

SLC SP02/2024

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Coverage: Wales

Theme: Children, Education  
and Skills

# Student Loans in Wales

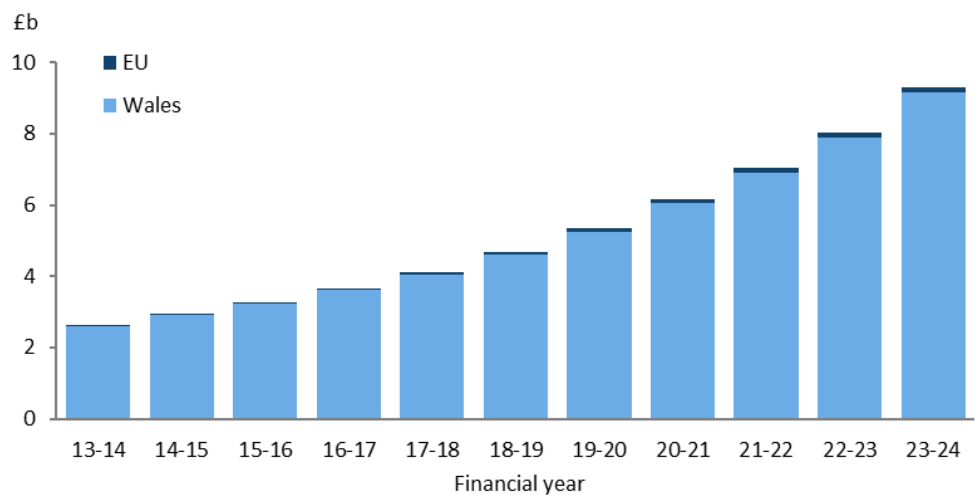
## Financial year 2023-24

### Income Contingent (ICR) Student Loan balance

#### Income Contingent student loan balance reaches £9.3 billion for higher education borrowers

Figure 1: Total balance of Income Contingent Student Loans at the end of financial year 2013-14 to 2023-24 (£ billion)

The legend follows the same order as the stacks in the bars.



Source: [Table 1](#)

[Download the data for Figure 1 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

*Figure 1* indicates that the loan balance grows year-on-year as new lending and interest added to existing balances outweighs repayments and write-offs.

The total higher education loan balance has increased from £2.6 billion in financial year 2013-14, to £9.3 billion by 2023-24. When comparing this to the 2022-23 year-end figure of £8.0 billion, this is an increase of 15.7% (£1.3 billion).

This increase is similar to those noted previously, with increases averaging 14.6% over the preceding three financial years.

The EU borrower's balance has increased each year, from £18.2 million in 2013-14, reaching £163.8 million by the end of financial year 2023-24. This is 9.4% higher than the 2022-23 figure of £149.7 million (+ £14.1 million).

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Although the EU loan balance has increased each year, the rate of increase continues to slow (down from 32.3% in 2018-19).

Tuition fee funding for new EU students in Wales (without a '[settled](#)' or '[pre-settled status](#)') ceased in academic year 2021/22. However, those continuing a course remain eligible for financial support for the duration of their course.

Of the total balance, 72.0% are amounts which are liable for repayment. This means that a borrower has passed their Statutory Repayment Due Date (SRDD). This is the point they would become liable to begin repaying a loan (normally the April after graduating or otherwise leaving their course, provided they are earning above the relevant income threshold).

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## Introduction

This statistics publication presents figures and observations on student loan outlays, repayments and borrower activity for Wales domiciled Student Loans Company (SLC) customers. This covers students who are studying, or borrowers who have studied in higher education (HE) and further education (FE) in the United Kingdom (UK). Figures are also shown for European Union (EU) students studying in Wales.

Figures provided here are for Income Contingent Repayment (ICR) Loans administered by SLC, which were introduced in academic year 1998/99.

This publication covers financial years up to and including 2023-24.

Complete information on student finance arrangements in Wales are available at the Student Finance Wales [website](#).

## Accessibility

[Public Sector Accessibility Regulations](#) mean that all public sector organisations have a legal duty to make their websites accessible for everyone, including those with disabilities. In 2023, as part of SLC's ongoing commitment to improving accessibility of our websites and content, we made changes to the way we publish our statistics.

