than the funding available to meet that demand. It was noted that funding could often be found to allow the college to balance its accounts (e.g. European funds, additional funds from the SFC or other means). However, the unpredictability of access to additional funds to meet demand, along with changeable demand each year, causes colleges difficulty in ensuring funding gets to eligible students at the right time.

- The exact amount of unmet demand for student support funds is not known. This is in part a result of the fluctuations in demand on the budget from one year to the next. These fluctuations result from changes to the student demographic; who is eligible for funding in any given year.

- The SFC operates an in-year redistribution (IYR) process early in the academic year to redistribute funding from those colleges that declare an underspend to those that report an overspend. NUS Scotland use the figures reported by the SFC through requests for additional funding in the IYR as a proxy for measuring unmet need. However, this is problematic for two reasons. First, there is no agreed methodology for how colleges bid for additional funding through IYR (for example, some historically have asked for
additional funds through IYR and then returned some later as underspend). Second, as discussed later, colleges are taking various steps to limit spend against the student support budget. These practices go some way to disguise the level of demand for SFC student support funds. As a result, the exact amount of unmet demand is unknown.

- Colleges highlighted a range of different techniques being used to manage the available SFC student support budget so that it reaches as many students as possible. The main methods reported were: (a) offering eligible students Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) funding rather than bursary (so reducing the number of students making claims on the SFC bursary fund); and (b) setting a cap on the amount of funding available through childcare and discretionary funds. Adopting these strategies allows most colleges to meet the demands made on the SFC student support budget from existing funds.

- “Variance” was a practice that colleges previously could adopt to manage the bursary element of support funding. Essentially variance meant colleges could reduce by up to 20 per cent the amount of bursary awarded, below the full award the student was eligible to receive. From 2016/17 the option to use variance has been removed from the national policy guidance issued by the SFC to colleges. No colleges we spoke with were using variance to manage student support funding.

- College officials welcomed the flexibility offered by the national policy guidance in how they allocated student support funding to best meet the needs of students with varied needs and sometimes complex personal circumstances.

- While the discretion available to colleges in allocating funds was valued by officials, there were some rules in the national policy that colleges reported as being too restrictive. The requirements regarding what sources of evidence were needed to show income were highlighted as problematic for some, particularly vulnerable, students.

- Student support advisors provide a range of different types of support, deal with students with a variety of needs and need to know about the complex interplay of student support funding and welfare benefits in order to make a full assessment of the best funding package for an individual student. This requires both skilled staff and adequate resource to ensure that students get the correct information and access to funding at the appropriate time.

- The recent policy change that led to EMA being extended to part-time study was uniformly felt by college officials to be unhelpful. Officials pointed out that the same allowance going to those involved in only a few hours of study a week and to those studying full-time (with the same funding conditions) was unfair to students on full-time programmes.
INTRODUCTION

The term ‘student support’ can be used to refer to a range of forms of support available to someone taking part in education e.g. study skills classes, pastoral care, counselling, financial advice and financial awards. In Scottish policy (and in this briefing) ‘student support’ is the term used when referring to the finances that are available to students taking part in further or higher education. Commonly, this term refers to the financial awards available to students to assist them with the direct costs of participating in education e.g. maintenance, childcare and disability, rather than with the tuition fees that may be charged by the institution.

The focus of this briefing is the student support funding allocated by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to colleges. However, it is important to note that colleges operate in a complex funding environment with students eligible for different streams of funding depending on the course they are taking, their route into learning and a range of other factors e.g. age and household income. Figure 1 (next page) shows the five main public funding streams open to college students, the level of funding associated with each and which public body it is that allocates each funding source to students. Annexe A provides a summary of each of these funding sources.

SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL: STUDENT SUPPORT FUNDING

Each year, the Scottish Government allocates funding to the SFC for onward distribution to college regions to offer financial support to eligible students taking part in programmes of non-advanced study (“further education”).

The SFC student support budget is a cash-limited pot of funding that has three components. The first is a fund for living costs (the bursary element). The second is a fund for childcare (the childcare element). The third is a fund for financial hardship (the discretionary element).

The student support budget that is allocated by the SFC to colleges is ring-fenced. This means that the SFC does not allow colleges to use student support funds for other purposes. Colleges can, however, transfer a proportion of individual elements of the student support budget to other elements of the student support budget. For example, a proportion of the discretionary and childcare fund can be used to supplement the bursary budget where required. Guidance on how the individual elements of student support funds can be used are set out in the SFC national policy document corresponding to the specific funding stream. To monitor how colleges work within the national policy guidance, and provide value for public funding, colleges are required to submit quarterly returns to the SFC and are audited annually.
Figure 1: Examples of funding streams among Scotland’s college students

Aiden, 18
He is studying full-time for a National Qualification (NQ) in Gardening and Landscaping.

Aiden is eligible for a Further Education Maintenance Allowance of £74.79 a week for the duration of his studies. This totals £3,141.89 for the academic year.

The funding he receives is administered by the college from funds provided by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

Logan, 17
He is participating in a Construction Operations Employability Fund course for 12 weeks.

Logan receives a training allowance of £55 a week. This totals £660 for the duration of the course.

The funding he receives is administered by the college from funds provided by Skills Development Scotland (SDS).

Claire, 26
She is studying full-time for a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Business and Administration.

Claire is entitled to a repayable student loan of £6,750 (intended to cover living costs for the whole year, including holidays) and a non-repayable Independent Student Bursary of £875.

The funding she receives is administered by the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS).

Eilidh, 16
She is attending her local college while studying Highers.

Eilidh is entitled to an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of £30 a week during term time. This totals £1,080 for the academic year.

The funding she receives is administered by the college from funds received from the Scottish Government.

Jorge, 18
He is working full-time while pursuing a Modern Apprenticeship (MA) in Information Technology.

He attends college one day a week to gain the credits he needs to complete his MA.

Jorge is paid the minimum wage for a Modern Apprentice of his age (£3.30 an hour). This totals £6,349.20 in the first year of the MA.

While Jorge is paid a salary from his employer, his employer receives financial support from Skills Development Scotland (SDS).

