

Timing of Payments – For Higher Education (HE) students in receipt of SAAS Care Experienced Students Bursary (CESB)

Equality Impact Assessment - Results

March 2022

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Title of Policy

Timing of Payments – For Higher Education (HE) students in receipt of SAAS Care Experienced Students Bursary (CESB).

Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy

Relevant National Outcomes:

"We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation"

"Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens."

At present, students in receipt of the Care Experienced Bursary receive their monthly payments of the bursary during the term time of their course.

Directorate: Division: team

Directorate for Advanced Learning & Science: Higher Education & Science: Student Financial Support.

Executive summary

Offering students the choice to receive CESB payments over 12 months rather than term time is seen as positive change for all equality groups, as it will be available to all. However, it is not mandatory and will not impact on eligibility or the overall amount received.

Background

We will offer HE students in receipt of the Care Experienced Students Bursary (CESB) from SAAS the choice to continue with the current arrangements for receiving the bursary in monthly payments during term time, or to spread these payments over 12 months, which would provide support over the summer months.

This follows the Programme for Government (PfG) commitment 'We will undertake a 2 year programme, giving students in receipt of the Care Experienced Bursary the option to receive their current funding package in 12 monthly payments.' Previously, the independent review of student support (the 'SSR') recommended that students should be given a choice on the timing of payments, within a set of pre-defined parameters. There have also been calls for student finance to be expanded to cover the full year in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Scope of the EQIA

As the introduction of the choice in timing of payments is intended as a positive change for all prospective HE students in receipt of the SAAS CESB, it is considered a concise and focused Equality Impact Assessment is proportionate in these circumstances.

Key Findings

The EQIA considered; key data regarding the age, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation of care experienced students, in both Further and Higher Education.

The EQIA has identified that there are gaps in the information available relating to the impact on the protected characteristics of care experienced students living in Scotland. However, the offer of receiving the CEB payments over 12 months will apply to all eligible care experienced students in higher education, irrespective of the protected characteristics and is therefore seen as a positive change for all.

Recommendations and Conclusion

In conclusion, positive or neutral impacts as a result of offering students the choice to receive CESB payments over 12 months rather than term time have been identified for care experienced students in all equality groups. No negative impacts have been identified.

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

The HE and FE student support package in Scotland will be subject to ongoing monitoring by the Advanced Learning and Science Directorate.



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