The changes mainly affected the way we provided visual information, including:

- including descriptive information of the full time-series for each graph within the main body of the statistics publication.
- providing data used to form each graph in accessible / downloadable tables.
- changing the way we present charts and graphs to be more accessible, including changes to colour, labels and legends.

We create our statistics publications in a way that helps to ensure that the department's statistical outputs are accessible, while continuing to meet the statistical needs of our users.

## What can you use these statistics for?

These statistics can be used as a reference to the value of the Student Loans Company (SLC) loan balance at the end of the financial year, student outlay within a financial year and information on borrower activity and repayment amounts.

The data used in this publication is sourced from Student Loans Company's 'Customer Ledger Account Servicing System' (CLASS). This system only holds information on borrowers who have received funding from SLC. This publication also only includes information on loan products and does not include information regarding grants and bursaries. Under normal circumstances grants and bursaries are not considered repayable.

Due to this, these statistics cannot be used to analyse trends or to draw conclusions regarding the full UK education funding landscape.

# Things you need to know

## More Frequent Data Sharing (MFDS)

From April 2019 the frequency in which repayments data is provided to SLC by HM Revenues and Customs (HMRC) increased. Before this SLC received customer repayment data, reported by employers, annually from HMRC after the end of the financial year. This increased to weekly. This meant for SLC customers being paid monthly through the Pay as You Earn (PAYE) system, SLC receives information of student loan deductions monthly.

**This increase in frequency resulted in a change in time series for repayments and interest applied for the 2019-20 financial year.** From the 2020-21 financial year, the time series normalised with a single years' worth of repayments data being included (just those processed by SLC within that financial year).

For more information on how this affected repayments and resulting interest calculations, please refer to our [Additional information](#) section and for further detail, please refer to [GOV.UK](#).

## Self-Assessment data

Self-Assessment repayment data is supplied from HMRC to SLC via a different process to PAYE. As a result, this will still be provided annually after the end of the financial year (and not weekly as for PAYE customers). This will therefore still show in the financial year in which it was posted to the customer's account, as in previous years. For this reason, financial year 2023-24 will mostly comprise of Self-Assessment repayments data from the previous financial year. This will also be true of the interest calculations being applied for these borrowers.

In Table 1, in previous years we have had to mark the figures relating to Self-Assessment repayments as 'estimated' due to this being provided later than anticipated. From 2018-19 this has been provided as expected, allowing this to be included as final figures.

In Table 4A we therefore mark the latest financial year of repayment as 'provisional' as the 2023-24 Self-Assessment earnings information is received from HMRC after the 30 April effective date. The final figure is shown in the following years' publication.

## Rounding, totals and averages

All borrower numbers and amounts have been rounded to the nearest 100 and £100,000, the nearest 1 decimal point on the data tables given. Average amounts are rounded to the nearest £10. Totals and averages are calculated from un-rounded numbers, these therefore may differ from adding up rounded components.

## Effective dates

The effective dates used in this publication are as follows:

Table 1 and 2:	31 March
Table 3, 4 and 5:	30 April

Tables 3, 4 and 5 provide information which requires annual PAYE end of year data supplied by HMRC to SLC, even after the introduction of [MFDS](#). This is received after the financial year ends hence the later effective date.

## Executive summary - Financial year 2023-24

For more detail, please click on the individual headline...

- Income Contingent student loan balance reaches £9.3 billion for higher education borrowers
- Plan 2 borrowing equates to 78.1% of the total Income Contingent Student Loan balance
- £852.8 million paid out in undergraduate lending in 2023-24, 3.0% higher than in the previous year
- Second year of decrease in postgraduate borrowing reported in 2023-24, down 4.1% to £61.5 million
- Continued increases in bank base rate /RPI in financial year 2023-24 results in a further rise in higher education accrued interest, up to £592.1 million
- Notable increases in interest accrued to balances continue across all three plan types in 2023-24
- Provisional 5.3% increase in the average higher education borrower's loan balance entering into repayment in financial year 2023-24, at £37,360
- Provisional 10.5% increase in the average EU higher education borrower's loan balance entering into repayment in financial year 2023-24, at £28,840
- 64.8% of all ICR borrowers who are liable to repay are in the UK tax system and 39.6% made a repayment in financial year 2023-24
- 11.9% increase in higher education borrower repayments in financial year 2023-24, rising to £214.3 million
- A provisional 5.4% increase in total amount repaid by higher education borrowers via HMRC in financial year 2023-24, reaching £176.4 million
- 13.0% increase in total amount repaid by higher education borrowers via scheduled repayments directly to SLC, reaching £8.7 million
- 23.1% increase in total amount repaid by higher education borrowers via voluntary repayments directly to SLC, reaching £23.3 million
- 7.3% increase in the average amount repaid by ICR loan borrowers via HMRC to £880 in financial year 2022-23