Source: SPICe
The amount each college receives through the three components of the SFC student support budget is based on a number of factors:

- The amount that the Scottish Government allocates to the SFC for student support; that the SFC then has available to distribute on to colleges.
- The amount of teaching the college has agreed to deliver in any given academic year\(^1,2\).
- The previous student support spending profile of the college in question.

### Bursary Fund

The SFC bursary fund is a non-repayable allowance to college students taking part in a programme of non-advanced study\(^3\). Bursary funding can be used to support students with any or all of the following costs: (i) day to day living; (ii) some caring responsibilities; (iii) travel to and from college; (iv) the cost of study equipment; (v) extra travel or study costs associated with a disability.

To access bursary funding, both the student and the course have to meet relevant eligibility criteria. The amount payable to each student will vary depending on the individual circumstances of the student and what access the student has to other sources of income e.g. parental or partner income. All rules regarding eligibility are set out in the SFC national policy on bursary funding for further education (Scottish Funding Council, 2016a).

**Figure 2: SFC bursary fund, AY 2006/07 to 2015/16 (£m), cash and real terms**

![Figure 2: SFC bursary fund, AY 2006/07 to 2015/16 (£m), cash and real terms](image)

Source: Cash figures from Scottish Funding Council (personal communication). Detailed figures provided at Annexe D. Real terms figures at 2015/16 prices based on HMT March 2016 GDP Deflators published 15 April 2016.

Figure 2 shows the total funding allocation from the SFC to colleges for bursary funds each year from academic year (AY) 2006/07 to 2015/16. The figures are presented in cash and real terms.

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1. The term “academic year” refers to the annual time frame over which teaching is offered. In a college in Scotland the academic year commonly runs from August one year to June the next.
2. Student support is linked to agreed teaching levels as the number of students / hours of learning will have a direct bearing on the demand for student support funding from that year’s student cohort.
3. “Non-advanced study” refers to accredited programmes of study at SCQF levels 1-6, up to but not including Higher National Certificate level. The full list of SCQF qualification levels can be found [here](#).
In cash terms, the budget has risen from £54.6 million to £84 million – an increase of £29.4 million (a 35% rise). In real terms, at 2015/16 prices, the budget has risen from £65.3 million to £84 million – an increase of £18.7 million (22%). One reason for this increase in bursary funding is a rise in the number of full-time students - from 66,861 in 2005/06 to 79,565 in 2014/15 (19%).

**Childcare Fund**

All students with dependent age children can apply for financial support to meet childcare costs whether they are taking part in further or higher education at college. There are two elements to the childcare fund:

- A general childcare fund that can be used by students who have caring responsibilities and are using registered childcare while studying.

- A Lone Parent Childcare Grant (LPCG) that gives eligible lone parent students an entitlement to a payment of up to £1,215 per year toward the cost of using formal registered childcare while studying.

The LPCG can be claimed by lone parents alongside an application for funding through the general childcare fund. Any funding received through the general childcare fund is, however, calculated on the basis of the student already receiving LPCG funding.

Unlike bursary and discretionary funds that are directed at students on non-advanced programmes, the SFC childcare fund is available to students on either further or higher education programmes. The SFC took over the role of allocating the childcare fund for higher education students at colleges from academic year 2011/12. Prior to that time, it was Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) that allocated childcare funding for higher education students, and the SFC that allocated to colleges the childcare fund for further education students. From 2011/12, the higher education childcare budget of £3.9 million was transferred from SAAS to the SFC. Since that time there has been no ring-fencing of any specific proportion of the childcare fund for use only by further or higher education students.

The rules regarding eligibility for these funds are set out in the SFC national policy on childcare funding (Scottish Funding Council, 2016c). There is also national guidance for colleges and higher education institutions on how to administer childcare funding, issued by the Scottish Government (2016a).

Figure 3 shows the funding allocation for childcare for the period 2006/07 to 2015/16. In the period from 2006/07 to 2010/11 (when the SFC only allocated funding for further education students) the budget rose in cash terms from £6.9 million to £9.0 million – an increase of £2.1 million (23%). In real terms, at 2015/16 prices, the budget rose from £8.3 million to £9.7 million – an increase of £1.4 million (15%) over this four year period.

From 2011/12 to 2015/16, the combined further and higher education budget for childcare rose in cash terms from £13.7 million to £14.3 million – an increase of £0.6 million (4%). In real terms, at 2015/16 prices, the budget fell from £14.4 million to £14.3 million – a reduction of £0.1 million.

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4 Figures on student numbers provided through personal communication one of the participating colleges.
Figure 3 shows that, in real terms, the childcare budget peaked in 2013/14 and has fallen slightly in the period since.

**Figure 3: SFC childcare fund, AY 2006/07 to 2015/16 (£m), cash and real terms**

Note: From 2011/12 the childcare figure included £3.9 million extra to take account of the combined budget for both FE and HE students. There is no ringfencing of the combined childcare budget between students on HE and FE courses.

Source: Cash figures from Scottish Funding Council (personal communication). Detailed figures provided at Annex D. Real terms figures at 2015/16 prices based on HMT March 2016 GDP Deflators published 15 April 2016

**Discretionary Fund**

The SFC further education discretionary fund is a non-repayable allowance available to eligible students taking part in a programme of non-advanced study. Discretionary funding is for use where students are facing financial hardship; where access to, or continuation in, further education may be inhibited by financial considerations or where students, for whatever reason (including disability), face financial difficulties. For example, colleges may use discretionary funding to provide a one-off hardship payment to a student who is facing significant debt and cannot identify an alternative source of funding that would allow them to pay for day to day living costs or rent while studying.

The rules regarding eligibility for discretionary funding are set out in the SFC national policy (Scottish Funding Council, 2016b). The policy states that there is no maximum number of times that a student can receive assistance from the further education discretionary fund in one academic year. However, the total amount received from the SFC discretionary fund during the course of one academic year should not exceed £3,500.

The budget allocation by the SFC to colleges for discretionary funding is presented in Figure 4. This shows that, in cash terms, the budget rose from £5.8 million in 2006/07 to £7.0 million in 2015/16 – an increase of £1.2 million (17%). In real terms, at 2015/16 prices, the budget rose from £6.9 million to £7 million – an increase of £0.1 million (1.4%).

