

Title: Reforming the Social Work Bursary IA No: Lead department or agency: Health. Other departments or agencies:	Impact Assessment (IA)		
	Date: 01/01/2011		
	Stage: Development/Options		
	Source of intervention: Domestic		
Type of measure: Other			

Summary: Intervention and Options **RPC Opinion:** RPC Opinion Status

Cost of Preferred (or more likely) Option			
Total Net Present Value	Business Net Present Value	Net cost to business per year (EANCB on 2009 prices)	In scope of One-In, Measure qualifies as One-Out?
N/A	N/A	£0	No NA

What is the problem under consideration? Why is government intervention necessary?
 The Department of Health funds the social work bursary on behalf of Government. In 2009, the Social Work Taskforce proposed that the Government should review the funding arrangements to provide more effective incentives for high quality entrants to the social work profession and to encourage completion of degree courses, entry to, and retention in, the workforce. The Government accepted this recommendation and also wished to examine the affordability and sustainability of the social work bursary in the current economic climate, including moving away from a demand-led model.

What are the policy objectives and the intended effects?
 The Government objectives for reforming the bursary are twofold:

- Firstly, to reward quality (and commitment to working as a social worker) as per the Social Work Task Force's recommendation, and
- Secondly, to reduce costs and to ensure that value for money is maximised from the significant level of investment.

What policy options have been considered, including any alternatives to regulation? Please justify preferred option (further details in Evidence Base)
 There is no preferred option - the Department is awaiting the outcome of the consultation.

Option 1: Retain the current bursary scheme for undergraduates and postgraduates but with means testing for the whole bursary.

Option 2: Retain the postgraduate bursary only.

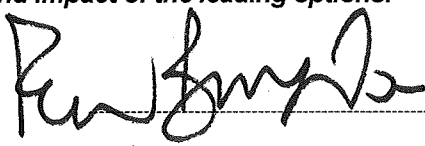
Option 3: Retain undergraduate bursary from the second year and postgraduate scheme remains the same.

Option 4: End the bursary completely.

Option 5: Create a new scheme based on successful completion of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment.

Will the policy be reviewed? It will be reviewed. If applicable, set review date: 01/2017					
Does implementation go beyond minimum EU requirements?			N/A		
Are any of these organisations in scope? If Micros not exempted set out reason in Evidence Base.	Micro No	< 20 No	Small No	Medium No	Large No
What is the CO ₂ equivalent change in greenhouse gas emissions? (Million tonnes CO ₂ equivalent)			Traded: N/A	Non-traded: N/A	

I have read the Impact Assessment and I am satisfied that, given the available evidence, it represents a reasonable view of the likely costs, benefits and impact of the leading options.

Signed by the responsible Minister:  Date: 7 May 2012

Summary: Analysis & Evidence

Policy Option 1

Description: Means-tested undergraduate and postgraduate bursary

FULL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Price Base Year 2011	PV Base Year 2012	Time Period Years 10	Net Benefit (Present Value (PV)) (£m)		
			Low: 90.6	High: 367.2	Best Estimate: 251.7

COSTS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price)	Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Cost (Present Value)
Low	As yet unknown	1	N/A	N/A
High	As yet unknown		N/A	N/A
Best Estimate	As yet unknown		N/A	N/A

Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups'
 Reductions in cost illustrated in benefits section below.

Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'
 There may be costs associated with establishing new or extending existing administrative systems to enable effective processing of bursary applications under this more complex system. However, discussions with the BSA have indicated that it is likely that social work bursaries could be integrated into their existing means-testing system for NHS bursaries.

BENEFITS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price)	Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
Low	N/A	N/A	11.0	90.6
High	N/A		44.5	367.2
Best Estimate	N/A		30.6	251.7

Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'
 Benefits illustrated as cost savings against counterfactual. See attached notes for details of methodology used to calculate the best estimates.

Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'
 Social benefit of opening up training to potential applicants from deprived backgrounds, thus enhancing equality gains from the scheme. Would have potential to reduce attrition of trainees who face financial difficulties.

Key assumptions/sensitivities/risks	Discount rate (%)	3.5
General assumptions relating to all policy options are attached in Evidence Base. High, Low and Average savings based on scenario analysis (see notes below for more details), in which the "average" student would receive different proportions of the maximum bursary.		

BUSINESS ASSESSMENT (Option 1)

Direct impact on business (Equivalent Annual) £m:			In scope of OIOO?	Measure qualifies as
Costs: N/A	Benefits: N/A	Net: N/A	No	NA

Summary: Analysis & Evidence

Policy Option 2

Description: Retain the postgraduate bursary

FULL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Price Base Year 2011	PV Base Year 2012	Time Period Years 10	Net Benefit (Present Value (PV)) (£m)		
			Low: 246.7	High: 372.7	Best Estimate: 327.1

COSTS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years		Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Cost (Present Value)
Low	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
High	N/A		N/A	N/A
Best Estimate	N/A		N/A	N/A

Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups'
 Reductions in cost illustrated in benefits section below.

Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'
 There will be a reduction in the cost of administering the bursary, as the majority of claimants under the current system are undergraduates (over 75% in 2010/11), who will not be eligible to apply for funding under this policy option.

BENEFITS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years		Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
Low	N/A	N/A	29.7	246.7
High	N/A		45.3	372.7
Best Estimate	N/A		39.6	327.1

Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'
 Benefits illustrated as cost savings against counterfactual. See attached notes for details of methodology used to calculate the best estimates.

Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'
 Ability to continue funding postgraduate students, which are understood to be the preferred entrants into social work, at current rates, while significantly reducing the overall payroll.
 However, there may be disbenefits in that revoking the bursary could deter potential social workers from applying for undergraduate training and there could be a negative impact on attrition rates.

Key assumptions/sensitivities/risks	Discount rate (%)	3.5
General assumptions relating to all policy options are attached in Evidence Base.		

BUSINESS ASSESSMENT (Option 2)

Direct impact on business (Equivalent Annual) £m:			In scope of OIOO?	Measure qualifies as
Costs: N/A	Benefits: N/A	Net: N/A	No	NA

Summary: Analysis & Evidence

Policy Option 3

Description: Retain undergraduate bursary from second year and postgraduate scheme remains the same

FULL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Price Base Year 2011	PV Base Year 2012	Time Period Years 10	Net Benefit (Present Value (PV)) (£m)		
			Low: 114.8	High: 284.7	Best Estimate: 221.0

COSTS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years		Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Cost (Present Value)
Low	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
High	N/A		N/A	N/A
Best Estimate	N/A		N/A	N/A

Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

Reductions in cost illustrated in benefits section below.

Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

Impact on administration costs expected to be minimal as current infrastructure would support this policy option. Potential for a small reduction in administration resources as a result of a lower volume of claimants.

BENEFITS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years		Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
Low	N/A	N/A	13.6	114.8
High	N/A		34.3	284.7
Best Estimate	N/A		26.6	221.0

Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'

Benefits illustrated as cost savings against counterfactual. See attached notes for details of methodology used to calculate the best estimates.

Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'

Ability to continue provision of social work bursary for most students at existing rates, while reducing the overall budgetary commitments to the Department.

However, there may be disbenefits in that revoking the bursary could deter potential social workers from applying for undergraduate training and there could be a negative impact on attrition rates.

Key assumptions/sensitivities/risks

General assumptions relating to all policy options are attached in Evidence Base.

Discount rate (%)

3.5

BUSINESS ASSESSMENT (Option 3)

Direct impact on business (Equivalent Annual) £m:			In scope of OIOO?	Measure qualifies as
Costs: N/A	Benefits: N/A	Net: N/A	No	NA

Summary: Analysis & Evidence

Policy Option 4

Description: End the bursary completely

FULL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Price Base Year 2011	PV Base Year 2012	Time Period Years 10	Net Benefit (Present Value (PV)) (£m)		
			Low: N/A	High: N/A	Best Estimate: 614.1

COSTS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years		Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Cost (Present Value)
Low	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
High	N/A		N/A	N/A
Best Estimate	N/A		N/A	N/A

Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

Reductions in cost illustrated in benefits section below.

Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

Once transitional period is complete, all administrative and related bursary costs will cease, thus nullifying all bursary expenditure. There will still remain expenditure associated with payment of travel expenses for practice placements, however this could be absorbed into other funding sources.

BENEFITS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years		Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
Low	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
High	N/A		N/A	N/A
Best Estimate	N/A		74.5	614.1

Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'

Benefits illustrated as cost savings against counterfactual. See attached notes for details of methodology used to calculate the best estimates.

Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'

Potential disbenefit of workforce undersupply if the bursary is a significant influencer of applications. There may also be an adverse impact on attrition rates, as students would have less financial support to remain in training.

Key assumptions/sensitivities/risks

General assumptions relating to all policy options are attached in Evidence Base.

Discount rate (%)

3.5

BUSINESS ASSESSMENT (Option 4)

Direct impact on business (Equivalent Annual) £m:			In scope of OIOO?	Measure qualifies as
Costs: N/A	Benefits: N/A	Net: N/A	No	NA

Summary: Analysis & Evidence

Policy Option 5

Description: Create a new scheme based on successful completion of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (£5,000 payment)

FULL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Price Base Year 2011	PV Base Year 2012	Time Period Years 10	Net Benefit (Present Value (PV)) (£m)		
			Low: N/A	High: N/A	Best Estimate: 370.0

COSTS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price)	Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Cost (Present Value)
Low	N/A	1	N/A	N/A
High	N/A		N/A	N/A
Best Estimate	As yet unknown		As yet unknown	N/A

Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

Reductions in cost illustrated in benefits section below.

Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

Expect there to be change in costs of administering bursary, although this hasn't been assessed at this stage. New processes will need to be put into place to track graduates through to AYSE.

BENEFITS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price)	Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
Low	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
High	N/A		N/A	N/A
Best Estimate	N/A		44.4	370.0

Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'

Benefits illustrated as cost savings against counterfactual. See attached notes for details of methodology used to calculate the best estimates.

Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'

Negates commitment to pay students who leave training or who are not committed to entering the profession after graduating. Would also provide a further incentive to students to complete training and enter the profession.
Potential disbenefit in increased risk of attrition of students requiring financial support during study.

Key assumptions/sensitivities/risks

Discount rate (%) 3.5

General assumptions relating to all policy options are attached in Evidence Base.
Costings reflect a scenario in which 75% of graduates enter ASYE within one academic year of completing training.
ASYE is a policy still under development, so risk if implementation of ASYE is delayed or the policy is dropped that bursary scheme will no longer be fit for purpose.

BUSINESS ASSESSMENT (Option 5)

Direct impact on business (Equivalent Annual) £m:			In scope of OIOO?	Measure qualifies as
Costs: N/A	Benefits: N/A	Net: N/A	No	NA

Summary: Analysis & Evidence

Policy Option 6

Description: Create a new scheme based on successful completion of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (£7,000 payment)

FULL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Price Base Year 2011	PV Base Year 2012	Time Period Years 10	Net Benefit (Present Value (PV)) (£m)		
			Low: N/A	High: N/A	Best Estimate: 323.4

COSTS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Cost (Present Value)
Low	N/A	N/A	N/A
High	N/A	N/A	N/A
Best Estimate	As yet unknown	As yet unknown	N/A

Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups'
 Reductions in cost illustrated in benefits section below.

Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'
 Expect there to be change in costs of administering bursary, although this hasn't been assessed at this stage. New processes will need to be put into place to track graduates through to AYSE.

BENEFITS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
Low	N/A	N/A	N/A
High	N/A	N/A	N/A
Best Estimate	N/A	38.6	323.4

Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'
 Benefits illustrated as cost savings against counterfactual. See attached notes for details of methodology used to calculate the best estimates.

Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'
 Negates commitment to pay students who leave training or who are not committed to entering the profession after graduating. Would also provide a further incentive to students to complete training and enter the profession.
 Potential disbenefit in increased risk of attrition of students requiring financial support during study.

Key assumptions/sensitivities/risks	Discount rate (%)	3.5
General assumptions relating to all policy options are attached in Evidence Base. Costings reflect a scenario in which 75% of graduates enter ASYE within one academic year of completing training. ASYE is a policy still under development, so risk if implementation of ASYE is delayed or the policy is dropped that bursary scheme will no longer be fit for purpose.		

BUSINESS ASSESSMENT (Option 6)

Direct impact on business (Equivalent Annual) £m:	In scope of OIOO?	Measure qualifies as
Costs: N/A	Benefits: N/A	Net: N/A
	No	NA

Evidence Base (for summary sheets)

A. Overview of situation and introduction of potential remedial policies

i. Characterising the underlying problem

The Department is consulting on reforming the social work bursary. The detail on the options and the rationale for reform are contained with the consultation document. In summary, the reasons for reform are twofold.

Firstly, the Social Work Task Force recommended that the bursary be reviewed as in their view the policy objective for introducing the bursary had been met and the bursary had been successful in increasing numbers of social workers. The SWTF view was that this investment be reviewed to examine whether it could be used as a lever to increase the quality. The Department agreed with their recommendation.

Secondly, the Department was also concerned to examine whether the bursary represented value for money and to examine how costs could be reduced and controlled. Annual bursary costs had increased from £60m in 2005/06 to £81m in 2011/12. The bursary is currently demand led with no limit on the number of the bursary recipients. Some of the options for retaining the bursary (1, 2 and 3) will include a cap on the number of bursary recipients.

The literature review also found that there is no direct correlation between people taking up employment as a social worker and payment of the bursary but the bursary may encourage students to study social work. The GSCC also estimate that 25% of graduates do not register as social workers or take up employment as social workers with six months of graduation. These are some of the issues the consultation is trying to address.

There are therefore three objectives for reforming the bursary:

1. *to improve the overall quality (and commitment to work as a social worker) of social work graduates;*
2. *to maintain a sufficient supply of high quality new entrants to the profession, and*
3. *to recognise the overall cost constraints and the need to maximise value for money*

The 5 options for reforming all meet these high level objectives to varying degrees. Whilst it is relatively straightforward to estimate the costs of the options for reforming the bursary, the Department is particularly keen to hear views on the impact on supply and demand, where there is limited robust data and views are subjective.

ii. Summary of analytical narrative

Related government policies and priorities: There are no related government policies on which changes to the student bursary would affect.

Costing of Shortlisted Options: The analytical team were asked to cost the initial shortlist of options, which subsequently changed following consideration of associated costs and wider impacts by the policy group (comprised of representatives from the Department of Health, Department for Education and Business, Innovation and Skills), the Social Work Task Force and the External Working Group. The costs presented, and associated savings, have been calculated over a ten-year period. Annual average costs are also illustrated.

Evidence Sources: The analytical team were tasked with costing the options shortlisted for consideration in the consultation document. Prior to this, the Department utilised anecdotal and expert knowledge from the Social Work Task Force and External Working Group in arriving at the final options (see Section **Diii**).

General Assumptions: The costs presented in this analysis all take account of the following assumptions (additional assumptions associated with individual policy options are included in the relevant section):

- *Tuition fee contributions are exempt from policy changes (with the exception of ending the bursary, in which case tuition fee funding would also cease)*
- *Additions are not exempt from policy changes.*
- *Direct vendor payments and tuition fee contributions are solely associated with postgraduates*
- *Future student intake growth rates are calculated as most recent five-year average of historic data (-1.3% p.a. for undergraduates, 9.1% p.a. for postgraduates).*
- *Undergraduate courses assumed to comprise three years study; Postgraduate courses assumed to comprise two years study.*

- *Attrition rates by year of study presumed to be as follows (largely consistent with NHS rates):*
 - *UG Yr1: 0%*
 - *UG Yr2: 15%*
 - *UG Yr3: 5%*
 - *PG Yr1: 0%*
 - *PG Yr2: 10%*
- *As payments are made once per term, a financial year assumes one third of the previous and two thirds of the current academic year costs.*
- *Physical value of undergraduate and postgraduate bursaries set to increase by 0.2% p.a., based on the increase in tuition fees as a proportion of total spend. All other bursary elements are assumed to remain fixed for the analysis period.*
- *Discount rate of 3.5% p.a. applied, as per impact assessment standard practice.*
- *Spending Review bids up to 2013/14 reflects actual settlements and assumed to remain fixed for remainder of analysis period (at £72m).*
- *Annual travel allowance of £575.00 (UG) and £862.50 (PG)*
- *Travel allowance paid to any students deemed ineligible to receive a bursary, with the exception of first year undergraduates, who are not required to undertake practice placements.*
- *Students enrolling in academic years up to (and including) 2012/13 will receive full payments at current rates for the duration of their studies. Any students enrolling from 2013/14 are assessed under the proposed policies.*

B. Policy objectives and intended effects

As a result of the consultation, the Department would like:

- *High quality graduates joining the social work profession*
- *Justification for social work students (undergraduates and postgraduate) receiving additional financial support. The consultation will contribute to this through information on supply and demand to create a new high level policy objective;*
- *Reduced and controlled expenditure;*

There is a balance to be struck between the objectives for reforming the bursary and the consultation is seeking views on the impact of each option against the overall criteria of quality, supply and value for money.

