

SLC SFR 05/2016

30 November 2016

**Coverage:**  
**England**

**Theme:**  
**Children, Education  
and Skills**

**Issued by**  
The Student Loans Company  
100 Bothwell Street  
Glasgow  
G2 7JD

**Press Office**  
☎: 0141 306 2120  
✉: [press\\_office@slc.co.uk](mailto:press_office@slc.co.uk)

**Public Enquiries**  
☎: 0141 306 2000

**Statistician**  
Dave Cartwright  
☎: 0141 243 3209  
✉:  
[information\\_office@slc.co.uk](mailto:information_office@slc.co.uk)

**Online:**  
[www.slc.co.uk/statistics.aspx](http://www.slc.co.uk/statistics.aspx)

# Student Support for Higher Education in England 2016: 2015/16 payments, 2016/17 awards

## Introduction

This statistical first release presents figures on the student support awarded to applicants and paid to students or their Higher Education Provider. It shows final payment figures for the six academic years up to and including 2015/16 and early in-year awards for academic year 2016/17. The 2016/17 data gives an early indication of a number of changes such as the larger maintenance loans being made available to students from lower income backgrounds, in place of maintenance grants; and the introduction of the new Postgraduate Master's Loan (Tables 6.1 to 6.7).

It covers the awards and then payments to part-time students and postgraduate students as well as those to full-time students.

It covers applicants and students domiciled in England taking a designated Higher Education (HE) course at a University, Further Education (FE) College or Alternative Provider in the UK, as well as applicants and students domiciled in the EU (outside UK) taking a designated course in England.

## Key points

- The total number of students supported increased from 1.05 million in academic year 2010/11, to 1.24 million in 2015/16. The amount of support increased from £7.3 billion in 2010/11 to £14.1 billion in 2015/16 (Table 2).
- In academic year 2015/16 Tuition Fee Loans were paid to HE institutions on behalf of 1.01 million full-time students, which amounted to £8.03 billion (Table 4B).
- £1.64 billion was awarded in total in Maintenance and Special Support Grants in 2015/16, an increase of 1% from the previous year (Table 3A).
- 984,600 students borrowed £3.94 billion in Maintenance Loans in academic year 2015/16, an increase of 5% from the amount paid at the same point in 2014/15. On average, students took out an income contingent Maintenance Loan worth £4,000 in 2015/16, compared to £3,890 at the same point in 2014/15 (Table 4A).
- The 2015/16 payments are not yet final and will be revised in next year's publication. This is partly due to the alternative provider subset being subject to significant movement due to later course start dates.

## Contents

Introduction .....	1
Key Points .....	1
Table of contents .....	2
Definitions .....	3
Statistical commentary .....	5
Overview – measuring payments and awards.....	10
Data sources .....	10
Data quality .....	10
Data uses .....	10
Revisions .....	10
Notes on policy .....	11
Related statistical publications .....	13
Factors affecting time series .....	13
Notes for users .....	13
User consultations .....	14
National statistics .....	14
Table guide .....	15