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5 Comparison of the budget between 2006/07 and 2015/16 is not recommended given the combining of the further and higher education budget for childcare from 2011/12. For this reason, two separate comparisons have been offered – one for the period up to 2010/11 and one for the period from 2011/12 onward.
In-Year Redistribution

As previously noted, the SFC student support budget is a cash-limited allocation that is agreed in advance of the start of the academic year. For a variety of reasons – for example, differences each year in the number of college students in each region that may be eligible for student support funding – predicting likely demand for student support budget from one year to the next is challenging. The result is that each year several colleges experience a degree of mismatch between the initial funding allocation received from the SFC and the amount needed to meet demand from eligible students.

In an attempt to respond to these funding mismatches, the SFC operates an “in-year redistribution” (IYR) process. This involves, toward the end of the calendar year, the SFC recovering from colleges unspent student support funds (this might be unspent funding from the previous academic year or funds from the current academic year that the colleges do not expect to allocate). This recovered funding is then distributed to those colleges that report shortfalls in student support funding.

The most recent IYR exercise, for academic year 2015/16, resulted in a request from colleges for a total of £4.3 million of additional student support funding from the SFC (Scottish Funding Council, 2015). As there is no agreed methodology for how colleges make a claim for additional funding, it is not clear that this figure represents an accurate picture of unmet demand for funding within the sector. Colleges each take different approaches to bidding for additional funds through the IYR. Some ask for a larger sum than may be needed to ensure some funding is forthcoming. Others rely on very detailed figures on student numbers, demographic information about the student cohort and estimates of likely drop out from programmes to provide an estimate of additional resource needed.

Given that some colleges later return unspent student support funding to the SFC through the IYR process (e.g. through the most recent IYR £2.3 million was returned) it is clear that year on year student support funding is not always getting to the right places at the right time. In part this may be the result of some colleges requesting funding through IYR that turns out to be more than was needed. There will be various reasons for this including: students dropping out of their...
studies, so freeing up previously allocated student support funding; and colleges adopting a range of budget management approaches to limit student support spending (which will be discussed further later).

**AN ENTITLEMENT MODEL**

In recent years, colleges have been subject to significant reform, including regionalisation of college governance and ONS reclassification. These reforms have raised issues about the way that student support funding operates in the college sector. In response, a national review group was established in 2014 to review the policy guidance and consider whether the distribution of funding from the SFC to colleges for student support remains fit for purpose. In the introduction to the review report it was noted that the current system of further education funding was originally introduced to offer a flexible system to meet varied local needs. However, geographical differences in the way that the system is being operated have led to inequalities in the way funding is distributed; with these differences having a direct impact on students (Scottish Funding Council, 2014). The recommendations in the review report are intended to address these inequalities (Annexe B provides a full list of the recommendations in the review report). One mechanism for doing this is to offer students an entitlement to further education student support funding:

“The view of the Group is that the introduction of entitlement/based Bursary and Childcare funding systems would be the best way of ensuring parity of treatment for students in different regions whilst at the same time meeting demand. SFC should explore the feasibility of introducing an entitlement/based system with Scottish Government” (Scottish Funding Council, 2014)

**Eligibility and Entitlement**

The recommendation in the review report, that further education student support should be an entitlement, arises as a result of the way that the SFC student support budget operates. Essentially, for SFC student support funding eligibility does not presently translate into an entitlement to funding.\(^6\)

For other funding sources (e.g. SAAS funding), where a student meets the relevant eligibility criteria, the funding is guaranteed (and so is an entitlement). In the case of SFC student support funds, however, an award will be made based on a range of considerations including whether student support funds are the most appropriate funding option and whether there is sufficient funding available to make an award to every eligible student. This is perhaps best illustrated by returning to the examples of student funding sources presented at Figure 1 (p.4):

- Claire meets the eligible criteria to receive a student loan for living costs. SAAS assesses Claire’s application based on SAAS eligibility rules. On meeting the eligibility criteria, Claire is entitled to access this funding. Even if Claire decides not to take any or all of the student loan, she remains entitled to claim it. She is expected to pay back any student loan funding at the point she meets repayment conditions.

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\(^6\) An important exception here is the LPCG, which eligible further and higher education students have an automatic entitlement to receive.
• As a full-time student on a non-advanced programme of study, Aiden meets the eligibility criteria to receive a non-repayable bursary. The college assesses Aiden’s eligibility for funding based on SFC policy guidance. While Aiden meets eligibility criteria for a bursary he has no automatic entitlement to it. The college can decide (as a way of managing its budget) to offer Aiden an EMA payment rather than a bursary. Whether he receives an EMA or a bursary, this funding will be non-repayable.

In evidence to the Education and Culture Committee, Angus Allan from South Lanarkshire College suggested that the distinction between eligibility and entitlement to funds is about students having certainty in access to funding:

“Certainty varies depending on how the student is funded. A student on a training allowance has the certainty of an income of £55 per week—that is an entitlement… but [for] bursary funded courses / those are discretionary awards. Colleges are given a pot of money to manage on behalf of the SFC for students on bursary/funded courses. The students are eligible to apply to that pot of money, but they are not necessarily entitled to an award from it.” (Scottish Parliament, 2015)

NUS Scotland has been arguing consistently in recent years for students that meet the relevant eligibility criteria to have an entitlement to student support bursary funding7 (NUS Scotland, 2015a; NUS Scotland, 2016). While this has been accepted by the SFC review group, two significant issues arise in considering this option:

• The majority of SAAS funding comes in the form of repayable loans. Only relatively small amounts of student support funding for higher education is non-repayable bursary funding. If student loans were to be considered as part of any future funding model, this has implications for further education students e.g. being asked for the first time to consider student loan borrowing while studying.

• While the approach used by SAAS means all eligible students have an entitlement to funding, limits on the budget still apply. In higher education the limits relate to the number of funded places that are available. The cap on funded places applies, at least in part, to ensure that SAAS has sufficient available funding to meet the costs of teaching and living cost support for Scottish domiciled students.

