

Board of Management Students, Staff & Equalities Committee

Date of Meeting	Monday 1 February 2021
Paper No.	SSEC2-E
Agenda Item	5.3
Subject of Paper	Audited Student Funding Support AY2019/20
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Gillian Plunkett Student Experience Director
Date of production	19 January 2021
Action	For Noting

1. Recommendations

The Students, Staff and Equalities Committee is asked to note this paper.

2. Purpose of Report

To provide an overview of the audited student support funds expenditure for AY201920.

3. Context

A key strategic priority for the College is **Strategic Priority 2 - To enable individuals to excel and realise their full potential** and in order to achieve this students are provided with a range of information, advice and support, including financial support.

Student support funds are governed by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and the Students Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) Policy and Guidance. This Policy and Guidance outlines student eligibility (including residency eligibility), assessment processes, and appropriate use of funds, management and audit requirements.

Links to the Policy and Guidance documents for 2020 are provided below.

[National Policy for Further Education Bursaries](#)

[National Policy: Further Education Discretionary Fund](#)

[National Policy: Childcare Funds for College Students](#)

[Higher Education Discretionary Funds Guidance](#)

To provide students with financial support the College receives an annual support fund allocation which is managed through the Student Experience Directorate.

Student support funds are subject to an annual audit with the final audit certificate and related data returned to the SFC for analysis related to a range of social and economic indicators.

4. Student Support Fund Expenditure 2019/20

Expenditure on student support funds at City of Glasgow College for AY2019/20 was £10.6 million (4% increase on the previous year). Table 1 below provides information on expenditure by funding type.

Table 1 – Student Support Fund Expenditure 2019/20*

Fund Type	Total Expenditure per Fund	No. of Students Supported	Average Annual Payment	Average Weekly Payment
Further Education Bursary Fund	£7,686,115	2,583	£2,976	£82
Further Education Childcare Fund	£363,962	118	£3,084	£85
Higher Education Childcare Fund	£491,666	115	£4,275	£118
Further Education Hardship Fund	£934,613	1,365	£685	N/a
Higher Education Hardship Fund	£805,378	870	£926	N/a
Total Expenditure	£10,281,734*	5,051	£2,389	N/a

*Externally Audited October 2020

4.1 Further Education (FE) Bursaries

Table 1 shows that over 75% of student support funds are spent on Further Education (FE) Bursaries.

Although most students may be eligible to receive a FE Bursary (eligibility includes residency), not all students will do so as FE Bursaries are means tested against parental income and will vary from a maximum of approx. £4,395 p.a. to £0. This contrasts dramatically with Higher Education (HE) students who, if eligible, will receive a £4,750 loan as a minimum regardless of parental income, rising to £7,750.

Table 1 shows that the average FE Bursary provided to students at City of Glasgow College is £2,976 which equates to around £82 per week and is around one third less than what HE students can expect via their student loan. It goes without saying that most students struggle with money, however FE students continue to be worse off than their counterparts on HE courses.

4.2 Further Education and Higher Education Discretionary Childcare Fund

Combined expenditure on childcare for FE and HE groups was £855,628 with 58% of funding supporting students who are also lone parents. Glasgow City has the highest rate of lone parents of all 32 Scottish local authorities with 4 in 10 families

with children being lone parent families, and wide neighbourhood differences across the city.

With lone parent figures in Scotland expected to rise over the next 25 years lone parents continue to be a priority group. ([Understanding Glasgow](#), Glasgow Indicators Project, 2017). Lone parents are also the guardians of the next generation, and the Scottish Government has recognised the importance of Childcare and Early Years Strategies in both providing quality childcare in Scotland and providing opportunities for lone parents to train and work in this area

4.3 Further Education and Higher Education Discretionary Hardship Fund

Combined expenditure on hardship payments for FE and HE groups was £173,999. The number of students supported from the FE Fund (1,365) is higher than the HE Fund (870). This reflects the higher number of FE students in hardship.

4.4 Other Funds

In addition to the above the College has also sourced three additional support funds for Maritime students; John Mather Trust totalling £4,000, Salvesen Trust totalling £27,000 and Navigation Fund totalling £20,000. These funds primarily target Cadets who have no access to Bursary/SAAS funding.

5. Student Financial Support in Scotland: Independent Review (2017)

The [Independent Review](#) reported in November 2017 and some recommendations such as a non repayable Care Experienced Bursary for FE and HE students at £8,100 now in place. However other more controversial recommendations such as the recommendation to offer student loans to FE students have still to be enacted. The NUS and other support groups oppose this recommendations and we will continue to monitor progress.

6. Annual Increase in Support Funds

Annual expenditure on student support continues to increase by approximately 4-5%. This can be attributed to various widening access and inclusion initiatives such as targeting those from SIMD10 and care experienced students.

7. Impact and Implications

Current projections indicate that the college will meet its student support obligations for 2019/20 within budget with an additional £815,152 awarded through the In Year Redistribution exercise.

Further widening access initiatives, either internally or externally via the Scottish Government, could impact further upon resources and ability to predict spend with accuracy; and if implemented in full, the recommendations of the Independent Student Support Review to award student loans to FE students could have far reaching implications for the college and sector.