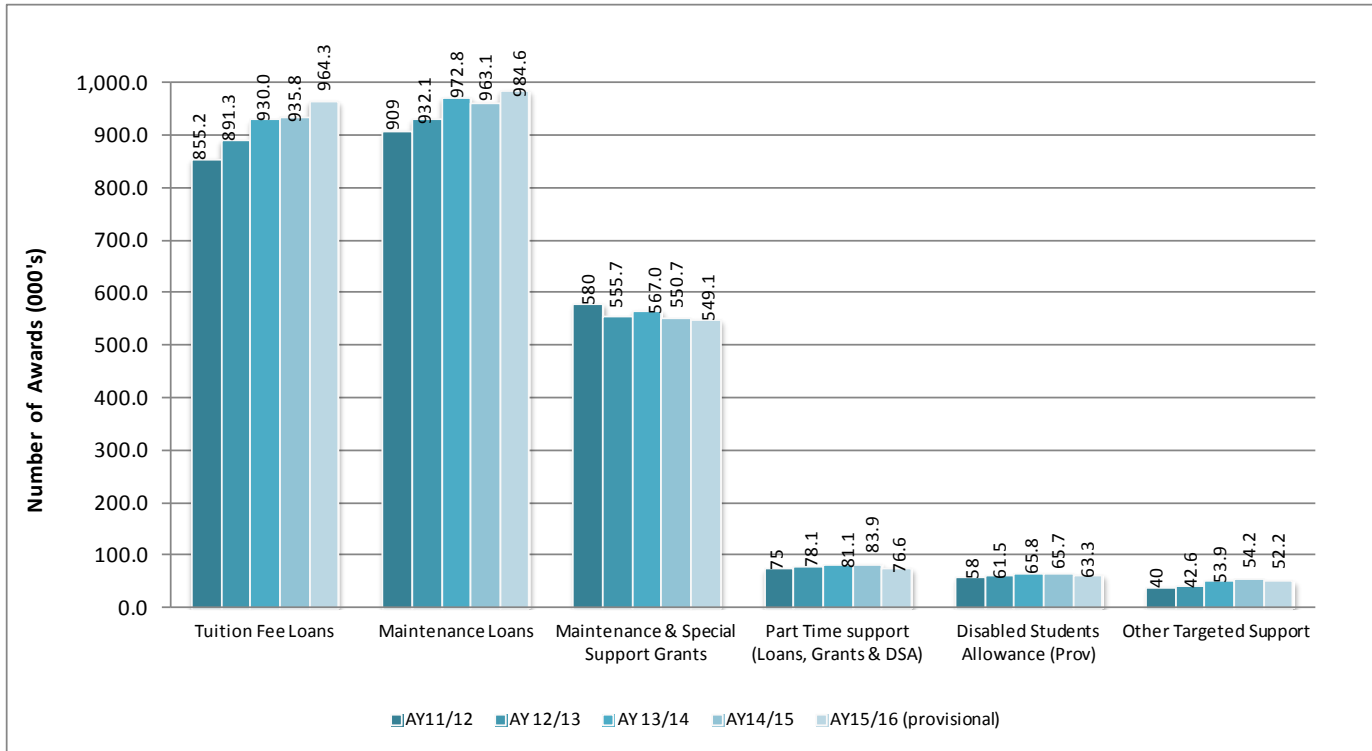
## Definitions

Term	Definition
Alternative Provider	An Alternative Provider is any provider of higher education courses which is not in direct receipt of recurrent funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) or from equivalent bodies in the Devolved Administrations; or does not receive direct recurrent public funding (for example, from a local authority, or from the Secretary of State for Education); and is not a further education college. Only providers with courses designated for student support are included in the statistics.
Applicant	This is a person applying for student support. Not all applicants take up a place. Applicants become students once they take up a place and the SLC has received a confirmation of their attendance.
Award	If an applicant for student finance is assessed as meeting the eligibility criteria as stipulated within the student finance regulations then they will be awarded student support. Awards will be paid on condition that the applicant subsequently attends the Higher Education Provider at which point they will be considered a student and payments will be released according to the payment schedule for the support types awarded.
Country of Study	The country in which the HE Provider is located at which the applicant intends to/is studying at.
Domiciled	The country in which the applicant was normally resident in the three years prior to the start of the course. This publication covers those students domiciled in England who study anywhere in the UK and EU (outside UK) students studying in England.
Estimated Eligible Population	The numbers of students that are eligible to apply for student finance including those who do not apply. Figures for the estimated eligible population are supplied by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). BIS use data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and other sources with the closest approximation of eligibility criteria available from those sources.
Entry Cohort	Grouping of applicants according to the Education (Student Support) Regulations against which the applicant was assessed for support. Student finance applicants are generally covered by transitional protection which means they continue to be assessed against the regulations in place for their first year of study, but this is not always the case.
Fee Waiver	A discount to tuition fees applied at the HE Provider's discretion. Fee waivers may not be applied and therefore reflected in the Tuition Fee Loan statistics until late in the academic year, depending on each HE Provider's arrangements.
Final Figures	The final position refers to statistics in a steady state. Final figures are not expected to change significantly and should represent the final outcome.

Full-Time	This refers to the mode of study for which student support is being paid, primarily to undergraduate students. For the purposes of this publication, the full time data also includes part-time and flexible ITT students who started their courses before 2010/11, as these students were also eligible for full-time student support. Students starting the same courses after 2010/11 are not included.
Full Year Maintenance Loan	The amount of Maintenance Loan available to students varies between those studying in their final year and those studying in an earlier year of their course. Students in their final year will be entitled to a reduced amount to reflect the reduced length of time in attendance at their university over which maintenance support is required.
Higher Education Provider	For the purpose of this release it is an organisation designated for student support and can include Universities which receive the bulk of their funding from public sources, Further Education Colleges, and Alternative Providers.
Level of Support	Identifies if the applicant was awarded the full level of means tested grant, the partial level or no grant at all.
Maintenance Loan Rate	Applicants are entitled to a different amount of Maintenance Loans depending on their term-time residence. Rates differ for applicants living at home, in London or elsewhere (excluding London).
Provisional Figures	These are figures based on the status of applications processed by Mid-November (two months into the academic year).
Public Provider	A Public Provider is any provider of higher education courses which is in direct receipt of recurrent funding from HEFCE or from equivalent bodies in the Devolved Administrations; or in receipt of direct recurrent public funding (for example, from a local authority, or from the Secretary of State for Education); or is a further education college. Only providers with courses designated for student support are included in the statistics.
Residual Income	This is the income associated with the household where the applicant normally resides. It comprises of the taxable earned and unearned incomes of the applicant or those of the applicants parents' minus any allowable deductions.
Student	For the purpose of this publication, an applicant for student support becomes a student once the Student Loans Company has received confirmation that the person is attending a course with a Higher Education Provider. Not all applicants take up a place.
Student Support Arrangement	This is the arrangement available at the time of the application for support. It includes the range of support available, the eligibility rules and the income thresholds.
Take-up rate	The rate of which the Eligible Population chooses to apply for a Student Loan.
Targeted Support	These are grants and allowances provided to students meeting specific circumstances. Targeted support includes Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), Travel Grant, Parental Learning Allowance, Childcare Grant and Adult Dependents Grant. DSA figures are presented separately from the Other Targeted Support products in the publication.