We are defining increasing quality in the social work bursary as being employers' preference for social work students being met. Many have expressed a preference for postgraduate entry to their employment. However, we specifically ask in the consultation for respondent's views on the impact on quality of each of the options for reforming bursary. We are also keen to hear views on how the impact on quality is measured.

C. Underlying causes of the issue

As indicated above, there are a number of underlying issues that this consultation is seeking to address. These have been discussed with the Social Work Reform Board and External Reference Group. These include:

- supply and demand for social workers,
- value for money of the social work bursary,
- there is currently no limit on the number of bursary recipients, the number of social work courses or numbers of students who study social work;
- Employer preference for mature entrants and at postgraduate;
- is also an issue that is reflected in Option 2 (retaining the postgraduate bursary only);
- 25% of social work graduates not registering with GSCC or taking up employment as a social worker six months after graduation.

D. Policy options for consideration

i. Baseline scenario (the counterfactual)

Under the current policy, the student bursary is simply unaffordable going forward, nor does it provide value for money. There is little evidence to suggest the bursary is an incentive for the training and recruitment of higher quality social workers, nor does it adequately attract applications from postgraduate candidates (deemed by employers to be preferable to undergraduate qualifiers).

Assessed against the costings used for this IA, the cost of the bursary by the end of the SR period is estimated to be £91m, against the agreed budget of £72m.

ii. Plausible options

DH officials discussed reforming the social work bursary with the Social Work Reform Board. These discussions generated fifteen options as set out below. An evaluation criteria was developed in consultation with stakeholders and the options scored against them by officials. The external reference group agreed that options 1, 2, 4 and 5 be consulted on and recommended the inclusion of Option 3. Option 3 was felt by stakeholders to address the quality issues and would reduce costs. The internal project group and Ministers agreed with this recommendation.

We recognise that the scores are initial scores and are seeking evidence through the consultation to firm up scores, in particular on supply and demand.

Doing nothing is not an option as costs would continue to rise beyond spending settlements and there would be no impact on the quality of qualifying social workers

Options	Description
1	Retain the UG and PG bursary but with means testing
2	Retain PG bursary only
3	Retain UG bursary from Year 2 and PG remains the same
4	End the bursary
5	Create new scheme - ASYE
6	Retaining the existing bursary for undergraduates and postgraduates at the same rates
7	Retaining the existing bursary for undergraduates and postgraduates but with reduced rates.
8	Retaining the postgraduate scheme as now
9	Creation of a new national Social Work Hardship Scheme to focus on most socially disadvantaged
10	Create a one off payment linked to locations, which are hard to recruit to
11	Create a one off payment linked to jobs, which are hard to recruit to
12	Golden Hellos to postgraduate students
13	A single payment in the final year of study
14	access to student loans for postgraduate students
15	Provide fixed funding to HEIs to run local bursary schemes

iii. Derivation of options for consideration during consultation

The criteria below were developed with the Social Work Reform Board and officials to assess the suitability of the options for inclusion within the consultation. It was recognised that fifteen options were too many and a number of the options generated did not meet the criteria. For example, the need to fit within the current legislation. Other options did not provide any flexibility for example targeting at particular groups (e.g. child protection) and in that regard the social work bursary is a blunt instrument.

An internal project board considered the criteria and the scores against them and recommended the five options to ministers. Ministers initially did not wish to consult on Option 3 but agreed to consult on it, following further advice from the external reference group, who felt that it worked well because of the link to quality (with weeding out of unsuitable social workers during undergraduate year 1 and the assessment before practice placements).

Title	Description
Legally compliant	The options are lawful in accordance with the relevant legislation; case law and general principles of administrative law
No adverse impact on equality	The options take into account their equality and diversity impacts, particularly race, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, transgender, pregnancy and maternity, carers and religion or belief issues, The socio-economic impacts of the options are also considered.
Security of supply	Maintains supply of entrants to the social work profession.
Quality of entrants to the profession	Quality of entrants to the profession is improved
Fair	The proposals provide a reasonable level of support to achieve a work/life balance.
Value for Money	The proposals provide value for money.
Affordable	The options are affordable within the current spending review settlement and reduce expenditure from the current level
Administration	The costs of implementing and administering the options do not cost more than currently. The scheme is robust, workable and simple to administer.
Widens participation	The options encourage those from a wide range of backgrounds to apply to promote greater equality in the areas identified above.
Flexible	The options are flexible enough to take into account planning for workforce changes, for example, whether the scheme has the potential to be focussed on either a particular location or social work specialism.

Option	Legally compliant	No adverse impact on equality	Security of supply	Quality of entrants to the profession including postgraduates	Fair	Value for Money	Affordable	Administration	Widens participation	Flexible
1	Yes	Yes	Not Known	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
2	Yes	Yes	Not known	Yes	Depends on criteria	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
3	Yes	Yes	Not Known	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
4	Depends on replacement schemes	Yes	Not known	Depends on replacement schemes	Depends on replacement schemes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Not known
5	Yes (note 1)	Yes	Not Known	Yes	Depends on rate	yes	Yes	yes	no	yes
6	Yes	Yes	Not known	no	Yes	no	no	Yes	Yes	No
7	Yes	No	Not known	Yes	Depends on criteria	no	Depends on rate	yes	yes	no
8	Yes	Yes	Not known	Yes	yes	no	yes	yes	Yes	no
9	Yes	Depends on criteria	Not known	Not known	Depends on criteria	yes	yes	Yes	yes	yes
10	No	Yes	Not known	Yes	yes	Yes	Yes	no	no	yes
11	No	Yes	Not known	Yes	Depends on criteria	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

12	No	No	Not known	Yes	Depends on criteria	Yes	Yes	No	No	yes
13	Yes	Yes	Not known	Yes	yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	no	yes
14	No	Depends on criteria	Not known	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	no	No
15	yes	yes	Not known	no	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Note1: the SWRB proposals for an ASYE programme contains an element of education, training and assessment. We will need to review this when ASYE is implemented.

iv. Options assessed in IA

Comments on the 5 options against these criteria is in Annex 5 of the consultation document.

- 1: **Retain social work bursary but with means testing:** Some of the postgraduate bursary is currently means tested. This option would extend it to the totality of the postgraduate bursary and introduce it for the undergraduate bursary.
- 2: **Retain the postgraduate bursary:** only postgraduate students would be eligible to claim a social work bursary. Students studying on the undergraduate route would not be eligible for a social work bursary but would remain eligible for funding from other student finance routes. Levels of payments would be reduced.
- 3: **Retain undergraduate bursary from year 2 and the current postgraduate bursary.** This option sees the bursary start for undergraduate students in their second year of study. This funding coincides with when practice placements begin for students.
- 4: **End the social work bursary completely.** This option would see the halting of bursaries for both undergraduates and postgraduates. However, funding could be reinvested in alternative schemes. These could include elite schemes, and schemes targeted at particular locations, specialisms, or return to practice schemes.
- 5: **Create a new scheme based on the successful completion of the assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE):** This option supports those students who graduate (either from an undergraduate or postgraduate course), take up employment as a social worker and complete the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme. It offers a one off payment to individuals that can then, for example, be used to help pay off student loans.

In addition, the above options all assume that the existing commitment from the Department to provide travel expenses for practice placements remains honoured. Therefore, second and third-year undergraduate and all postgraduate students deemed ineligible for the bursary under any option would receive a separate expenses payment. This has been included in the costings presented in this IA.

Options 1, 2 and 3 also have the added stipulation that the number of students to be funded is likely to be capped under the new policy. The method by which the capping will take place has yet to be decided; however, we have modelled the following caps for illustration purposes:

- *No cap*
- *Cap number of payments at 2012/13 student levels*
- *Reduce predicted number of payments in any year by 15%*
- *Reduce predicted number of payments in any year by 30%*
- *Hybrid option in which payments are capped at 70% of 2012/13 student levels*

E. Means-tested Undergraduate and Postgraduate bursary with a cap on the number of students who receive a bursary - impacts, costs and benefits

i. Operational mechanisms, expected scale of impact and associated evidence

This option will require the most significant change to current administrative processes, as it will involve the development of a rule-based system for assessing the eligibility of candidates to receive a bursary. It is assumed that the NHSBSA would take responsibility for providing this service, in parallel with their obligation to assess students claiming for means-tested NHS bursaries.