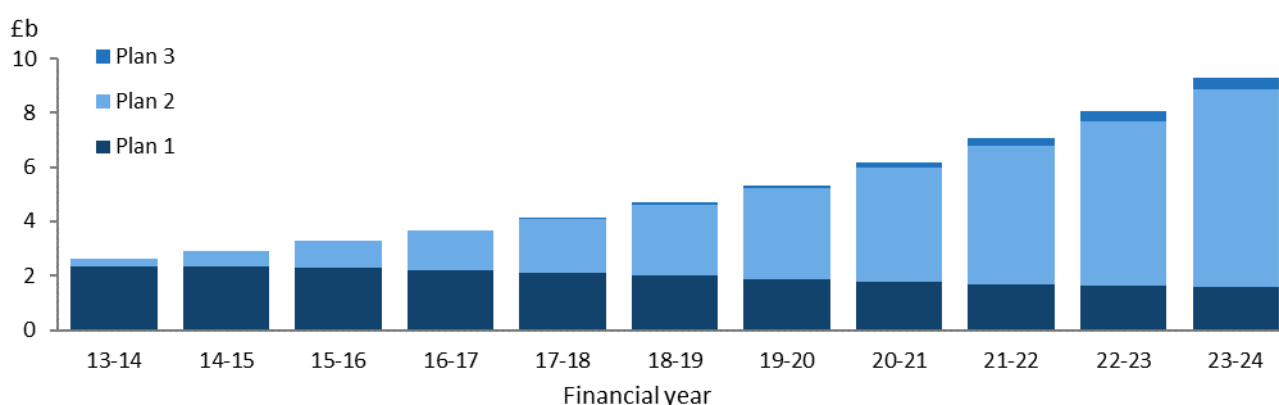
## Income Contingent Student Loan balance by repayment plan

In financial year 2023-24, there were three plans. Students who began their course prior to 1 September 2012 are on Repayment Plan 1, those who began their course after 1 September 2012 are on Repayment Plan 2. Students who have taken out postgraduate loans are on Repayment plan 3. Borrowers can be 'multi-plan' should they have studied multiple courses.

### Plan 2 borrowing equates to 78.1% of the total Income Contingent Student Loan balance

Figure 2: Total balance of Income Contingent Student Loans at the end of financial year 2013-14 to 2023-24 by repayment plan (£ billion)

The legend follows the same order as the stacks in the bars.



Source: [Table 1](#)

[Download the data for Figure 2 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 2 indicates the changing proportion of the loan balance in respect to repayment plans.

In financial year 2013-14, Plan 1 loans equated to 89.8% of the entire loan balance. By 2023-24, this had reduced to just 17.2%. This is as a result of no new Plan 1 loans being issued following the 2011/12 academic year.

Due to the replacement of Plan 1 loans with Plan 2 for all new borrowers from academic 2012/213, from this point the % of the balance attributed to Plan 2 loans has increased each year, from 10.2% in financial year 2013-14 to 78.1% by the end of 2023-24.

Following their introduction in academic year 2017/18, by financial year 2023-24 Plan 3 (postgraduate) loans equated to 4.7% of the higher education loan balance. In financial year 2017-18 this was purely Masters Loans and in 2018-19 Doctoral Loans were introduced into this repayment plan type.

For more information on repayment plans, please refer to the [Income Contingent Student Loan repayment plans & interest rates and calculations](#) section on GOV.UK.