**Entitlement: students and access to welfare benefits**

Any move to an entitlement approach also has implications for access to welfare benefits. Many full-time students do not have access to welfare benefits (e.g. universal credit, job seekers allowance, income support or tax credits). However, there are specific groups that can claim benefits in particular circumstances. For example, a lone parent with children aged under 5 and a student aged under 19 years that is ‘estranged or separated from’ their families both have an

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7 NUS Scotland makes a distinction for further education from what is offered by SAAS for students in higher education. Instead of the centrally operated system that SAAS offers, NUS Scotland has called for further education student support to continue to be delivered locally.
entitlement to income support while studying full-time for a non-advanced level course (CPAG, 2014).

As student loan funding (available to higher education students) is an entitlement for all eligible students, any welfare benefits assessment of income automatically takes this funding into account. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), when assessing a claim for welfare benefits, will take the full student loan entitlement (up to £6,750 in 2015/16) into account even if the student does not draw down on all or any of this funding.8

In contrast, as a result of the way that student support funding for further education students operates (i.e. eligibility does not equate to an entitlement to receive a set amount of funding), welfare benefits are only affected where the student actually receives student support funds. For some students in receipt of (or entitled to) specific welfare benefits while studying, an assessment for student support may conclude that the student has more financial security or a higher income overall if they remain on benefits rather than claiming student support funding.

There are associated risks for students that, in moving into education and losing access to welfare benefits, they would be vulnerable financially at the end of their studies if they do not immediately enter employment; while they wait for a new assessment of their entitlement to welfare benefits.

Any move to an entitlement model would, for some particularly vulnerable students, raise the risk that going to college to study at further education level could trigger a loss of welfare benefits. As colleges have historically played an important role in widening access to education among learners from a wide range of backgrounds, this raises potentially unintended consequences if any move to an entitlement model created financial barriers to learning for some groups.9

ONS RECLASSIFICATION

At the same time as college reform has been taking place in Scotland, colleges have had their government classification changed from non-profit organisations to public sector bodies; a change that took effect in April 2014. This change is the result of an assessment of all UK colleges by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in 2010. The ONS has assessed colleges on the basis of the public sector powers held by government Ministers and agencies (e.g. the SFC), with levers of control and borrowing powers seen as particularly important. Against these criteria, the ONS recommended to HM Treasury that colleges should be classed for accounting and budgeting purposes as public sector bodies. The main consequence of this change is how budgets held by colleges are now treated. Notably:

- Incorporated colleges’ ‘resource consumption’ (recurrent expenditure) and capital expenditure are included as part of the Scottish Government’s spending for HM Treasury purposes. Since there is an annual ceiling placed on each area of government

8 Lucy Hunter-Blackburn suggests that up to a third of students from poorer households won’t draw down on the student loan entitlement available to them due to various factors, not least an aversion to debt (Economist, 2015).
9 What we don’t know is how many students, or potential students, are entitled to welfare benefits while studying full time so how many students may be at risk of losing access to welfare benefits with a move to an entitlement approach to funding.
expenditure (referred to as ‘Departmental Expenditure Limits’ or ‘DEL’), incorporated colleges will also have to control their expenditure so that it does not exceed these pre-set limits.

- Even if expenditure is financed from incorporated colleges’ own reserves or borrowing, it is still included as part of overall government expenditure and therefore has to be allocated an equivalent amount from the Scottish Government’s overall budget (even though the Scottish Government would not actually have to pay for or fund the cash expenditure). This is referred to as ‘budget cover’.

The result is that college budgets are now included within the Scottish Government’s overall budget. This means: (a) colleges are unable to spend reserves of cash built from one financial year to another without using SG budget cover; and (b) government consent is now required for a college to borrow funding (e.g. for large capital projects) with any borrowing the college seeks to pursue requiring capital budget cover (Scottish Funding Council, 2013).

This is an issue for student support funding as, until April 2014, colleges were able to hold cash reserves from one financial year to the next. These reserves could then be used to top-up specific elements of college spend. As colleges are now unable to spend cash reserves without using budget cover, reserves are no longer available as an additional source of funding. The response has been for colleges to form an agreement with the Scottish Government and the SFC that they will use funds held for depreciation\(^{10}\) to meet any student support shortfalls.

**VIEWS FROM THE COLLEGE SECTOR**

Given the work that has been taking place, notably through the student support review, to revise the way that the SFC student support budget operates, we facilitated discussions with nine of Scotland’s publicly funded colleges to discuss these issues further. The discussion addressed two specific questions:

- Whether colleges are dealing with a high level of unmet demand for the SFC student support budget.
- How individual colleges are using available student support funding to meet the needs of different groups of students, including managing any limits to available funding.

Discussions with colleges took place during January and February 2016. The approach taken, and a list of the colleges that participated, is summarised at Annexe C.

\(^{10}\) Funds for depreciation is the term used to refer to a budget line against which funds for buying new fixed assets is accounted. Funds that colleges have allocated to renew any assets it holds (e.g. buildings) are being drawn down on my colleges to cover shortfalls in student support funding.
BUDGET MANAGEMENT

A central focus of discussions with college officials was the challenges staff face trying to manage a cash limited pot of money. Most of the college officials we spoke with pointed out that both the bursary and childcare fund were often oversubscribed. The result was that staff needed to find ways to manage and meet high levels of demand on these resources.

One approach to managing this oversubscription was to identify funding from other sources to make up the shortfall. Until ONS reclassification in financial year 2014/15, colleges had the option to draw on college reserves to meet any excess demand on the student support budget. Since the changes that took effect from April 2014 colleges can no longer hold funding reserves from one financial year to the next. Since then, any overspend on the student support budget cannot be addressed by drawing down on college reserves. Rather colleges now meet any shortfall through using funds previously allocated for depreciation.

A small number of officials told us that there was an option to make a request to the regional board for additional funds, if required. They noted, however, that there was no guarantee that any application for additional funds would be approved. Others told us that this was not an option; they knew that there was no additional funding available from the regional board if they oversubscribed on the SFC student support budget so did not consider asking.