As yet, we have no cost estimates for introducing such a system, other than the expectation administrative expenditure would rise (beyond the £0.9m cost to process the existing scheme in 2011/12). The NHSBSA have committed to quantifying this additional investment as part of the consultation process.

We would also expect this policy to have an impact on the future intakes of both undergraduate and postgraduate students onto social work courses, although we are unable to quantify by how much at this stage. The analysis team will work to provide this information for the final impact assessment, taking into account the views and concerns raised during the consultation process.

As this is a self-contained policy, we expect no impact on competition or other organisations.

ii. Costs and benefits

At this stage, the only expenditure that has been estimated relates to the amount of the bursaries paid to students. As discussed in the previous section, there will also be associated administrative costs; however, we expect these to be minimal in comparison to the overall outlay.

Given the resources required to fully develop and assess a means-tested system, this will not take place unless the outcomes of the consultation are heavily in favour of this option. Therefore, we have used approximate average payments that could be realised under such a system to inform potential best and worst-case scenarios (detailed in assumptions). The resulting impact is presented in the following tables, under various capping methodologies. These ten-year costs are presented in financial years, include travel expenses payments for ineligible students, and have not been discounted (as per impact assessment guidance). Note that the costs below have been calculated against average annual bursary payment values that have not been adjusted for inflation, thus are presented in constant prices.

Best Case	No Cap £m	2012/13 Levels £m	15% Reduction £m	30% Reduction £m	<30% of 12/13 £m
2012/13	81.7	81.7	81.7	81.7	81.7
2013/14	73.4	72.9	72.1	70.7	67.6
2014/15	61.6	60.2	58.5	55.5	52.3
2015/16	55.1	52.7	51.0	46.8	44.9
2016/17	55.6	52.1	51.1	46.6	44.4
2017/18	58.6	53.9	53.9	49.2	46.2
2018/19	61.9	55.9	57.0	52.2	48.2
2019/20	65.5	58.1	60.4	55.4	50.4
2020/21	69.5	60.5	64.2	58.9	52.9
2021/22	73.8	63.1	68.3	62.8	55.5
TOTAL	656.9	611.1	618.4	579.8	544.2

Worst Case	No Cap £m	2012/13 Levels £m	15% Reduction £m	30% Reduction £m	<30% of 12/13 £m
2012/13	81.7	81.7	81.7	81.7	81.7
2013/14	80.6	79.5	78.1	75.7	69.9
2014/15	78.8	76.0	73.1	67.5	61.8
2015/16	79.1	74.4	71.3	63.6	60.4
2016/17	81.9	75.1	73.4	65.0	61.4
2017/18	85.9	76.8	77.1	68.3	63.3
2018/19	90.2	78.6	81.1	72.0	65.3
2019/20	95.0	80.7	85.5	76.1	67.6
2020/21	100.3	82.9	90.4	80.5	70.0
2021/22	106.1	85.5	95.8	85.5	72.7
TOTAL	879.7	791.0	807.7	735.8	673.9

iii. Assumptions

In addition to the general assumptions discussed in section Aii, the following relate specifically to this policy option:

- Average payments under best, mid and worst case scenarios assumed to be 50%, 75% and 83.5% of total bursary respectively (83.5% based on average payment of the current means-tested element of the postgraduate bursary)
- All students eligible to receive a bursary under any implemented capping policy will receive, as a minimum, enough to cover travel expenses

F. Retain the Postgraduate bursary with a cap on the number of students who receive a bursary - impacts, costs and benefits

i. Operational mechanisms, expected scale of impact and associated evidence

This option will require no change to current administrative processes, as there will be no change to the way the existing Postgraduate bursary is administered. We would expect a reduction in the costs of this service, as fewer students would be eligible to apply for funding. It is assumed that the NHSBSA would continue with their responsibility to provide this service.

As yet, we have no estimates of the administrative savings this would realise, although much of the expenditure is fixed and the savings would only be made against the variable costs. The NHSBSA have committed to quantifying these savings as part of the consultation process.

We would also expect this policy to have an impact on the future intakes of undergraduate students onto social work courses, although we are unable to quantify by how much at this stage. The analysis team will work to provide this information for the final impact assessment, taking into account the views and concerns raised during the consultation process. However, recent research suggests that financial incentives are not a priority concern for undergraduate applicants, provided their fees can be funded through tuition fee loans (which will continue to be available to them through the Student Loans Company).

As this is a self-contained policy, we expect no impact on competition or other organisations.

ii. Costs and benefits

At this stage, the only expenditure that has been estimated relates to the amount of the bursaries paid to students. As discussed in the previous section, there will also be small savings to be realised from reduced administrative costs.

The financial impact of this policy option impact under various capping methodologies is presented in the following table. These ten-year costs are presented in financial years, include travel expenses payments for ineligible students, and have not been discounted (as per impact assessment guidance). Note that the costs below have been calculated against average annual bursary payment values that have not been adjusted for inflation, thus are presented in constant prices.

	No Cap £m	2012/13 Levels £m	15% Reduction £m	30% Reduction £m	<30% of 12/13 £m
2012/13	81.7	81.7	81.7	81.7	81.7
2013/14	73.1	71.8	71.8	70.5	68.3
2014/15	63.1	59.6	59.8	56.5	54.3
2015/16	55.5	49.6	51.3	47.1	44.4
2016/17	56.1	47.7	51.5	46.9	42.4
2017/18	60.9	49.7	55.9	50.9	44.4
2018/19	66.2	51.8	60.7	55.2	46.6
2019/20	72.0	54.2	66.0	60.0	48.9
2020/21	78.4	56.9	71.8	65.2	51.6
2021/22	85.3	59.7	78.1	70.9	54.4
TOTAL	692.4	582.6	648.6	604.7	537.0

iii. Assumptions

There are no assumptions made in relation to this option, other than those listed in section Aii.

G. Retain undergraduate bursary from the second year and postgraduate scheme remains as now with a cap on the number of students who receive a bursary - impacts, costs and benefits

i. Operational mechanisms, expected scale of impact and associated evidence

This option will require no change current administrative processes, as there will be no change to the way the existing bursaries are administered. We would expect a slight reduction in the costs of this service, as fewer students would be eligible to apply for funding. It is assumed that the NHSBSA would continue with their responsibility to provide this service.

As yet, we have no estimates of the administrative savings this would realise, although much of the expenditure is fixed and the savings would only be made against the variable costs. The NHSBSA have committed to quantifying these savings as part of the consultation process.

We would also expect this policy to have an impact on the future intakes of undergraduate students onto social work courses, although we are unable to quantify by how much at this stage. The analysis team will work to provide this information for the final impact assessment, taking into account the views and concerns raised during the consultation process. However, existing research suggests that financial incentives are not a priority concern for undergraduate applicants, provided their fees can be funded through tuition fee loans (which will continue to be available to them through the Student Loans Company). That said, we could see a reduction in lower quality undergraduate applicants who are not committed to the profession.

As this is a self-contained policy, we expect no impact on competition or other organisations.

ii. Costs and benefits

At this stage, the only expenditure that has been estimated relates to the amount of the bursaries paid to students. As discussed in the previous section, there will also be small savings to be realised from reduced administrative costs.

The financial impact of this policy option impact under various capping methodologies is presented in the following table. These ten-year costs are presented in financial years, include travel expenses payments for ineligible students, and have not been discounted (as per impact assessment guidance). Note that the costs below have been calculated against average annual bursary payment values that have not been adjusted for inflation, thus are presented in constant prices.

	No Cap £m	2012/13 Levels £m	15% Reduction £m	30% Reduction £m	<30% of 12/13 £m
2012/13	81.7	81.7	81.7	81.7	81.7
2013/14	73.1	71.8	71.8	70.5	63.6
2014/15	71.0	67.5	66.5	62.0	55.4
2015/16	74.8	68.9	67.7	60.6	57.1
2016/17	79.0	70.5	70.9	62.9	59.0
2017/18	83.6	72.3	75.1	66.7	61.0
2018/19	88.6	74.2	79.7	70.9	63.2
2019/20	94.2	76.4	84.8	75.5	65.6
2020/21	100.3	78.8	90.4	80.5	68.3
2021/22	107.0	81.4	96.5	86.1	71.2
TOTAL	853.3	743.5	785.3	717.3	646.1

iii. Assumptions

There are no assumptions made in relation to this option, other than those listed in section Aii.