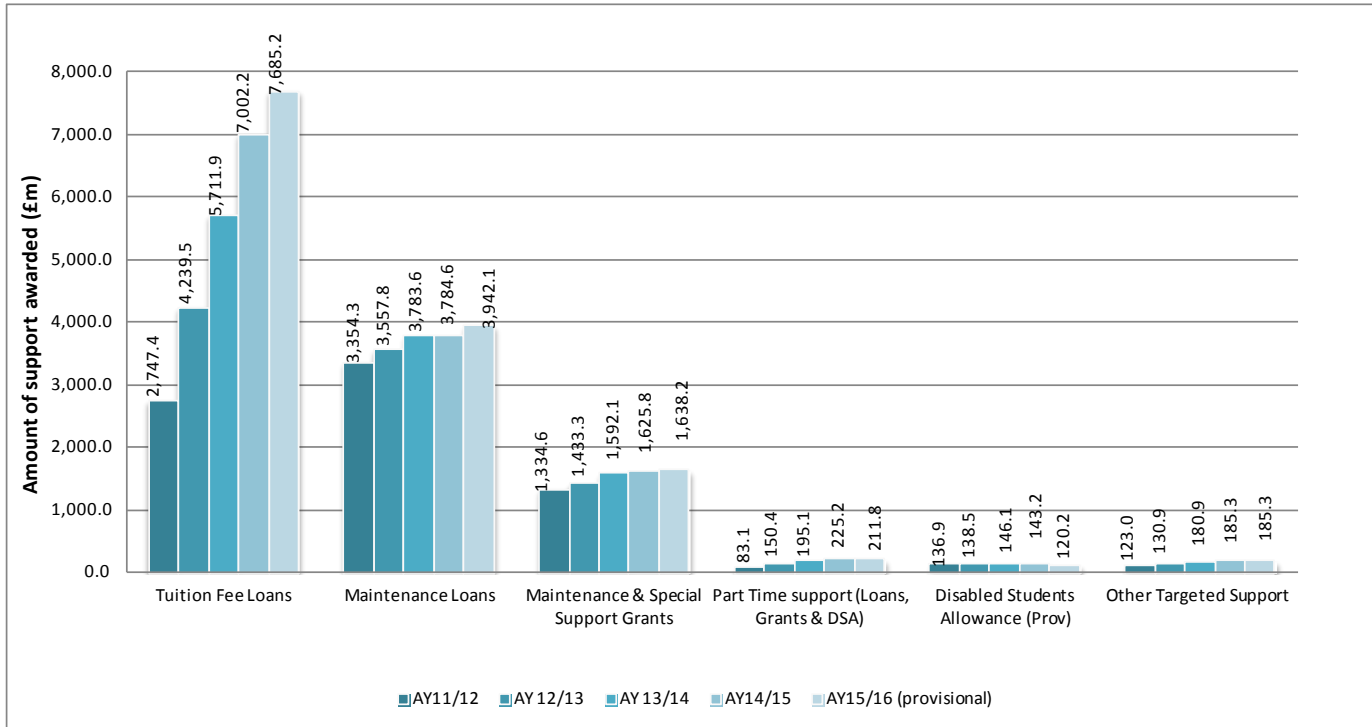
## Statistical commentary

Chart 1: Number of Awards for Student Support Applicants domiciled in England (000's)



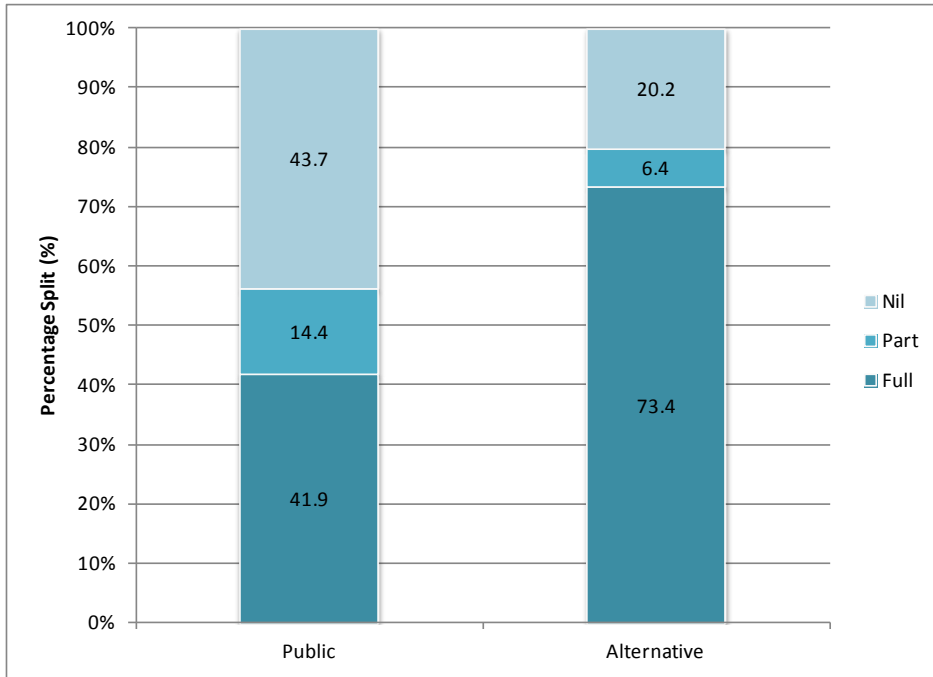
This chart shows the number of awards for all successful applications for Higher Education student finance from applicants domiciled in England. See Table 2.

Chart 2: Amount of support awarded (£m) for Student Support Applicants domiciled in England by product & academic year



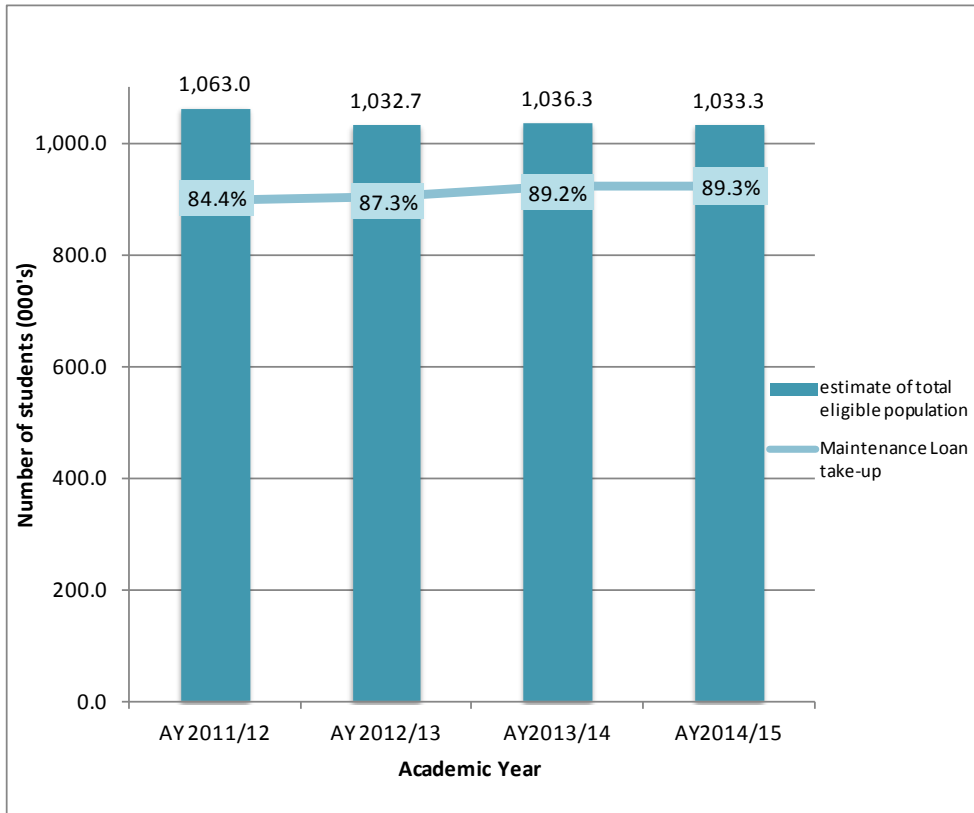
This chart highlights the increase in the amount of tuition fee loans awarded over the past five academic years which is a result of the shifting of the student body from the pre 2012/13 to the post 2012/13 fee system. See Table 2.