Not all colleges reported facing student support funding shortfalls. One college explained that the mixed picture between colleges (some underspending and some overspending) is in part explained by whether a college is going through a period of growth or contraction. When a college is growing its student activity levels, it was noted that there is no model used by the SFC to calculate the corresponding growth in demand for student bursary funding. A shortfall in bursary funding is “therefore inevitable”. Similarly, where a college is narrowing its scope / reducing its student activity, it may experience a surplus of student support funding.

Among those colleges that do experience significant demand on the SFC student support funds it is not always the case that this shows up as an overspend on the student support budget. This is in part a result of the way that colleges affected by significant demand manage the SFC student support budget. The following are examples of practices used by colleges to reduce / manage demand for SFC student support funds:

- Capping of the childcare fund that is allocated to individual students to ensure that this funding reaches as many eligible students as possible. The amount that the cap is set at varies between college regions.

- Capping of the discretionary fund that is allocated to individual students to ensure that as large a group of students as possible are able to access some financial support from this source. Again the amount that the cap is set at varies between college regions.\(^\text{11}\)

- Allocating EMA funding to eligible 18 and 19 year old students to reduce the burden on the bursary fund and direct the bursary funding to those students that were not eligible for alternative sources of funding.

\(^{11}\) The SFC national policy on discretionary funding states that the maximum amount that can be allocated to an individual student is £3,5000 so any cap set by a college has to be below that maximum level.
• Imposing strict attendance requirements on access to specific elements of the student support budget (notably bursary and childcare funds).

• One college stated that it limits access to discretionary funding at the start of the academic year to those at risk of eviction for rent arrears. With no access to Housing Benefit, several colleges highlighted that eviction is a significant risk for students. As a result, discretionary funding is commonly drawn on to support students with the costs associated with housing (notably paying rent).

We heard from some colleges that management of the budget also involved assuming that a proportion of students will drop out from their studies during the academic year. In effect this means that some colleges are allocating funds beyond what the budget can sustain on the assumption that some of those students that receive funding at the start of the academic year will drop out of their studies (many doing so early in the academic year). The result is that when the budget is considered early in the academic year it looks to be over-subscribed. However, after drop-outs are factored in, the budget across the year as a whole is not oversubscribed.

**Variance**

Variance was a practice that a small number of colleges used, and which was allowed within the national policy on bursary funding. It effectively allowed colleges to spread bursary funding among a larger number of students by giving only a proportion of the total bursary award that a student was eligible for. The maximum variance that could be employed was 80 per cent of the total eligible award. For example, someone who was eligible for a bursary award of £70 a week could be given anywhere between £56-£70 using the variance rules.

None of the colleges we spoke with reported using variance as a means of managing student support funding. As one of the recommendations in the student support review report (Scottish Funding Council, 2014) was that colleges stop using variance, this may explain why none of the colleges we spoke with reported doing this.

Some of the officials we spoke with were clear that, if a student was eligible for a specific amount of bursary funding, they should receive the full amount, not a partial payment. One of the colleges we spoke with had previously used variance, but had stopped this practice. It had, at the time of assessing the claim, allocated a payment of 80 per cent of the amount of bursary funding the student was eligible for. Only once the college was confident funding was available to do so, was the remaining balance awarded (and backdated) to bring the award up to 100 per cent.

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12 The most recent figures published by the SFC (Scottish Funding Council, 2016d) show that approximately 25.4 per cent of full time further education students at Scottish publicly funded colleges exit their studies early (drop out of their studies).

13 Until 2016/17, bursary funding rules allowed colleges to use ‘variance’ meaning a student’s full bursary award could be scaled back by 20 per cent to allow more students to be given an award. This practice was identified in the student support review report as a source of “unequal practice within the system”. From 2016/17 onward colleges no longer have the option of using variance to manage funds.
Calculating Unmet Demand

The varied approaches being used by colleges to manage the student support budget make it difficult (if not impossible) to identify an accurate figure of unmet demand.

The NUS has chosen to use the figures in the SFC in-year redistribution (IYR) report as the best measure of unmet demand. While this is the closest approximation of a figure, and it is the only figure that is available, it is not a particularly accurate measure of unmet demand. The main reasons for this are:

- There is no consistent and transparent methodology being applied by the SFC or used by colleges when a college puts in a claim for additional funding for student support through the IYR application.

- There is no analysis available on the potentially hidden levels of demand for student support funding that is being managed through the techniques noted above e.g. capping spending on specific budgets or awarding EMAs instead of bursary funding to 18 and 19 year old students from low income households.

- Demand for student support will both vary year on year (depending on the circumstances of each cohort of students) and at different points within the same academic year. For example, as noted above, looking at the budget early in the year may show a potential overspend, but once a proportion of students have withdrawn from their courses, the funding allocation may not be oversubscribed.  

In talking to SFC and college officials it became clear that different colleges apply different criteria when making requests for additional student support funding through the IYR process. Some had clear audit trails showing eligibility and levels of funding allocated. Others made their request for additional funds based on a belief that the full amount would not be provided, so requested a larger amount than required to allow for this.

As noted earlier, not all of the college officials that we spoke with raised concerns about demand for the student support budget outstripping available funds. A budget shortfall was not, for every college, the only or the main challenge they faced in relation to managing the student support budget. Rather, some raised concerns about how the rules enabled or limited the college’s ability to treat students in a way that was consistent and fair.

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14 What is more difficult to gauge is what relationship there is between available funding and withdrawal rates. Some colleges were of the view that the limits to available funding were a factor in students withdrawing from their studies.
FAIRNESS AND CONSISTENCY

While the purpose in speaking to college officials was to find out more about how colleges are managing the cash limited SFC student support budget, those we spoke with gave a great deal of prominence to concerns about the complexity of the funding landscape at Scottish colleges.

One aspect of this complexity that was a cause of significant concern was the differences in funding levels and conditions affecting students, depending on the source of funding the student has access to. As Figure 1 (page 4) indicates, there are a variety of funding streams in place, offering different levels of funding and coming from different public bodies. The result is that college students can be at the same college, or even in some cases taking the same programme of study, but for the purposes of student finance are treated differently.