H. End the bursary completely to reinvest in other social work training - impacts, costs and benefits

i. Operational mechanisms, expected scale of impact and associated evidence

This option will require the minimal administrative investment to process payments to cover travel expenses only, a service that we assume the NHSBSA would continue to provide.

As yet, we have no estimates of the administrative savings this would realise. The NHSBSA have committed to quantifying these savings as part of the consultation process.

We would also expect this policy to have an impact on the future intakes of both undergraduate and postgraduate students onto social work courses, although we are unable to quantify by how much at this stage. It is anticipated that the largest impact will be seen in postgraduate applications, as these have no access to other sources of funding (eg from SLC). Existing research suggests that financial incentives are not a priority concern for undergraduate applicants, provided their fees can be funded through tuition fee loans (which will continue to be available to them through the Student Loans Company). That said, we could see a reduction in lower quality undergraduate applicants who are not committed to the profession. The analysis team will work to provide quantitative information for the final impact assessment, taking into account the views and concerns raised during the consultation process.

As this is a self-contained policy, we expect no impact on competition or other organisations.

ii. Costs and benefits

At this stage, the only savings that have been estimated relate to the reduction in bursaries paid to students. As discussed in the previous section, there will also be savings to be realised from reduced administrative costs.

These ten-year costs are presented in financial years, include travel expenses payments for ineligible students, and have not been discounted (as per impact assessment guidance). Note that the costs below have been calculated against average annual bursary payment values that have not been adjusted for inflation, thus are presented in constant prices.

	No Cap £m
2012/13	81.7
2013/14	59.6
2014/15	29.3
2015/16	12.4
2016/17	9.0
2017/18	9.4
2018/19	9.9
2019/20	10.4
2020/21	11.0
2021/22	11.6
TOTAL	244.4

iii. Assumptions

In addition to the general assumptions discussed in section Aii, the following relate specifically to this policy option:

- *DH will continue to reimburse students for any travel expenses incurred as a result of practice placements*
- *DH will not continue to contribute to postgraduate tuition fees from 2013/14*
- *Capping policies do not apply*

I. Create a new scheme based on successful completion of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment - impacts, costs and benefits

i. Operational mechanisms, expected scale of impact and associated evidence

This policy option would realise significant savings in the short-term, as students, entering training in 2012/13 would not be eligible to receive payments for two or more years.

This option will require significant redesign of the administrative process, as the payment system would need to be completely changed. However, the new running cost should be among the cheapest of the

shortlisted options, as the system would require a single batch of fixed payments to be made on an annual basis (as opposed to the current termly payments that require individual calculations).

As yet, we have no estimates of the administrative savings this would realise. The NHSBSA have committed to quantifying these savings as part of the consultation process.

It is unclear what impact of this option will have on future student intakes, particularly for postgraduate applicants who have little access to other sources of funding. Existing research suggests that financial incentives are not a priority concern for undergraduate applicants, provided their fees can be funded through tuition fee loans (which will continue to be available to them through the Student Loans Company). That said, we could see a reduction in lower quality undergraduate applicants who are not committed to the profession. The analysis team will work to provide quantitative information for the final impact assessment, taking into account the views and concerns raised during the consultation process.

As this is a self-contained policy, we expect no impact on competition or other organisations.

ii. Costs and benefits

At this stage, the only savings that have been estimated relate to the reduction in bursaries paid to students offset against the post-ASYE payments. As discussed in the previous section, there will also be savings to be realised from reduced administrative costs.

These ten-year costs are presented in financial years, include travel expenses payments for ineligible students, and have not been discounted (as per impact assessment guidance). Note that the costs below have been calculated against average annual bursary payment values that have not been adjusted for inflation, thus are presented in constant prices.

Payment:	£5,000 £m	£7,000 £m
2012/13	81.7	81.7
2013/14	64.3	64.3
2014/15	41.0	41.0
2015/16	33.2	35.5
2016/17	43.0	50.1
2017/18	50.0	59.0
2018/19	52.9	62.3
2019/20	56.1	65.9
2020/21	59.7	69.8
2021/22	63.6	74.2
TOTAL	545.6	603.8

iii. Assumptions

In addition to the general assumptions discussed in section Aii, the following relate specifically to this policy option:

- Assumed that 75% of students graduating social work training will go on to successfully complete the ASYE year in the financial year after they qualify, in line with CfWI findings
- Graduates will go straight into the social work profession immediately after qualifying, else do not become social workers
- Generates two sets of costs, assuming £5,000 and £7,000 payments
- Travel expenses during studies are reimbursed in addition to the post-ASYE payments
- Payments are made in the financial year after graduation

J. Summary and Weighting of Options

i. Best estimate of financial outcomes of various options

The following savings have been calculated against the discounted costs (at a rate of 3.5%) of each proposed policy option (when compared to the cost of the counterfactual). The methodologies by which the high, low and best estimates have been defined are described in **Annex A**.

Option		Annual Saving	10yr Saving
Means-tested undergraduate and postgraduate bursary	High	- 36.7	- 367.2
	Low	- 9.1	- 90.6
	Best Estimate	- 25.2	- 251.7
Retain the postgraduate bursary	High	- 37.3	- 372.7
	Low	- 24.7	- 246.7
	Best Estimate	- 32.7	- 327.1
Retain undergraduate bursary from second year and postgraduate scheme remains the same	High	- 28.5	- 284.7
	Low	- 11.5	- 114.8
	Best Estimate	- 22.1	- 221.0
End the bursary completely	High	N/A	N/A
	Low	N/A	N/A
	Best Estimate	- 61.4	- 614.1
Create a new scheme based on successful competition of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (£5,000 Payment)	High	N/A	N/A
	Low	N/A	N/A
	Best Estimate	- 37.0	- 370.0
Create a new scheme based on successful competition of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (£7,000 Payment)	High	N/A	N/A
	Low	N/A	N/A
	Best Estimate	- 32.3	- 323.4

ii. Conclusion

At this stage, the Department has no preferred option and all are to be given equal consideration in the upcoming consultation.

Annex A: OPTIONS COSTING METHODOLOGY

01. Introduction

The final options for reforming the social work bursary scheme to be put forward for consultation are as follows:

- Option 0: The counterfactual (ie bursary remains the same)
- Option 1: Retain the current bursary scheme for undergraduates and postgraduates but with means testing for the whole bursary.
- Option 2: Retain the postgraduate bursary only.
- Option 3: Retain undergraduate bursary from the second year (for new entrants who would receive it after their first year) and postgraduate scheme remains the same.
- Option 4: End the bursary completely.
- Option 5: Create a new scheme based on successful completion of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment.

The Department does not have a preferred option. All five are genuine policy options.

In addition to each of the options, Ministers and senior DH colleagues have expressed an interest in implementing a capping policy, where appropriate. Thus, when generating estimated costs for options 0, 1, 2 and 3, the following caps have been modelled:

- *No cap*
- *Cap number of payments at 2012/13 student levels*
- *Reduce predicted number of payments in any year by 10%*
- *Reduce predicted number of payments in any year by 20%*

Finally, this analysis assumes that those students who would not receive a bursary either as a result of the implementation of a policy option or cap will be reimbursed for travel costs associated with work placements (with the exception of first year undergraduates, who are no longer expected to undertake placements).

This document outlines the methodologies utilised by the Workforce Directorate Analysis Team (WDAT) in assessing the likely costs and savings that the Department could reasonably expect to realise under each of the shortlisted options.

It is important to note that many assumptions underpin this analysis, some of which are rooted in the results of previous work and expert knowledge of social care experts. By necessity, others have been generated using best estimates to ensure this analysis could be completed within to time. Such assumptions have been outlined earlier in this document.

The scope of this analysis must also be considered. Given the quick turnaround period required, the analysis has been unable to fully integrate several complex workforce issues, examples of which would include training attrition rates, takeup of social care positions by new graduates and consideration of the embedded complexities within each policy option. Where possible, efforts have been made to estimate the impact of such issues, which are outlined in this document. The Centre for Workforce intelligence has also been commissioned to undertake a qualitative analysis to further our understanding of these issues.

This analysis makes no effort to assess the impact of the proposed options on forecast intake volumes. Following discussions with the policy lead, the decision was taken to base all costings on the current expected levels of demand for social care training schemes. A subsequent project may be commissioned at a later date to consider the extent to which any revisions to the bursary scheme would impact on course takeup rates (this would obviously further impact on the cost of the bursary scheme).