**Chart 3: Maintenance and Special Support Grant distribution by level of support and provider type in 2015/16 for post 2012/13 entry cohort applicants domiciled in England (provisional)**



This chart shows the full, part, nil split of Maintenance and Special Support Grants for English domiciled post 2012/13 entry students in academic year 2015/16 (provisional). See Table 3A(ii).

**Chart 4: Maintenance loan take up (%) by estimated full time eligible population (000's) for students domiciled in England**



This chart shows the estimated eligible population for Maintenance Loans and the corresponding take up rate. See Table 4A(ii).

**Chart 5: Tuition Fee Loans paid (£m) to Higher Education Providers for English domiciled students and EU students studying in England by provider type**

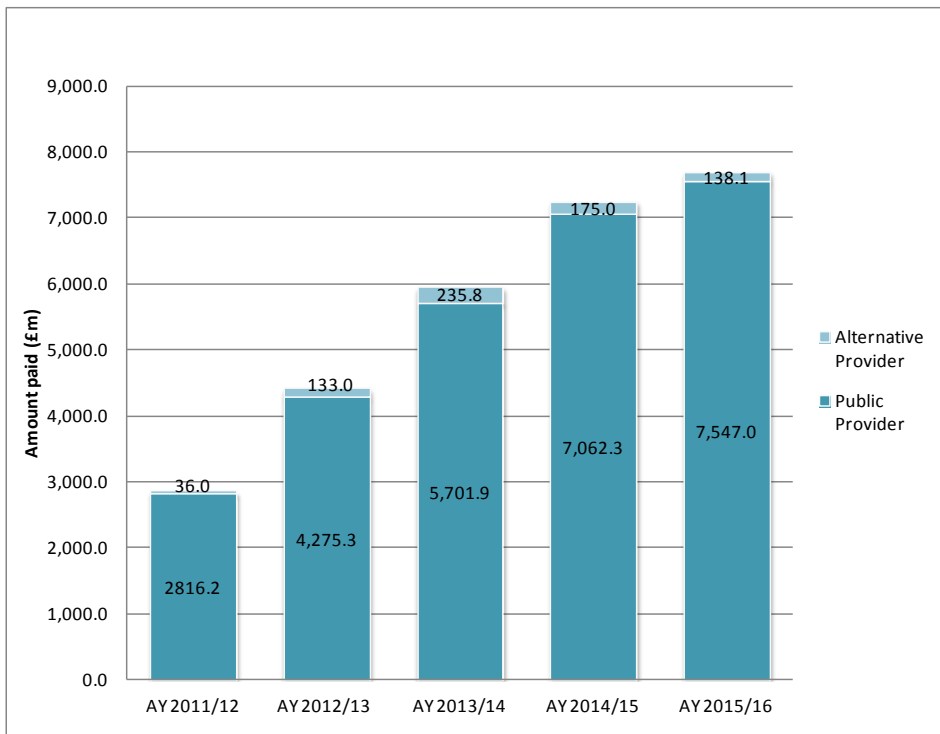
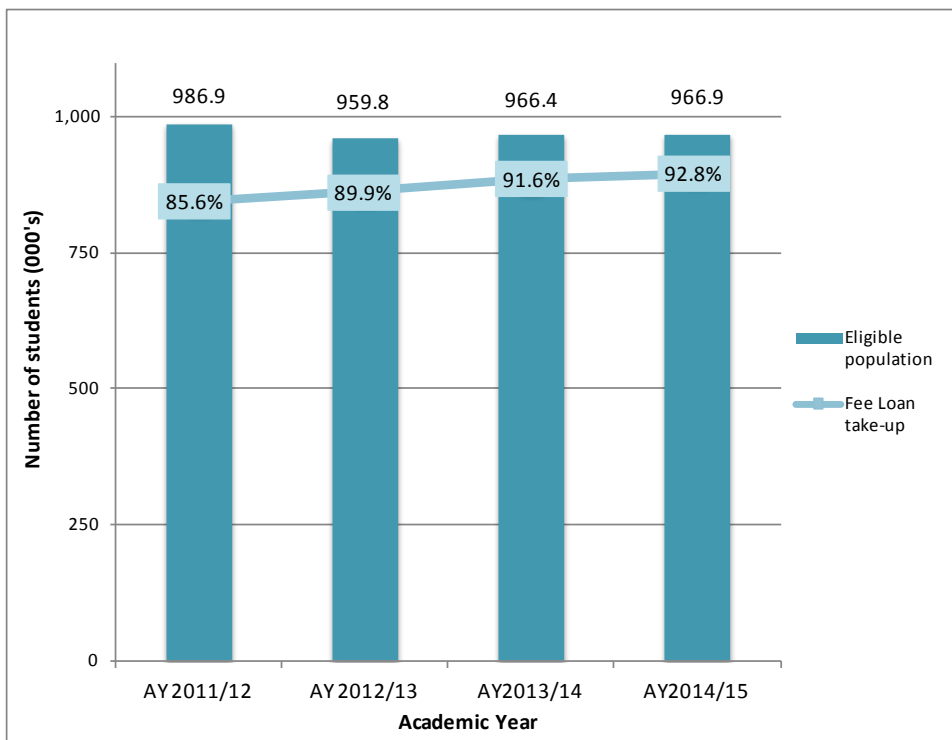


Chart 5 shows the breakdown of tuition fee payments to public and alternative providers over the last five academic years. See Table 4B(i).

**Chart 6: Tuition Fee Loan take up for English domiciled students at public institutions**



This chart shows the estimated eligible population for Tuition Fee Loans for English domiciled students at public institutions and the associated take up rate over four academic years. See Table 4B (ii).