The officials we spoke with repeatedly referred to the need for fairness in the way that student funding operates. They also highlighted a need for greater consistency and transparency in how funding decisions are applied to different groups of students in different colleges across Scotland.

Given the relatively small number of colleges in Scotland, 26 at present (Colleges Scotland, 2016), and the range of funding streams in place, there were questions raised by officials about whether such complexity is necessary. Students were said to find it both difficult to understand and potentially unfair that such differences exist. The examples below explain how these differences might emerge in practice:

- Two 18 year old students are doing equivalent college courses in two different college regions, one gets a SFC further education bursary of up to £74.79 a week while the other gets an EMA of £30 a week.

- A 17 year old student takes a short term training programme through the Employability Fund. During that 12 week period they receive £55 a week. The student then transfers to a full-time college course and gets EMA funding of £30 a week.

- A 25 year old student living away from home and taking a further education course gets a bursary of over £90 a week for 42 weeks (the full academic year). They also receive additional funds for travel due to the distance from their home to college. The next academic year they stay at the same college but progress to HNC level study (higher education). They now get a SAAS bursary of £875 and can access up to £6,750 in repayable student loans⁵ for the full year. As a higher education student, they can no longer apply for specific funding for travel as these costs are expected to be met through the bursary and loan support offered.

- After staying at school to complete her Highers, a 17 year old starts a Level 3 Modern Apprenticeship involving day release attendance at college. The employer pays the living

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⁵ Over 52 weeks the SAAS bursary amounts to just over £16.80 a week. Including the repayable student loan, the weekly living cost funds available (for the full 52 weeks) are just over £146 a week. However, almost all of this funding is in the form of repayable student loan rather than a non-repayable bursary.
wage of £8.25 an hour\textsuperscript{16}. Over a 37 hour working week, the young person receives a gross salary of £15,873 (£305.25 a week).

As well as these significant differences in levels of funding, college officials also pointed out that there are differences in the income thresholds that are used to assess access to specific funding streams. All of the student support funds listed in Box 1 below are means-tested, so the incomes of other household members are assessed as part of a claim for these funds. Where the household income is below these thresholds, there is no effect on the funds received. Once the household income is assessed as above these thresholds, there is a tapering off of payments.

**Box 1: parental income thresholds for sources of student support\textsuperscript{17}**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding stream</th>
<th>Income threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education Maintenance Allowance:</td>
<td>£24,275 and above (if one dependent child)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE Maintenance Bursary:</td>
<td>£24,475 and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Student Bursary (SAAS):</td>
<td>£18,999 and above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, the rules relating to payment of travel costs were highlighted as undermining attempts by colleges to respond to the low carbon agenda. For example, a further education student that lives within two miles of their local college will not receive support with the cost of travel. Those that travel longer distances will be able to apply for assistance with travel costs through the bursary fund. In some instances it was suggested that these rules could incentivise eligible students to attend a college further away rather than attend their local college.

**Flexibility in using SFC funding**

As part of discussions about managing the SFC student support budget, college officials highlighted what seem to be potential contradictions or difficulties between, on the one hand, the rules of eligibility that are set out in the SFC national policy documents and, on the other hand, the areas where there is discretion in how colleges manage these funds. The following illustrate areas where the national policy allows some degree of discretion:

- The national policy allows elements of the student support budget to be used in other areas of student support than it has been allocated to. For example, discretionary and childcare funding, as long as national policy guidelines are fulfilled, can be used to supplement the bursary fund, if required.

- Colleges have discretion in how to award bursary funding to students, including using it to pay for living costs, travel and study costs. Colleges can also use this funding to cover the costs associated with having an adult dependant or to meet the costs of additional support for learning.

\textsuperscript{16} Accredited Living Wage figure promoted by the Scottish Living Wage campaign [http://slw.povertyalliance.org/](http://slw.povertyalliance.org/) (April 2016)

\textsuperscript{17} As Modern Apprenticeship income is a salary there is no means-test applied. The Employability Fund training allowance is paid where a young person is taking part in approved training and is not in receipt of welfare benefits. Income thresholds are not applied directly to this fund.
• The discretionary fund can be used to support students either in-kind (e.g. buying equipment to enable study) or in cash within agreed policy guidelines.

College officials told us that they valued the discretion they were able to use in operating the student support budget. Indeed, some saw this flexibility as vital given the varied and sometimes complex situations and circumstances students can be facing. Officials told us, for example, about using the discretionary fund almost solely to assist students at risk of eviction with the costs of housing.

However, while there was discretion available to colleges on some issues, on others there was a view that national policy rules undermined colleges ability to use the fund effectively. For example, colleges told us about difficulties faced by some students in being able to provide the appropriate paperwork needed to evidence household income (e.g. P60 documents). For some students the difficulty is that they and their family members do not have the required paperwork or understand what it is so that it can be sourced. For others, there is a false assumption that there is a positive familial relationship in place that would support / enable the student to provide the required evidence. College officials felt that the rigidity around some of these issues acted as a barrier to supporting students to access the funding they needed to take part in college learning.

Supporting students

The college officials we spoke with highlighted that some of the students attending Scotland’s colleges have quite complex and challenging backgrounds. This means that staff can be required to spend significant amounts of time with individual students to assist them in identifying the best funding sources to allow them to take part in college education. We heard about a range of activities that student support staff pursue to support students, including:

i. Attempts to engage students early in the process in applying for funding – so that eligible funds can be accessed as close to the start of the course as possible.

ii. Time involvement in explaining what evidence is to be provided to support applications for funding. This can be quite challenging when the forms or evidence to be provided is either not available or not understood by the student and household members.

iii. Understanding of the welfare benefits system and its interplay with college funding. The two interact in such a way that some students are entitled to specific welfare benefits while attending college, and others are not.

iv. Working with students that have had difficulty engaging with formal agencies in the past (e.g. at school, benefit offices, social work departments); so dealing with issues of trust of formal agencies and understanding of the formal rules required to access funding.

v. Supporting students to meet attendance requirements attached to accessing specific funding streams, as well as understanding the implications of not doing so.