## Total amount paid out in loans to student borrowers

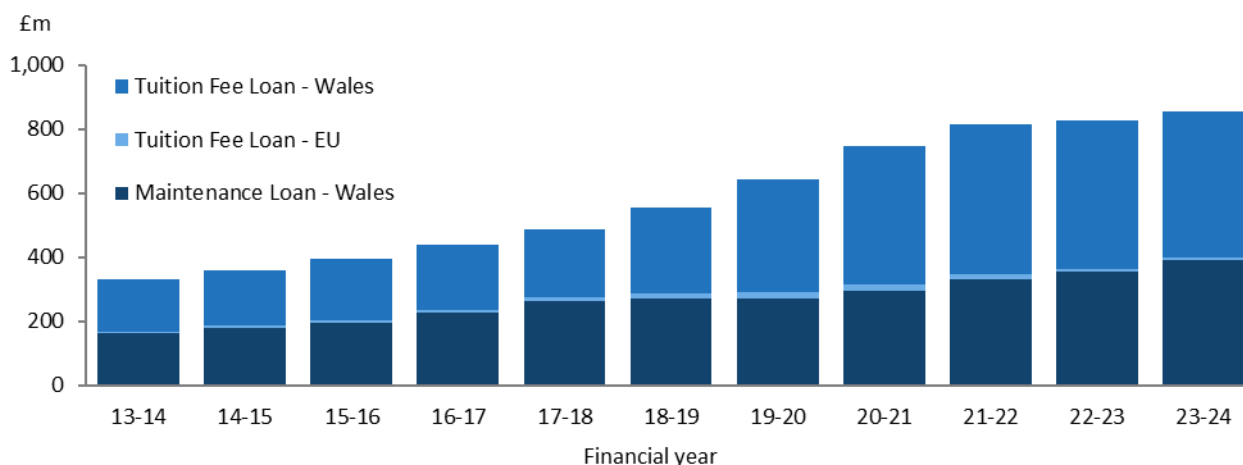
Loans discussed in this section include Tuition Fee Loans and Maintenance Loans for undergraduates, and Masters and Doctoral Loans for postgraduates.

The total amount paid out in higher education undergraduate and postgraduate loans was £329.4 million in financial year 2013-14, increasing year-on-year to reach £914.3 million by 2023-24. This was 2.5% (£22.0 million) higher than issued the previous financial year. This increase follows a year of relative standstill (+ 0.1%) in 2022-23 and earlier year-on-year increases, more recently of 8.9% in 2021-22 and 17.2% in 2020-21.

### £852.8 million paid out in undergraduate lending in 2023-24, 3.0% higher than in the previous year

Figure 3: Total amount paid out in loans to higher education undergraduate borrowers in financial years 2013-14 to 2023-24 (£ million)

The legend follows the same order as the stacks in the bars.



Source: [Table 1](#)

[Download the data for Figure 3 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 3 shows total amount paid out in the form of undergraduate loans has increased year-on-year, to reach £852.8 million in 2023-24. When comparing this to the previous financial year, there has been an increase of 3.0% (£24.7 million). This is a more significant increase than the 1.4% increase reported in the previous year, yet lower than the 9.2% seen in 2021-22 and the 16.2% in 2020-21.

£160.4 million in Tuition Fee Loans was paid out on behalf of Wales-domiciled undergraduates in 2013-14, increasing to peak at £467.6 million in 2021-22. Financial year 2022-23 reported the first reduction in the amount paid out, down 0.9% to £463.3 million, followed by a second decrease in the most recent year (down by a further 2.0% to £454.2 million).

£5.4 million in Tuition Fee Loans was paid on behalf of EU-domiciled undergraduates in 2013-14, steadily increasing to peak at £19.1 million in 2020-21. The first reduction was noted in 2021-22 (down by 12.9% to £16.6 million) likely due to the discontinuation of EU student funding to new students. This was followed by a further, more significant decrease in 2022-23 (down 34.6% to £10.9 million).

In the most recent financial year, 46.1% less was paid out to EU-domiciled undergraduates in comparison to 2022-23, down to £5.8 million.