**Chart 7: Number of English domiciled students paid Tuition Fee support at public providers by entry cohort**

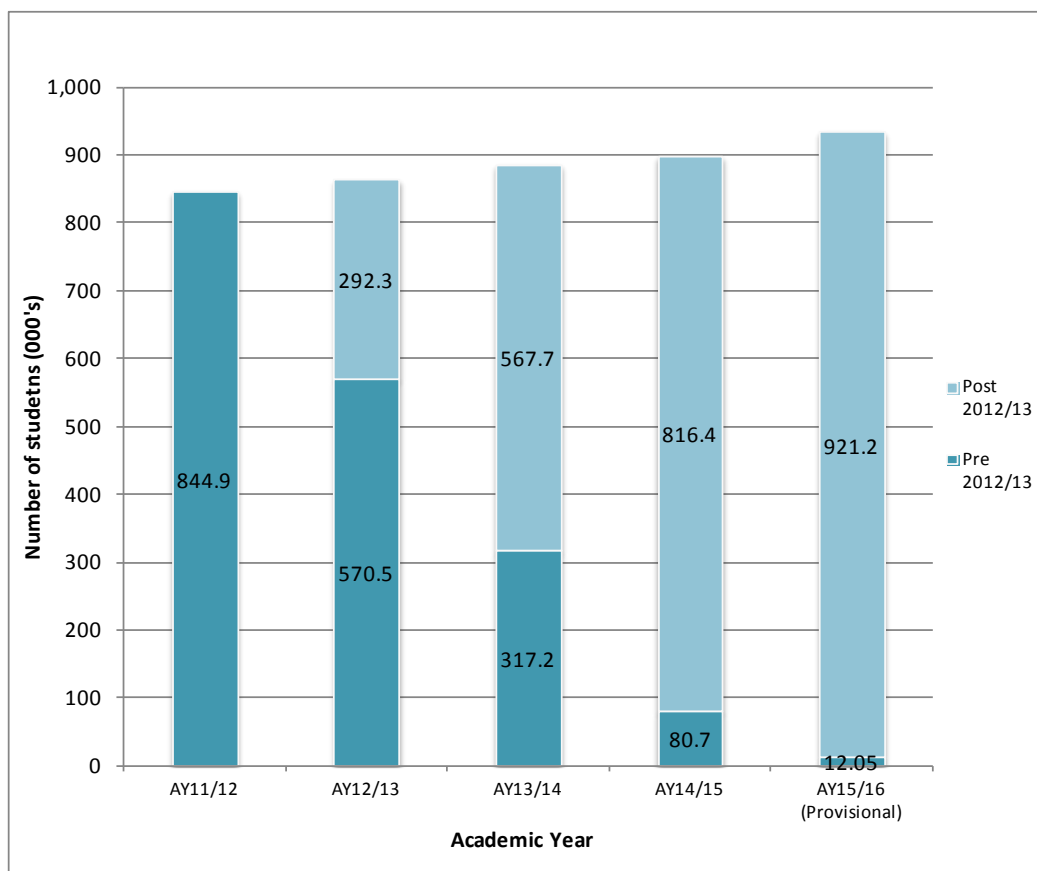


Chart 7 illustrates the shift from the old system of tuition fees (pre 2012/13 cohort) to the new system (post 2012/13 cohort) over five academic years. See Table 4B(i).

**Chart 8: Number of Tuition Fee Loans paid to HE Providers on behalf of full time students domiciled in England according to country of study by academic year**