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18 One example of a group that has difficulties in this regard are those with care experience.
vi. Navigating the specific circumstances of individual students to identify what the best funding option is for them. Several officials spoke of wishing to secure the best outcome for students to maximise their income, which involves a full assessment of circumstances and implications of pursuing one funding source over another.

Confirming this message, Colleges Scotland, in its written submission to the Education and Culture Committee one-off evidence session on student support, made specific reference to the assistance that bursary staff in colleges offer. Its submission spoke of the support offered as being “both personalised and extensive, with staff often providing vital support”. It’s submission went on to provide case studies based on real experiences to highlight the work that is done by student support staff to retain and support learners “with often quite critical needs” (Colleges Scotland, 2015).

**Education Maintenance Allowance**

The final issue that was raised by all colleges was the recent decision to extend EMA to students taking part time courses. From January 2016, EMA funding can be offered to students taking a programme of part-time study at non-advanced level. Part-time study is defined in the EMA guidance as a course of 12 hours or less of study per week. The amount paid to those taking a course at part-time hours is the same as for full-time study: £30 a week.

Officials highlighted that the extension of EMA to part-time study had resulted in significant work to develop and establish systems to operationalise this change. However, those we spoke with said that, so far, very few students studying part-time had actually been eligible for EMA. This raised questions as to whether the decision to extend EMA to part-time students had been adequately scoped out to confirm that there was a need to extend EMA to part-time students.

The issue that caused greater concern, however, was a sense of unfairness that a student could be taking three hours of study a week and get the same amount of EMA allowance through EMA as someone who was required to attend a programme of full-time study. This was, for some officials, accompanied by a concern that – in theory at least – someone on a part-time programme of study accessing EMA at one college could easily then go to another region and seek access to a second EMA payment. Colleges pointed out that were no systems in place to stop someone from doing this.

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19 In communication with an SG official we were informed that colleges were consulted on the decision to extend the scheme to part time students and were provided with resources to support them in doing so.
20 As the SFC audits the claims for EMA by colleges, any attempt by a student to make two separate claims for funding at different colleges should be quickly be picked up by the SFC and rectified.
ANNEXE A: COLLEGE FUNDING SOURCES / PROGRAMMES

1. Scottish Funding Council – student support

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) is the main funder of colleges in Scotland. Part of the funding it provides to colleges is a ring/fenced budget for student support. The three elements to the student support budget (bursary, discretionary and childcare) each have set criteria applied that must be met in order for the college to issue the appropriate level of funding to those students that meet eligibility criteria.

The SFC student support budget is cash-limited. There a maximum bursary allowances for eligible students (in 2015/16 this was £74.79 for students living with their parents and £94.52 for independent students).

Within the broad parameters of the policy requirements for allocation of funding to specific groups of students, colleges do have some discretion over how best to allocate the funding it has available. With recognition that bursary funding is the largest part of the budget, with the greatest level of demand, colleges can move a proportion of the allocated funding for discretionary and childcare costs to the bursary allocation. Full details on both the requirements and the discretion available to colleges can be found in the three sets of policy documentation produced by the SFC (Scottish Funding Council, 2015, 2015a, 2015b).

2. Student Awards Agency Scotland – student support

SAAS offers financial support to eligible students in colleges and higher education institutions that are taking higher education level qualifications (e.g. HNC, HND or degree). SAAS provides non-repayable bursaries and grants. It also administers student loans for living costs on behalf of the Student Loan Company. Details on the funds available to higher education students can be found in the SAAS annual funding guide (Student Awards Agency Scotland, 2015).

Some of the living cost student loan is offered to all eligible students, regardless of household income levels. In 2015/16, the maximum non-means/tested student loan is £4,750 for a full academic year. In addition, there is a further student loan and bursary available to students from lower income households. The combined total of all three elements is intended to offer lower income students an income guarantee which in academic year 2015/16 is £7,625. The income guarantee is a Scottish Government initiative available to Scottish domiciled full-time undergraduate students from the lowest income households. The majority funding is offered as a student loan, with young students from very low income households receiving £1,875 as SAAS bursary and independent students from very low income households receiving £875 as SAAS bursary – the remainder as loan. More details on the levels of funding for different groups of students can be found on the Scottish Government website (Scottish Government, 2016).
3. Education Maintenance Allowance

Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a payment of £30 a week during term time that is available to 16 to 19 year olds from low income households while taking part in non-advanced study in school, college or other educational provision. The EMA funding is allocated by the Scottish Government to local authorities (for school pupils) and colleges (for college students). Until January 2016 EMA funds were for young people from low income households that were participating in full-time study. From January 2016, the £30 a week award was extended to students taking part in part-time non-advanced college courses. The income thresholds applied to those entitled to an EMA was also increased to allow more young students to access this funding. The Scottish Government has issued a full set of guidance on the operation of the EMA scheme in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2015a).

4. Employability Fund

The Employability Fund (EF) is administered by Skills Development Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government. The EF contributes to the delivery of the youth employment strategy by working in partnership at the local level to ensure young people have the necessary skills and confidence employers are looking for. The focus is on gaining relevant work experience via developing employability and vocational skills that will allow young people to transition into a Modern Apprenticeship or job. Young people 16/18 years old that are not in receipt of benefits and not in education, training or employment who are taking part in a training programme can access the SDS Young Persons’ Allowance of £55 a week for each week of their training (Skills Development Scotland, 2016). Some of those involved in EF will be attending college as part of their training programme.

5. Modern Apprenticeship

Modern Apprenticeships (MA) are training packages that offer employees the opportunity to learn new skills at craft, technical or management level. To receive financial support from SDS the employer offering the MA needs to offer the trainee three things: (i) a relevant SVQ or alternative competence based qualification; (ii) core / career skills; and (iii) industry linked training.

Some MA employees will gain the required qualification by participating in a college course either on a block learning or day release basis. As a Modern Apprentice has a contract of employment while on the MA, they are paid a wage by their employer whether they are at their place of work or attending a programme of study at college. The minimum wage for MAs aged 16/18 years (and those aged 19 and over in the first year of their apprenticeship) is £3.30 (UK Government, 2016).
ANNEXE B: STUDENT SUPPORT REVIEW GROUP

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SFC

1. FESSAG [Further Education Student Support Advisory Group] should review the bursary guidance on the use of funds to ensure greater clarity and consistency where possible, with the aims of standardising practice where possible and ensuring the parity of student experience across Scotland.