Finally, the costs and savings generated in this analysis relate only to the value of the bursary payments and do not take account of any changes in administration expenditure that would be required to implement a chosen policy option, although any expectations have been listed in the Impact Assessment.

02. Analysis Overview

The costs of these options have been estimated for policy implementation in academic 2013 as per the policy team's recommendation. The outputs of the analysis are as follows:

- Trainee Volumes
 - *All trainees by academic year and course type (ie undergraduate or postgraduate)*
 - *All trainees by academic year, course type and year of study*
 - *Trainees receiving support under existing and proposed bursary schemes*
- Bursary Scheme Costs
 - *Academic year costs by proposed option and course type*
 - *In-year financial year costs by proposed option and course type*
 - *Discounted financial year costs by proposed option and course type (2012/13 prices)*
- Expected Savings
 - *Monetary savings that could be realised against the current scheme (counterfactual)*

03. Base Data

The following data were used in generating the outputs of this analysis:

- Actual bursary costs for academic years 2009/10 to 2011/12
 - *Provided by NHSBSA (rebased to reflect the full financial year)*
 - *Broken into various payment elements (basic grant, maintenance grant, additions, vendor payments and tuition fee payments)*
- Student intake volumes for academic years 2003/04 to 2011/12
 - *Provided by GSCC*
- Estimation of compound course attrition rates by course type (ie undergraduate or postgraduate), academic year and year of study
- Academic to financial year conversion ratios
- Economic discount values
- Bursary inflators
- SR bids for financial years 2011/12 to 2014/15
- Annual travel expenses allowance for undergraduates and postgraduates
- Proportion of qualifying social workers successfully completing the ASYE
- Average payments under various means testing scenarios

04. Basic Methodology

The costings for each methodology have been assessed using the following methodology (all assumptions used in the calculations are outlined in the previous section):

1. Student intake figures used to generate number of students at each year of study in each academic year (eg $\text{Postgraduates}_{\text{YearX}} = (\text{Enrolments}_{\text{YrX-1}} * \text{AttritionRate}_{\text{YrX-1}}) + (\text{Enrolments}_{\text{YrX}} * \text{AttritionRate}_{\text{YrX}})$)
2. Annual growth rates calculated and used to generate forecast growth in student numbers
3. Total bursary historic bursary costs (to 2011/12) grouped into:
 - a. *Undergraduate*
 - b. *Postgraduate*
 - c. *Tuition Fees*
4. Forecast costs to 2021/22 calculated by uplifting the annual costs by predicted student growth and bursary inflation. Tuition fee costs then excluded from calculation.
5. Total costs divided by predicted number of students to calculate annual per student cost for undergraduates and postgraduates separately
6. For each policy/capping combination, the total number of students eligible to receive payments in each academic year were calculated and separated into those being funded under the existing system (ie those starting courses up to 2012/13) and the proposed option
7. Eligible student numbers multiplied by relevant per student cost (either as calculated above or a fixed amount, as in the case of payments linked to completion of ASYE) to calculate total annual bursary cost

8. Travel expense estimates calculated against those students ineligible to claim bursary under either policy or capping option
9. Total annual cost calculated by summing bursary and expenses costs along with tuition fee contributions (removed earlier in calculation)
10. Thus far, costs are presented in academic years. At this stage they are converted into financial years and discounted (using a rate of 3.5%) for the purposes of the impact assessment

05. CALCULATION OF ESTIMATES FOR IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Where applicable, high, low and best estimate values have been defined as follows:

- **HIGH BENEFIT ESTIMATE** – ten-year discounted cost of the option combination comprising the cheapest sub-option and most strict capping policy (ie the cheapest)
- **LOW BENEFIT ESTIMATE** – ten-year discounted cost of the option combination comprising the most expensive sub-option and no cap (ie the most expensive)
- **BEST ESTIMATE** – where capping options have been applied, this has been calculated as the average value of the various costs, excluding the “no cap” option (this is in line with the policy group’s recommendation that, if appropriate to the option selected, some form of cap will be imposed). For options that are unsuitable for capping, the associated standard cost has been used as the best estimate.

06. Further Analysis

The estimates generated to date are solely intended to illustrate the scale of savings that the Department could expect to realise under each of the proposed policy options in order to inform the consultation exercise. Further work will be required to improve on the quality of the underlying data and assumptions, as well as model any other (potential hybrid) options that are generated during the consultation.

At this stage, the following follow-on projects have been identified:

- **Research into Demand and Supply Drivers for Social Workers**
 - Currently underway by the CfWI, this qualitative research project is looking to better understand the primary supply and demand drivers that impact on recruitment of social workers and the scale to which they will influence our training growth estimates. WDAT is expecting an initial report into the centre’s findings by the end of March 2012. Given the consultation timetable, we will be unable to incorporate these into the costings for the consultation; however, they will be able to inform the final impact assessment in the summer.
- **Impact of Policy Options on Growth**
 - Current estimates assume a fixed growth profile and have not been sufficiently developed to incorporate the effect that the various policy and capping options would have on the quantity of applications received for social work courses. Nor have the growth estimates been adjusted to reflect the impact of the upcoming rise in tuition fees (which are not likely to be met by increases in DH tuition fee contributions).
- **New Policy Options**
 - Several additional policy options have been raised in recent internal meetings, however there is insufficient time to fully agree and cost them for the consultation process. It is, however, quite likely that they will be raised during the exercise. These could include:
 - Diverting any savings realised from cutting undergraduate funding to increase postgraduate tuition fee rises, in order to combat the rising tariffs
 - More comprehensive analysis of any means-testing system, including analysis of any available applicant demographic data and development of means-testing rules
 - Rules for capping the number of bursary recipients;

It has also been suggested that the consultation exercise should include a further qualitative element concerning justification of the bursary and how essential its existence will be going forward, when we consider alternative funding mechanisms available and recent research indicating that financial gain does not play a major part in a

potential applicant's decision to train as a social worker. The literature review commissioned by the Department does look at some of these issues and we would expect respondents to the consultation to consider these issues.

Annex B: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review was commissioned in 2011 by the Department from the Social Care Workforce Research Unit to look specifically at the five policy options in the consultation document.

A previous review had been carried out in 2010 to inform the review of the social work bursary and concluded that.

"The literature on financial support systems for student social workers is very limited and this makes it hard to draw firm conclusions about the impact of differing funding schemes on applications, student progression, and long term performance and retention in the workforce.

The review suggests that the introduction of the social work bursary has increased the number of students enrolling on social work qualifying programmes. It has also increased the demographic diversity of social work students to the extent that there are now greater numbers of younger students and students from black and minority ethnic groups, especially black African students."

Literature Review of the Social Work Bursary Options

Background

The social work bursary was introduced in 2003 as one of a series of initiatives designed by the Department of Health to improve the number of applications to social work qualifying programmes (Department of Health, 2003). In its final report, the Social Work Task Force acknowledged the success of the bursary in increasing the popularity of social work as a degree subject but concluded that current arrangements needed 'to be reviewed to promote applications from people of sufficiently high quality, and to encourage completion of degree courses, entry to and retention in the work force' (Social Work Task Force, 2009, para 1.57).

In 2010, at the request of the Department of Health, the Social Care Workforce Research Unit (SCWRU) undertook a literature review designed to inform the Department of Health has planned review of the social work bursary. As part of this work, SCWRU also re-interrogated data collected as part of the Evaluation of the New Social Work Degree Qualification in England (2008) and an investigation of undergraduate progression rates (Hussein *et al.*, 2009). The review (Moriarty & Man Thorpe, 2010), along with a journal article based on the review material (Moriarty *et al.*, 2011 advance access-b), concluded that the bursary had contributed to increases in the numbers and diversity of students on social work qualifying programmes. It noted that any changes to systems of student financial support were likely to have a disproportionate impact on social work students because their older age profile meant that they were more likely to have other financial commitments and less likely to be in receipt of financial support from parents. However, it also noted that, in common with information about funding for student support systems more generally (Griffin *et al.*, 2009), there was a dearth of UK research-based data on the effectiveness of differing types of support. In the case of social work, most of the published research consisted of studies undertaken in the early years of the bursary looking at students' knowledge of its existence (Seymour, 2004; Furness, 2007). In particular, while higher rates of withdrawal now exist on full time social work degree qualifying programmes than on the predecessor two-year Diploma in Social Work (Dips) qualification (Hussein *et al.*, 2008; Hussein *et al.*, 2009), no published work had been able to link progression rates with differing types of financial support for students. While there was a more extensive literature on students in higher education as a whole, much of it was based on studies looking at the impact of student loans on participation in higher education. The relevance of these findings for social work was unclear.