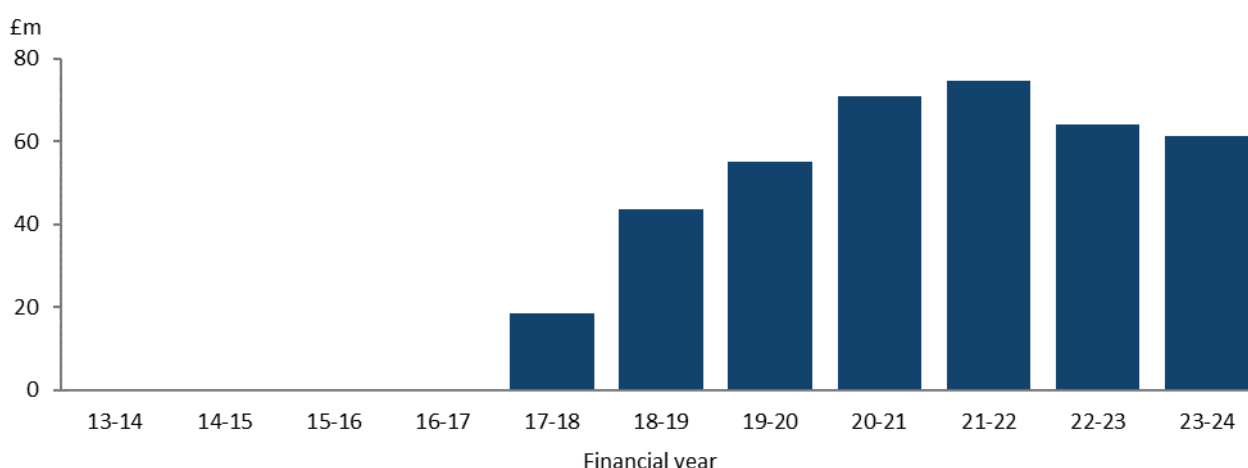
£163.6 million was paid to undergraduate borrowers in the form of Maintenance Loans in financial year 2013-14, increasing each year, albeit by varying %'s to reach £392.8 million by 2023-24. In the most recent year, an 11.0% increase is noted in comparison to 2022-23, more significant than the 6.5% increase noted in the previous year.

Figures show that in 2023-24, the reduction in outlay in relation to Tuition Fee Loans was offset by a notable increase in the total amount paid out in Maintenance Loans. This can be attributed to the increase in the average Maintenance Loan taken out.

For more information of take-up on loans, please refer to our Student Support publication [series](#). The latest release can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

## Second year of decrease in postgraduate borrowing reported in 2023-24, down 4.1% to £61.5 million

Figure 4: Total amount paid out in loans to higher education postgraduate borrowers in financial years 2013-14 to 2023-24 (£ million)



Source: [Table 1](#)

[Download the data for Figure 4 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 4 illustrates that postgraduate borrowing increased from £18.6 million in its introductory financial year of 2017-18, to peak at £74.6 million in 2021-22.

In 2022-23 a first decrease was reported, of 14.1%, down by £10.5 million to £64.1 million.

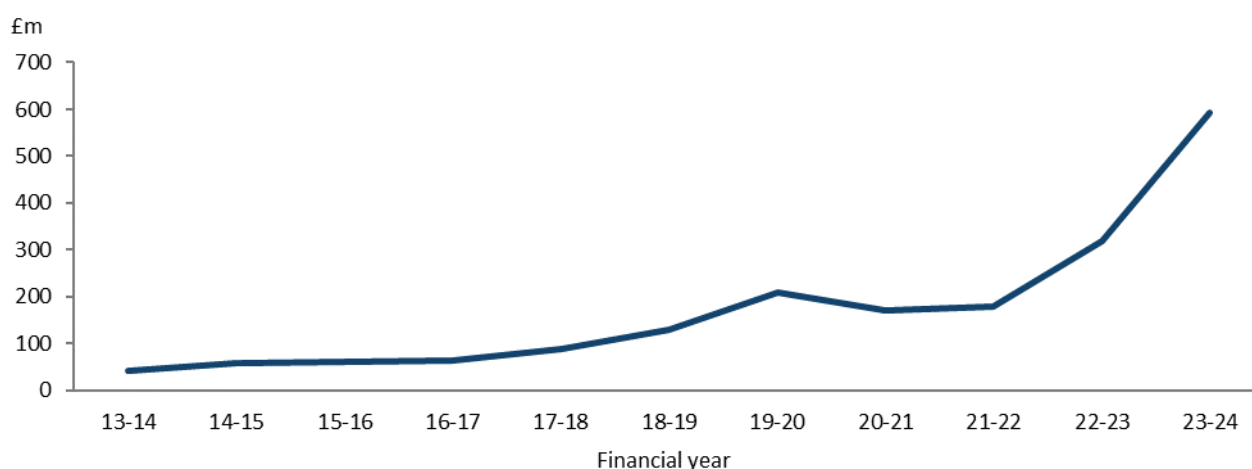
This was followed by a further, yet less significant decrease in the most recent financial year, of 4.1%, down to £61.5 million.