2. The practice of variance should cease and that all students should receive 100% of their calculated bursary award.

3. EMA funding, rather than bursary funding, should be allocated to all eligible 18 year old students living at home.

4. Income bands for calculating bursary should be brought into line with those used by SAAS. SFC should do further work to cost this proposal and to make an assessment of any financial impact of introducing it.

5. The method described in paragraphs 28 to 32 should be used to calculate initial allocations of Childcare Funding, if its preferred option of an entitlement based system is not affordable.

6. Information on available Bursary and Childcare funding should be made clearer to prospective students. Ideally this should be available online pre/application. SFC should work with colleges through FEESAG to develop standard information and make it available online.

7. The guidance on childcare should be changed to include the following conditions:
   - Colleges should provide Childcare funding during short holidays
   - Colleges should provide Childcare funding for student placements
   - Colleges should allocate Childcare funding for periods where students have to care for school/aged children when school holidays do not coincide with the college academic calendar, or waive the attendance requirements for those particular periods.
   - Colleges should provide Childcare funding for periods of self/directed study, up to the maximum of the notional learning hours for the course that the student is undertaking.

8. FESSAG should investigate the introduction of an attendance policy for both Bursary and Childcare which requires student attendance of 100%, but permits authorised absence and self/certificated absence. The policy should also allow for rational flexibilities to be negotiated between the college and the student, particularly where the student has been absent because their child is ill or has an appointment.

9. Where there are delays in processing student awards, Colleges should consider providing “hardship” type upfront payments of Bursary and Childcare funding, particularly where this is required by childcare providers.
10. FESSAG should work with colleges to devise a template letter that can be issued to students by all colleges, stating students’ status as part-time or full-time, the number of hours studied per week and the duration of the course of study. Students can use these letters when dealing with external contacts (for example benefits agencies and council tax offices).

11. SFC should write to colleges to set out its proposed procedures for managing student support funds in the context of ONS.

12. The SUMs Guidance should be modified to reflect that, in deciding whether courses are classified as full-time or part-time and the associated learning hours, colleges should take into account the rules on benefits and council tax eligibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

1. The view of the Group is that the introduction of entitlement/based Bursary and Childcare funding systems would be the best way of ensuring parity of treatment for students in different regions whilst at the same time meeting demand. SFC should explore the feasibility of introducing an entitlement/based system with Scottish Government.

2. SFC should carry out further work to calculate the cost of meeting the recommendations set out in this report. The final costings should be shared with Scottish Government and used as the basis for discussing the changes to student support funding.

3. SFC should highlight to Scottish Government the funding pressure created by the introduction of ONS in the context of the discussion of the overall level of funding for student support.
ANNEXE C: COLLEGE PARTICIPANTS

As a result of recent policy discussions on the subject of the SFC student support budget, we took the decision to seek the views of those involved in managing this funding source working within the college sector on the themes being discussed at national level. Notably this included questions to funding and student support staff in colleges about:

- Whether colleges are concerned about the level of unmet demand associated with the way the SFC student support budget operates.
- How individual colleges are using available student support funding to meet the needs of different groups of students, including managing any limits to available funding.
- The issues that concern colleges about the way that the SFC student support funding is administered and operated.

Staff working within funding teams and as student support officers from nine colleges gave their time to discuss with us their views on the way the SFC student support fund operates and how individual colleges manage the cash limited pot issued by the Scottish Funding Council.

In selecting colleges to speak to us about their experience of operating the SFC student support budget we sought to include a range from across Scotland, within urban and more rural areas of Scotland as well as ensuring representing from those that had been through mergers as well as those that had not.

The colleges that took part were:

- Ayrshire College
- Borders College
- Dundee and Angus College
- Edinburgh College
- City of Glasgow College
- Glasgow Clyde College
- New College Lanarkshire
- South Lanarkshire College
- SRUC (Scotland’s Rural College)
## ANNEXE D: FINAL STUDENT SUPPORT FUNDING ALLOCATIONS, CASH AND REAL TERMS, FINANCIAL YEARS 2006/07 TO 2015/16

### Final SFC student support funds to colleges, FY 2006/07 to 2015/16 (cash) (£)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bursary</th>
<th>Discretionary</th>
<th>Childcare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>54,596,010</td>
<td>5,776,576</td>
<td>6,918,813</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>56,070,121</td>
<td>5,864,724</td>
<td>7,105,621</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>57,891,775</td>
<td>6,038,756</td>
<td>8,335,953</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>64,131,236</td>
<td>6,232,996</td>
<td>8,602,703</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>72,974,407</td>
<td>6,866,934</td>
<td>9,021,599</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>78,696,801</td>
<td>7,095,947</td>
<td>13,665,622</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>78,708,244</td>
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<td>2013/14</td>
<td>81,274,008</td>
<td>7,259,677</td>
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<td>2014/15</td>
<td>82,275,468</td>
<td>7,264,706</td>
<td>14,505,396</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>83,968,996</td>
<td>7,002,635</td>
<td>14,258,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Scottish Funding Council

Note: Since 2011/12 Childcare funding has included an uplift of £3.9 million each year as the SFC are now responsible for allocating to colleges childcare funding for higher education students at colleges. This was previously the responsibility of SAAS. The total childcare budget has since 2011/12 been for use by both further and higher education students.

### Final SFC student support funds to colleges, FY 2006/07 to 2015/16 (real) (£)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bursary</th>
<th>Discretionary</th>
<th>Childcare</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>65,252,639</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>65,156,984</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
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<td>70,924,250</td>
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<td>2011/12</td>
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<td>2012/13</td>
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<td>2013/14</td>
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<td>2014/15</td>
<td>82,440,019</td>
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<td>2015/16</td>
<td>83,968,996</td>
<td>7,002,635</td>
<td>14,258,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Real terms figures at 2015/16 prices based on HMT March 2016 GDP Deflators published 15 April 2016
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UK Government (2016) UK Government webpage with minimum wage levels. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/national/minimum/wage/rates
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