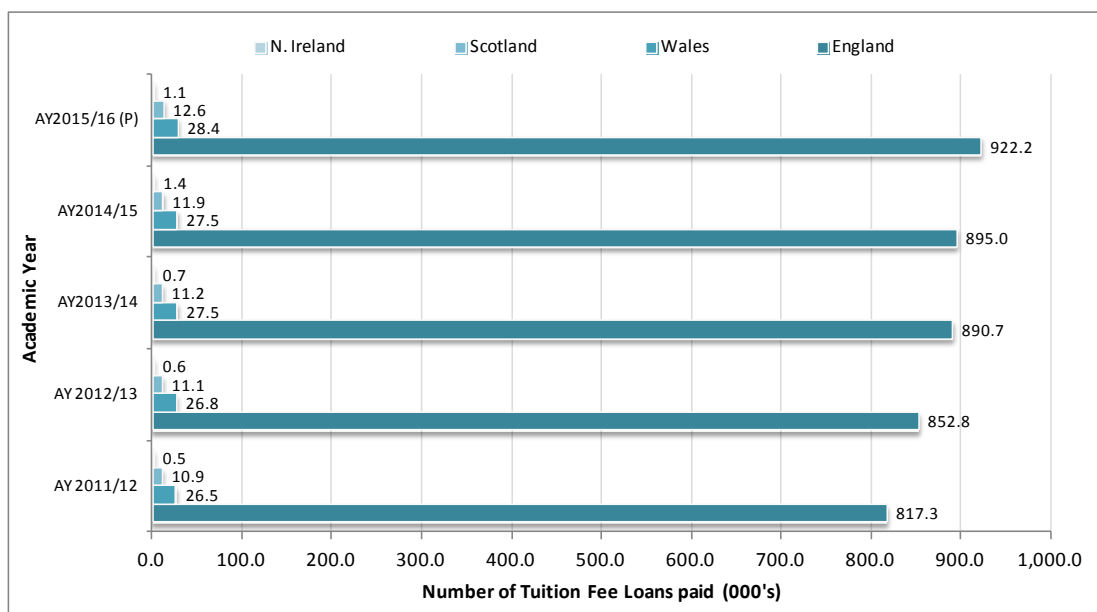
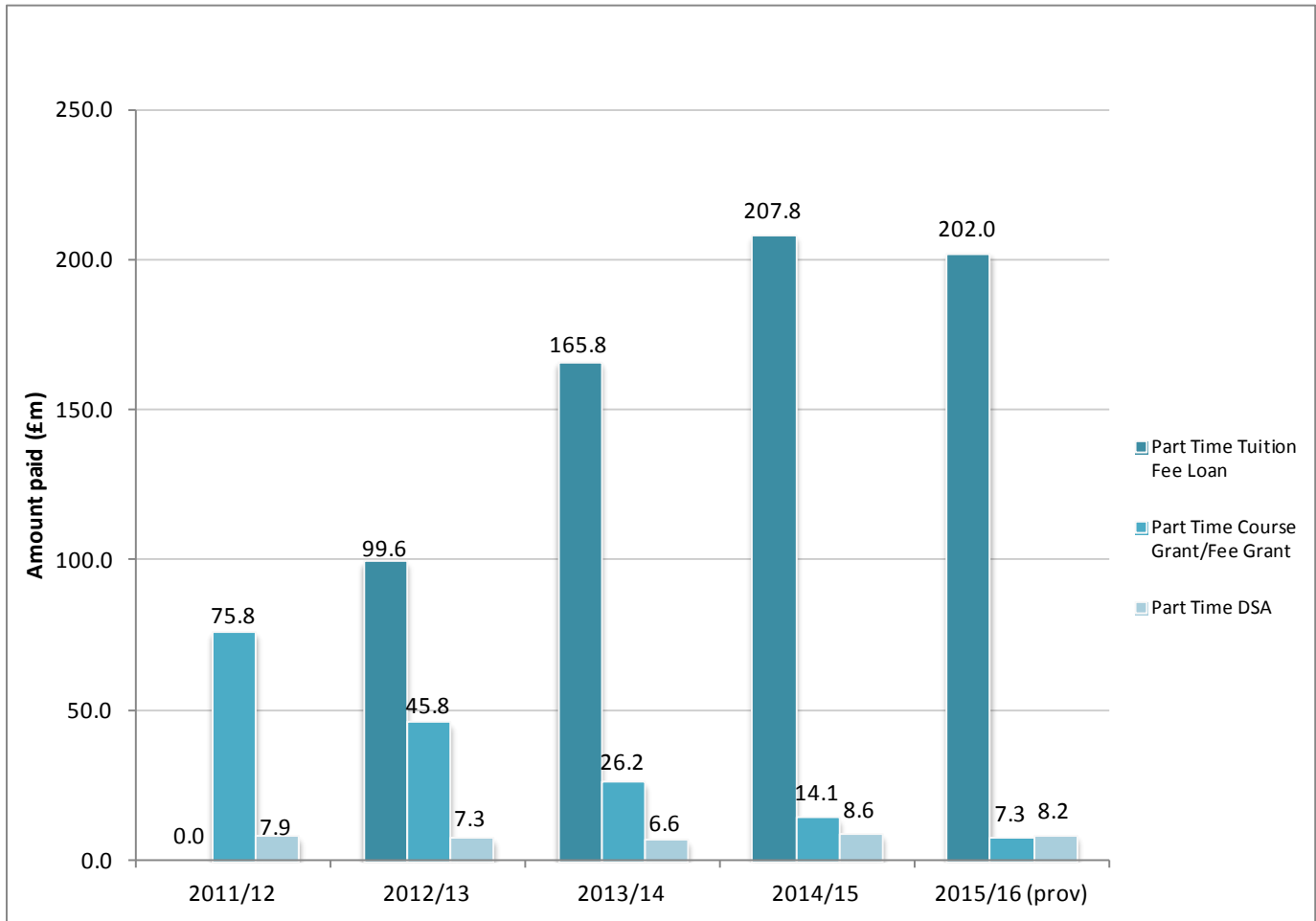


Chart 8 shows that the cross border flow for English domiciled students receiving tuition fee loans is stable year on year. See Table 4C.



**Chart 9: Part-Time fee support for students domiciled in England and EU domiciled students studying in England**



This chart shows the substitution of part-time course grants fee grants with the new part-time tuition fee loan product which was introduced in AY 2012/13.

See Table 5.

## Overview – measuring payments and awards

1. The main aim of this release is to measure Payments to student support recipients funded by England over the course of each academic year. This is effectively what is provided for Maintenance Loan and Tuition Fee Loans in Tables 4A and 4B of the publication. It is not possible to split grant payments by product; for this reason the breakdowns of spending on Maintenance Grants, Disabled Students Allowance and other Targeted Support products are based on Awards. This approach is taken in Table 3 (which feeds specific rows of Table 2) of the publication.
2. Awards differ from Payments as they refer to the decision on how much will be paid if the awarded applicants are present for study for the full academic year, while Payments refer to actual amounts received by students and so can be lower if the student is not present for the full academic year or if the applicant does not attend at all or does not draw down the full awarded amount (e.g. they dropout mid-year).
3. For all types of support an early indication of what is being awarded two months into the latest academic year, this time 2016/17, is provided in Section 6 of the tables (see Table guide on page 15). The number of Awards made will change noticeably between this point and the end of the academic year as additional students apply for student support.
4. Payments referring to the most recent Academic Year (2015/16) are provisional because the Alternative Provider subset is subject to significant movement even after this point due to later course start dates.

## Data sources

5. This publication uses data from a single source: administrative data from the SLC Customer Ledger Account Servicing System (CLASS). For details of the administrative sources see the published Statement of administrative sources published on the SLC website using the following link  
[http://www.slc.co.uk/media/5450/slc\\_statistics\\_-\\_statement\\_of\\_administrative\\_sources.pdf](http://www.slc.co.uk/media/5450/slc_statistics_-_statement_of_administrative_sources.pdf)

## Data quality

6. SLC has published the Quality Guidelines that it follows. As per those guidelines a Quality Plan is produced for each publication. The Quality Plan stipulates two stages of Quality Assurance. Data is extracted from the administrative systems then reviewed using a standard Quality Assurance checklist. The statistical tables created using that data are quality assured using the Statistical Quality guidelines. Further details can be found by following the link below  
[http://www.slc.co.uk/media/5403/slc\\_statistics\\_-\\_quality\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.slc.co.uk/media/5403/slc_statistics_-_quality_guidelines.pdf)

## Data uses

7. SLC has published a Uses Made document for Official statistics. Further details can be found by following the link below  
[http://www.slc.co.uk/media/5454/slc\\_official\\_statistics\\_-\\_use\\_made.pdf](http://www.slc.co.uk/media/5454/slc_official_statistics_-_use_made.pdf)

## Revisions

8. Revisions within the data are denoted with an [r]. Some of these revisions are carried over from the previous year's publication and are, therefore, not revisions to this year's publication. Further details can be found by following the link below [http://www.slc.co.uk/media/5449/slc\\_statistics\\_-\\_revisions\\_policy.pdf](http://www.slc.co.uk/media/5449/slc_statistics_-_revisions_policy.pdf)

## Notes on policy

9. Complete information on the student finance arrangements in England can be found at:  
<http://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/policy-information/student-support-information-notice.aspx>

### THE STUDENT FINANCE SYSTEM - SUMMARY OF POLICY CHANGES

#### Key changes in 2016/17:

10. **Full-Time Tuition Fee Loans** – No changes from 2015/16. Eligible English domiciled students and EU domiciled students (studying in England) who started full-time courses on or after 1 September 2012 at public providers are subject to a maximum tuition fee of £9,000, and can borrow up to this amount in the form of a tuition fee loan.