In 2011, the Social Care Workforce Research Unit was asked by the Department of Health if it could provide any additional material to inform the review of the social work bursary. Further searches of electronic databases and other sources (see note on methods section below) were made. While these searches established that little new research had been published since completion of the original review, it was agreed that SCWRU would look at the existing and new material to see whether there was any evidence to support any or all of the five options likely to be included in the Department of Health's planned consultation about the social work bursary. These options are to:

- *retain the current bursary scheme for undergraduates and postgraduates but with means testing for the whole bursary;*
- *retain the postgraduate bursary only;*
- *retain the undergraduate bursary from the second year (for new entrants who would receive it after their first year) and postgraduate scheme remains the same.*

- end the bursary completely; and
- create a new scheme based on successful completion of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (AYSE).

Discussion of these options below assumes that, should the bursary be continued, the amount that an individual will receive will be broadly similar to the 2011-2012 levels of £4,575 for a full time undergraduate student and £3,362.50 for a full time postgraduate (plus up to £3,732 for tuition fees), both studying outside London (NHS Business Services Authority, 2008).

Option 1
Retain the current bursary scheme for undergraduates and postgraduates but with means testing for the whole bursary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential <i>advantage</i> of this option might be to reduce the overall cost of the bursary while ensuring that eligible undergraduate and postgraduate students both continue to receive some financial support. The <i>disadvantage</i> is that means testing might deter some potential applicants who might otherwise make excellent social workers and that it does not address the concerns of the Task Force about using financial incentives to improve the quality of applicants to social work qualifying programmes. <p>Conceptually, systems of student support can be viewed as consisting of two types: need-based or merit-based financial aid (Toutkoushian & Shafiq, 2010). A means tested bursary would ensure that low-income students would be supported during their studies but would not provide any other incentive linked to progression or achievement. Research into higher education as a whole suggests that the process of means testing is cumbersome and may be off-putting (Hansen, 2008). Potential applicants often assume that the income threshold for grant eligibility is lower than it really is and so do not apply for awards for which they might be eligible (Mangan <i>et al.</i>, 2010; Usher <i>et al.</i>, 2010). Comments in student forums and discussion boards (for example, The Student Room, Undated) also indicate that many students seem to be confused about means testing and when they are eligible for means tested support.</p> <p>In addition to some eligible applicants, (particularly those who are unfamiliar with applying for means tested benefits) being deterred from applying for the bursary, it is also possible that some suitable social work applicants whose income is above the eligible limit might decide to study another subject. However, the evidence to support this viewpoint is only indirect and derives from admission figures for social work qualifying programmes in the period 1993-2003 recorded in the annual data packs issued by the General Social Care Council (GSCC) and Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) and the former Social Work Admissions Service (SWAS). During this time, postgraduate students on social work qualifying programmes were eligible for a non-means tested bursary administered by CCETSW whereas other students had to apply for means-tested grants. While steep declines in applications for social work programmes could be observed in this period, applications for postgraduate qualifying programmes remained stable (Perry & Cree, 2003).</p>
Option 2
Retain the postgraduate bursary only
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential <i>advantage</i> of this option would be to potentially reduce the overall cost of the bursary while offering an incentive for graduates to consider becoming a social worker. The <i>disadvantage</i> is that it might reduce the numbers of social workers qualifying each year, although this may be temporary. In addition, it could be seen as the most regressive option in that lower income students disproportionately enrol in less prestigious universities. As the more prestigious universities tend to run postgraduate social work qualifying programmes, lower income students might be proportionally more disadvantaged. <p>This option is similar to that which exists in teaching where training bursaries currently exist for graduates undertaking a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in shortage subjects while students on undergraduate initial teacher training programmes are reliant upon student loans (Training and Development Agency for Schools, 2011). However, a key difference between social work and teaching is that the PGCE has 'long represented the mainstay of initial teacher training provision' with these programmes accounting for 59 per cent of trainee teachers in 2007-08 (House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee 2010, 14). By contrast, the proportion of students undertaking postgraduate social work qualifying programmes has consistently remained at around 25 per cent (Evaluation of Social Work Degree Qualification in England Team, 2008). Restricting the bursary to postgraduate students might lead to a reduction in demand for undergraduate qualifying courses. Although the availability of masters level courses has increased since the introduction of the social work degree (General Social Care Council, 2010) and an increasing number of universities now offer both types of programme, a reduction in undergraduate programmes could have implications for the numbers of social workers qualifying each year and may also affect employers located in those parts of the country where there are no universities offering postgraduate programmes. It is also worth noting that most employment based programmes are offered at</p>

undergraduate level (General Social Care Council, 2010). Although a switch to a postgraduate-only bursary would not affect employment based students financially as they are ineligible for a bursary, it might make it more difficult for employers and potential students to find a programme in a convenient location.

There are some who think that the quality of the social work profession and its status would be raised by making social work a masters level profession (Samuel, 2009). It is possible that restricting the bursary to postgraduates might create a trend towards increasing the number of students qualifying this way. However, there is no published research comparing the skill levels of social workers who have undertaken different qualifying routes. Furthermore, the only evidence comparing career progression and retention comes from the National Institute for Social Work Workforce Studies. This evidence was equivocal and the data is now almost 20 years old.

In contrast to those who would prefer an end to undergraduate routes to becoming a social worker, other have expressed concerns that an overemphasis on academic qualifications and credentials might have unintended consequences for less privileged students (for example, Dillon, 2011 advance access). Research from the UK (The Sutton Trust, 2004) and US (Alexander, 2001) suggests that lower income students disproportionately enrol in less prestigious universities. Furthermore, social work students (Evaluation of Social Work Degree Qualification in England Team, 2008) and lower income students more generally prefer to study at a local university (Mangan *et al.*, 2010). The distribution of postgraduate qualifying programmes is unevenly spread both geographically and in terms of how well their host institutions are resourced. For instance, few Russell Group universities offer social work qualifying programmes and those that do usually offer postgraduate programmes. Social work applicants from non-traditional backgrounds are likely to be disadvantaged if the bursary were to be restricted to postgraduates in the future.

Option 3

Retain undergraduate bursary from the second year (for new entrants who would receive it after their first year) and postgraduate scheme remains the same

- The potential *advantage* of this option is that it may provide greater stability and continuity in that it is the one, which is most similar to the current arrangements while at the same time introducing some element of a progression-dependent award for undergraduates. The *disadvantage* is that it is not known whether potential applicants for undergraduate programmes would be deterred by not receiving a bursary in their first year.

There is increasing interest in progression-dependent awards in higher education as a way of incentivising students and of ensuring that taxpayers' money is being used most effectively (for example, Opheim, 2011). However, evidence on the effectiveness of this approach is quite limited and it is not clear at which stage of a student's studies the awards are most effective (Moriarty & Manthorpe, 2010). A study examining how universities provided support for students found that some institutions increased the level of their bursaries for individuals across their study period in recognition of greater need as students progress further into courses and as an aid to retention (Pollard *et al.*, 2010) while two evaluations of the time-limited Opportunity Bursaries for students from non-traditional and low income backgrounds (Hatt *et al.*, 2005; West *et al.*, 2009) and a study of bursaries for students undertaking initial teacher training (ITT) in further education (York Consulting Ltd, 2004) all reported benefits from awarding funds in the first year so as to acknowledge the increased amounts students would need for equipment and books at the beginning of their studies.

Research into higher education (Yorke & Longden, 2004, 2008) has clearly shown that the highest rates of withdrawal occur in the first year and so the advantage of only making the bursary available to undergraduate students after their first year is that it may deter some applicants who are not committed to studying social work in the long term. This may improve progression among undergraduates on college-based programmes whose progression rates are generally lower in comparison with postgraduates (Hussein *et al.*, 2009; General Social Care Council, 2010). However, it is also possible that progression rates could become worse if the performance of first year undergraduates is affected by their financial situation.

Option 4

End the bursary completely

- The potential *advantage* of this option is that it offers the greatest savings. The *disadvantage* is that it could lead to a drop in applications for social work programmes or an increase in withdrawals, which may ultimately mean that there are insufficient social workers in the workforce.