## Interest added to Income Contingent Loans

The interest charged on higher education loans is dependent on the repayment plan the loans falls under. In financial year 2023-24, there were three plans. Students who began their course prior to 1 September 2012 are on Repayment Plan 1, those who began their course after 1 September 2012 are on Repayment Plan 2. Students who have taken out postgraduate loans are on Repayment plan 3. Borrowers can be 'multi-plan' should they have studied multiple courses. Plan 1 loan interest rates are linked to the Bank of England base rate. Plan 2 and 3 loan interest rates are linked to the Retail Price Index (RPI) - a measure of inflation, which reflects changes to the cost of living in the UK.

### Continued increases in bank base rate/RPI in financial year 2023-24 results in a further rise in higher education accrued interest, up to £592.1 million

Figure 5: Total amount of interest accrued on higher education loans in financial years 2013-14 to 2023-24 (£ million)



Source: [Table 1](#)

[Download the data for Figure 5 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 5 shows that interest accrued to higher education loans equated to £41.2 million in financial year 2013-14, increasing year-on-year to reach £129.5 million by 2018-19. A sharp increase is evident in 2019-20 (up 61.3% to £208.9 million) due to 'More Frequent Data Share' (the more readily available data provided to SLC by HMRC meant that effectively, almost two years' worth of customer PAYE repayments and resulting interest calculations (those processed by SLC in both 2018-19 and 2019-20) were included in the 2019-20 financial year). Further detail can be found in the [Additional information](#) section. The time series normalised in 2020-21.

The interest accrued onto higher education loan accounts increased slightly in 2021-22 (+ 3.9%) compared to the previous year, despite a 14.4% increase in the 2020-21 loan balance. This was predominantly owing to the lower interest rates charged for the majority of 2021-22 due to caps being placed on Plan 2 and Plan 3 loan interest between July 2021 and February 2022.

Welsh Government monitors interest rates set by commercial banks using monthly data provided by the Bank of England. Should the commercial interest rate (or Prevailing Market Rate (PMR)) fall below the normal rate charged on these loans (varying between 'RPI and RPI + 3%, dependent on circumstance and income), Welsh Government will cap Plan 2 and Plan 3 interest rates to help protect borrowers against a rise in inflation.

During financial year 2021-22, the maximum interest was capped for Plan 2 and Plan 3 loans (at varying rates, averaging 4.5%). In September 2022, due to the further rise in RPI, the maximum interest rate for

these loans were capped again (at varying rates, averaging 6.5%) for the remainder of the 2022-23 financial year. This attributed to the majority of the 78.9% increase in accrued interest, to £318.3 million.

A cap remained throughout financial year 2023-24 (at varying rates, averaging 7.3%). This higher rate of interest contributed towards a further 86.0% increase in the total accrued interest, to £592.1 million. Without this cap, the continued rise in RPI would have meant that Plan 2 and Plan 3 loan borrowers would have faced an interest rate of circa. 13.5%.

Another contributing factor to these significant increases is the growing percentage of the loan balance associated with Plans 2 and 3 loans, which have much higher interest rates compared to Plan 1 loans.