11. **Part-Time Tuition Fee Loans** – No changes from 2015/16. Eligible English domiciled students and EU domiciled students (studying in England) who started part-time courses on or after 1 September 2012 at public providers are subject to a maximum tuition fee of £6,750, and can borrow up to this amount in the form of a tuition fee loan.

12. **Full-time loans for living costs** – For new full-time students starting their courses on or after 1 August 2016, non-repayable maintenance grants have been switched to loans with eligible new full-time students from the lowest income backgrounds receiving £766 additional living costs support when compared with the previous (2015/16) academic year.

13. For eligible new students on the lowest incomes the maximum loan for living costs for students living away from home and studying outside London has been increased to £8,200, for students living away from home and studying in London to £10,702 and for students living at home to £6,904 (an increase of 10.3% in living costs support when compared with the 2015/16 academic year).

14. Maximum loans for living costs for continuing full-time students who started their courses on or after 1 September 2012 but before 1 August 2016 have been increased by forecast inflation, 2.41%. The maximum loan for living costs for students living away from home and studying outside London was increased to £5,878, for students living away from home and studying in London to £8,202 and for students living at home to £4,675.

15. **Full-time maintenance grants** – The maximum Maintenance Grant/Special Support Grant for full time students who started their courses on or after 1 September 2012 but before 1 August 2016 has been maintained at 2015/16 levels in 2016/17. The maximum maintenance grant has been maintained at £3,387. The maximum Special Support Grant which is paid to certain groups of students eligible for benefits in place of maintenance grant has also been maintained at £3,387.

16. **Disabled Students' Allowance** – Maximum Disabled Students' Allowances for new and continuing full-time, part-time and postgraduate students have been maintained at 2015/16 levels in 2016/17.

17. For full-time undergraduate students, the Non-Medical Helper Allowance has been maintained at £20,725, the Specialist Equipment Allowance at £5,212, the allowance for other disability related expenditure at £1,741.

18. For part-time undergraduate students, the Non-Medical Helper Allowance has been maintained at £15,543, the Specialist Equipment Allowance at £5,212 and the allowance for other disability related expenditure at £1,305.

19. For postgraduate students, the maximum disabled students' allowance has been maintained at £10,362.

20. Additionally, for students making their first claim for DSAs in 2016/17 or later, the following changes will apply

- HE providers are to take primary responsibility for less specialist non-medical support roles, with the exception of sighted guides for which DSAs will retain primary responsibility.
- DSAs will retain primary responsibility for funding the most specialist non-medical help support, with the exception of specialist transcription services for which HE providers will take primary responsibility.
- DSAs funding will not be available where specialist accommodation is provided by the HE provider or their agent, other than by exception, and HE providers should no longer pass any additional costs onto the student.
- Devices for printing and scanning will continue to be funded through DSAs where there is a disability related reason, but HE providers are expected to reduce the need for individual devices through improved library services and access to printing/scanning services.
- Standard computer peripherals and other accessories will now be funded by exception only, and where there is a disability related reason, apart from standard laptop carry cases.

21. **Other targeted support** - Grants for new and continuing full-time students with dependants have been maintained at 2015/16 levels in 2016/17. The maximum Adult Dependents' Grant has been maintained at £2,757. The maximum Childcare Grant has been maintained at £155.24 per week for one child and £266 for two or more children. The maximum Parents' Learning Allowance has been maintained at £1,573.

22. **Postgraduate master's loan** – The new Postgraduate Master's Degree Loan is now available to eligible students starting master's courses, in any subject, on or after 1 August 2016. The loan scheme makes £10,000 available to students as a contribution towards the costs of their study and can be used for tuition fees and /or living costs.

#### **Key changes in 2015/16:**

23. **Full-Time Tuition Fee Loans** – No changes from 2014/15. Eligible English domiciled students and EU domiciled students (studying in England) who started full-time courses on or after 1 September 2012 at public providers are subject to a maximum tuition fee of £9,000, and can borrow up to this amount in the form of a tuition fee loan.

24. Students who started full-time courses which started before 1st September 2012 were subject to a maximum tuition fee of £3,465 in 2015/16 (maintained at 2014/15 levels in 2015/16) and could borrow up to this amount in the form of a tuition fee loan.

25. **Part-Time Tuition Fee Loans** – No changes from 2014/15. For all new part-time students in 2015/16 and eligible continuing part-time students' who started courses at public providers on or after 1 September 2012, maximum tuition fees were maintained at £6,750 and students could borrow up to this amount in the form of a tuition fee loan.

26. **Full-time loans for living costs** – Maximum loans for living costs for full-time courses were increased by forecast inflation 3.34%. For new full-time students and eligible continuing students who started their courses on or after 1 September 2012 and were living away from home and studying outside London the maximum loan for living costs was increased to £5,740, for students living away from home and studying in London to £8,009 and for students living at home to £4,565.

27. **Full-time maintenance grants** – For eligible new full-time students and continuing students who started their courses on or after 1 September 2012, the maximum grant in 2015/16 was maintained at £3,387.

28. For continuing full-time students who started their courses before 1 September 2012, the maximum grant in 2015/16 was maintained at £3,110.

29. **Disabled Students' Allowance**– Maximum Disabled Students' Allowances were maintained at 2014/15 levels in 2015/16.