Research looking at trends in applications for social work programmes prior to the introduction of the bursary suggested that potential applicants were proportionally disadvantaged by the end of the maintenance grant because they were older and so more likely to have family to support and they were reluctant to take out, or did not qualify, for student loans (Wallis-Jones & Lyons, 2002). The shortage of social workers which resulted is one of the key reasons for the increase in internationally recruited social workers (Hussein *et al.*, 2011 advance access;

Moriarty *et al.*, 2011 advance access-a).

There is a strong body of research into high education showing the links between student financial problems and early withdrawal, although financial reasons alone rarely provide the only explanation for students being unable to complete their studies as intended (Davies & Elias, 2003; Yorke, 2004; Yorke & Longden, 2004; Moriarty *et al.*, 2009). Even where students do not leave early, high numbers experience financial problems, with one study reporting that over 56 per cent thought their academic performance had been affected by worry over money (Johnson *et al.*, 2009).

Differences also seem to exist among students about the type of financial support they receive. Non traditional students would prefer a lower overall support package with greater proportion in non repayable support in the form of grants and bursaries (Usher *et al.*, 2010). The key argument here is that some applicants may be more debt averse than others (Callender, 2003; Callender & Jackson, 2008; Davies *et al.*, 2009; Callender, 2010) and that those who are concerned that the increased earnings they are likely to receive as graduates may be insufficient to make up for the debt they will incur as students (Adnett & Slack, 2007). This may be particularly true of social workers whose average age is older and who will earn above the threshold for paying back student loans but who may calculate that they will have a lower rate of return for the money they have spent on their education.

Educators on social work qualifying (Evaluation of Social Work Degree Qualification in England Team, 2008) and initial teacher training in further education programmes (York Consulting Ltd, 2004) report that the availability of a bursary improves the calibre of students they recruit by increasing the pool of applicants from which they can select.

Research with social work students (Moriarty *et al.*, 2011 advance access-b) shows that the existence of the bursary is an important reason for studying social work. However, it is not the only reason (Seymour, 2004; Furness, 2007; Stevens *et al.*, 2010 advance access). This suggests that ending the bursary would reduce the number of applications, although it is not clear by how many this could fall before there would be a shortage of newly qualified social workers.

Option 5

Create a new scheme based on successful completion of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

- The potential *advantage* of this option is that offers the greatest flexibility in terms of managing the workforce as schemes can be adjusted to take advantage of labour shortages in different parts of the country or in different areas of social work practice. The *disadvantage* is that the removal of financial support during qualifying education may lead to a reduction in the numbers of applicants choosing to study social work and so lead to a reduction in the number of social workers qualifying each year.

The earlier review undertaken by SCWRU (Moriarty & Manthorpe, 2010) found that this type of financial support was the one for which there was least published evidence, although some local councils have been operating 'golden hellos' as a way of reducing social worker vacancy rates on a local basis (Baginsky *et al.*, 2010; McGregor, 2010). The key source of information is the evaluation of the 'golden hello' initiative which provided one-off payments of up to a maximum of £4,000 to new further education teachers in their second year of teaching in designated shortage subject areas (Hopwood, 2004). This was undertaken at an early stage in the initiative and so was only able to draw preliminary conclusions. Nevertheless, there was evidence that the payment made recipients feel more valued and motivated to remain in further education. At the same time, some negative effects were also found. These consisted on divisiveness where differing interpretations of the eligibility criteria led to inconsistency in approval. It was also thought that the payment would not be sufficient to influence teachers' long term commitment and that other factors would exert greater influence on long term recruitment and retention.

Another study (Barmby & Coe, 2004; Barmby, 2006) looked at a scheme whereby the government paid off the loans of teachers qualifying between 2002-2004 over a 10 year period. The repayments began once a teacher had taken up his or her post in a school and were spaced out over 10 years so that for every year he or she remained in the profession, one-tenth of his or her loan was paid off. The research concluded that around a third of teachers were motivated to remain in teaching this way and that financial incentives were one, but not the only way, of attracting teachers into shortage subjects. Unfortunately, as the evaluation was only funded for a six month period, it was unable to answer any questions about whether the scheme was effective in the long term.

Wider context

It is important to consider the probable impact of changes to the bursary within the context of the wider changes to the funding of higher education following the Browne Review (Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance, 2010) and the White Paper on higher education (2011).

It is now known that the average fee for undergraduate courses will be over 8k per year (Office for Fair Access, 2011). Although students will not be expected to pay these 'up front' and the packages offered to different students on different social work programmes will vary, it is likely that the overwhelming majority of students will still need to undertake part time paid employment in order to meet their living costs (Evaluation of Social Work Degree Qualification in England Team, 2008; Worsley *et al.*, 2009; Collins *et al.*, 2010). There was some evidence that the social work students experiencing the greatest financial hardship were not those qualifying for means tested benefits or those who had a partner in paid employment but those whose main source of income was the bursary, particularly when their travel expenses were high because of the distance they had to travel to practice placements (Moriarty *et al.*, 2011 advance access-b).

Historically, part time students have been at a disadvantage (Callender, 2011) because they have not been able to apply for student loans. Before the social work degree, the proportion of social work students studying part time was greater – at 21 per cent in 2001-2002 (Evaluation of Social Work Degree Qualification in England Team, 2008) compared with 12 per cent in 2008-2009 (General Social Care Council, 2010). It is possible that an increase in part time provision might help offset any changes to the bursary, as it would help students to study more flexibly. It is also important to consider the balance between financial support for social work students through the bursary and incentives to help employers establish work-based routes to a social work qualification. There is strong evidence that students on employment routes have better progression (Harris *et al.*, 2008; Hussein *et al.*, 2011; Manthorpe *et al.*, 2011 advance access) and so these routes represent a cost effective way of ensuring a sufficient supply of social workers.

Along with the benefits of the bursary, there is some acknowledgement that it has led to the rapid expansion of many social work qualifying programmes (Worsley *et al.*, 2009) and questions about the viability of some social work programmes – particularly where there are problems in arranging sufficient good quality practice placements (General Social Care Council, 2010). It is widely held that there may be a mismatch between where programmes are located and where the need for newly qualified social workers is greatest (Lymbery, 2011). It is also important to recognise that funding for social work qualifying education could be used more effectively if there were more efforts to improve retention. Under the current system, it costs more to train a social worker because appears their rate of exit from the profession appears to be faster than that of other professionals such as nurses (Curtis *et al.*, 2011 advance access). This highlights the importance of making decisions about the bursary in the context of new work on social worker supply and demand.

Conclusions

Existing research on the impact of financial incentives for students in higher education in general has concluded that this is a topic in which there is a difficult balance between rigour and relevance (Baum *et al.*, 2008). Important limitations of existing research include the inability to determine student outcomes in the absence of financial incentives, the tendency to consider financial assistance in isolation from other initiatives designed to attract and retain students, and the lack of attention to why perceptions and use of financial incentives vary across groups (Perna, 2010). In the field of social work, because so little research has been done into the student finances (Moriarty *et al.*, 2011 advance access-b), it is difficult to make decisions about purely on the grounds of the research evidence – for example, it is not clear how many current social work students would qualify for a means tested bursary and so be able to estimate the size of any savings from switching to this option. There is very limited evidence on 'golden hellos' and that which there is originates in teaching where there are different patterns of recruitment and retention among students. The option of restricting the bursary to postgraduates could have implications for the number of undergraduate social work students and could be seen as potentially divisive. The lessons from social work admissions in the years leading up to the degree suggest that the removal of the bursary could result in a sharp decline in applications. This leaves the option of retaining the bursary for postgraduate students while only paying it to undergraduate students after their first year as the least unsatisfactory option in terms of the research evidence. However, the impact of this option on undergraduate progression would need to be monitored.

Methods

This update was based on an existing review undertaken in Autumn 2010 and new searches undertaken in September and October 2011 of a selection of bibliographic databases using a mixture of free and fixed text searching, including Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA); British Education Index; Education Resources Information Center (ERIC); and Social Care Online. The search terms used included bursary, student

support, study support, financial assistance, financial aid, financial incentives student debt, and student loans. In addition, publisher websites such as *Informaworld* and *Sage Journals Online* were searched and internet searches were undertaken to identify grey literature, information from central government departments and agencies, and messages left in online communities and blogs. In view of the timescale in which the review needed to be completed, the review has not attempted to include any quality appraisal of the findings and it is possible that the search strategies did not enable all the relevant items to be retrieved.

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