30. The full-time Non-Medical Helper Allowance was maintained at £20,725, the Specialist Equipment Allowance at £5,212, the allowance for other disability related expenditure at £1,741.

31. The part-time Non-Medical Helper Allowance was maintained at £15,543, the Specialist Equipment Allowance at £5,212 and the allowance for other disability related expenditure at £1,305.

32. For postgraduate students, the maximum disabled students' allowance has been maintained at £10,362.

33. From September 2015, DSAs have not been available for the first £200 cost towards a computer. Additionally, from this date DSAs are only available for higher specification computers which are needed to run assistive technology and where such a computer is required solely because of the student's disability.

34. **Other targeted support** - Dependants' grants for full-time students with caring responsibilities were increased by forecast inflation 3.34%.

35. Maximum Adult Dependants' Grant was increased by 3.34% to £2,757. The maximum Childcare Grant was increased by 3.34% to £155.24 per week for one child only and to £266.15 per week for two or more children. The maximum Parents' Learning Allowance was increased to £1,573, an increase of 3.34%..

## Related statistical publications

36. Statistics on Loans and Grants awarded to students in HE in England in academic year 2015/16 (provisional) were published in SLC SFR 05/2015 on 02 December 2015. These can be found at <http://www.slc.co.uk/media/6669/slcsfr052015.pdf>

37. Statistics on the repayment of student loans for Higher Education in England in financial year 2015-16 were published on 16 June 2016 in SLC SFR 01/2016. These can be found at <http://www.slc.co.uk/media/7594/slcsfr012016.pdf>

## Factors affecting time series

38. The academic years 2012/13 to 2015/16 show a stepped increase in tuition fee loan expenditure as a result of the shift in the student body from the pre 2012/13 to the post 2012/13 fee system.

## Notes for users

39. The figures in this first release have been compiled by the Student Loans Company Limited (SLC). All student numbers and amounts have been rounded to the nearest 100 and £100,000 unless specified otherwise. All totals and averages are calculated from un-rounded numbers.

40. Details of the amounts of loans and grants available to students are publicly available See the Guide to Student Finance section on the GOV.UK web site: <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

## User consultations

41. Consultation exercises are conducted by SLC on the Official Statistics it produces in order to understand who uses the publications, for what purpose, and to find out how they can be made more useful in terms of content, methodology, timeliness and presentation. As part of the consultation process SLC runs surveys. See the User Consultation Survey section of the SLC website at <http://www.slc.co.uk/statistics/statistics-user-consultation.aspx>

The most recent response to user feedback can be found at [http://www.slc.co.uk/media/5452/consultation\\_response\\_nov-jan\\_13\\_v7.pdf](http://www.slc.co.uk/media/5452/consultation_response_nov-jan_13_v7.pdf)

## National statistics

42. 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.

## Table guide

### Section 1 - Student Support Available

**Table 1A** shows the maximum support available for maintenance in England through the Maintenance Grant and Maintenance Loans schemes for student support scheme students between academic years 2011/12 and 2015/16.

**Table 1B** shows the support package for new entrants in academic year 2015/16.

**Chart 1** show the student support entitlements for different levels of household residual income under the student support arrangements for new students entering Higher Education in academic year 2015/16.

### Section 2 - Overview of Support Awarded

**Table 2** shows the overview of all the products for the student support scheme in England. It details the number of awards and the total amount of support awarded to England domiciled applicants between academic years 2010/11 and 2015/16.

### Section 3 - Grants and Allowances

**Tables 3A (i) to (ii)** show the distribution of Maintenance Grants for England domiciled students by entry cohorts.

**Tables 3B(i) to (ii)** show the summary of Disabled Students Allowances (DSA) expenditure authorised for payment to full-time England domiciled students

**Table 3C** shows the summary of Other Targeted Support awards to England domiciled applicants between academic years 2010/11 and 2015/16.

### Section 4 - Loans

**Tables 4A(i) to (iii)** show the number of students paid a Maintenance Loan, the amount borrowed and the average loan value by student support scheme for students domiciled in England. The tables also include estimates of the take-up rate of Maintenance Loans.

**Tables 4B(i) to (iii)** show the number of Tuition Fee Loans taken out, the amount borrowed and the average loan value by student support scheme for all students domiciled in England and for EU (outside UK) students attending HE courses in England. The tables also include estimates of the take-up rate of Tuition Fee Loans.

**Tables 4C** shows the number of Tuition Fee Loans taken out, the amount borrowed and the average loan value for the student support scheme for all students domiciled in England broken down by the country of the HE Provider attended.

**Table 4D** shows the number of students paid Maintenance Loans and Tuition Fee Loans combined, the amount borrowed and the average loan value by student support scheme for students domiciled in England between academic years 2010/11 and 2015/16.

### Section 5 – Part Time and Postgraduate Support

**Table 5A** shows the support given to part time students domiciled in England and EU (outside UK) students studying in England between academic years 2010/11 and 2015/16.

**Table 5B** shows the DSA support to Postgraduate students between academic years 2010/11 and 2015/16.

## **Section 6 – Early in-year awards**

**Table 6.1** shows the maximum support available for maintenance in England through the Maintenance Grant and Maintenance Loans schemes for student support scheme students between academic years 2016/17 and compares it to 2015/16.

**Table 6.2** shows the support package for new entrants in academic year 2016/17.

**Table 6.3** shows the distribution of Maintenance and Special Support Grants Awarded to full-time Applicants domiciled in England – early indicative awards academic years 2011/12 and 2016/17.

**Table 6.4** shows Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) Full-time students domiciled in England – early indicative figures academic years 2011/12 to 2016/17

**Table 6.5** Awards of Maintenance Loan awarded to full-time Applicants domiciled in England – early indicative figures academic years 2011/12 to 2016/17

**Table 6.6** Awards of Tuition Fee Loan to full-time Applicants domiciled in England and EU (Outside UK) Applicants studying in England by Provider Type – early indicative figures academic years 2011/12 to 2016/17

**Table 6.7** Payments of Postgraduate Loans to full-time Students domiciled in England and EU (Outside UK) Applicants studying in England by Provider Type – early indicative figures academic year 2016/17