Although Plan 1 loans make up just 15.6% of the total loan balance and have lower rates than Plan 2 and 3 loans, increases in rates applied to these loans have also contributed to the rises in the total interest accrued. Due to notable increases in the Bank of England base rate during financial year 2022-23, the maximum interest applied to Plan 1 loans increased from 1.5% to 5.0%. Further increases to the base rate within financial year 2023-24 resulted in the maximum interest applied reaching 6.25% by September 2023 (the rate was then frozen for the remainder of the financial year).

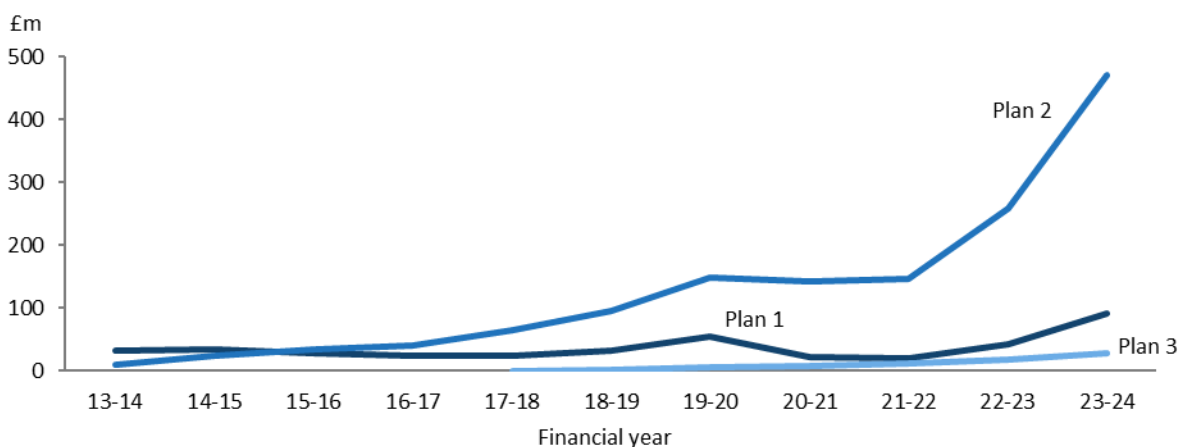
The total accrued interest on loans in 2023-24 equated to 7.4% of the previous financial year's loan balance, of £8.0 billion. This is higher than in 2022-23, where the interest accrued equated to 4.5% of the loan balance in previous financial year, of £7.1 billion.

It should be noted that, regardless of interest rates, the total interest accrued will increase as the loan balance grows year after year (up 15.7% in 2023-24). Also, that a borrower's rate of interest does not affect their monthly repayment amount.

For more information on interest rates and calculations, please refer to the [Income Contingent Student Loan repayment plans & interest rates and calculations](#) section on GOV.UK.

## Notable increases in interest accrued to balances continue across all three plan types in 2023-24, caused by continued rise in bank base rate/RPI

Figure 6: Total amount of interest accrued on higher education loans in financial years 2013-14 to 2023-24 by repayment plan (£ million)



Source: [Table 1](#)  
[Download the data for Figure 6 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 6 indicates the amount of interest added by financial year, split by the three repayment plans.

A first, sharp increase across all three repayment plans is evident in 2019-20 owing to '[More Frequent Data Share](#)'. The time series normalised in financial year 2020-21.

Plan 1 loan interest rates are linked to the Bank of England base rate. Due to notable increases in the base rate during financial year 2022-23, the interest applied to these loans increased by 117.6% to £42.7 million. Owing to further increases in the base rate in 2023-24, the amount accrued increased by a further 116.0% to reach £92.3 million.

15.6% of the total interest accrued in financial year 2023-24 can be attributed to Plan 1 loans (slightly higher than the 13.4% attributed in the previous year).

In 2023-24, Plan 1 interest represented 5.7% of the previous year's loan balance, compared to 2.5% in 2022-23.

Plan 2 and 3 loan interest rates are linked to the Retail Price Index (RPI). However, rates applied to these loans were capped (at varying rates) during financial year 2021-22. Caps were lifted, then reintroduced during 2022-23 and have remained in place throughout 2023-24. This is to help protect borrowers against a significant rise in inflation.

Due to notable increases in RPI (and resulting interest caps) over the two most recent financial years, Plan 2 interest increased to £258.4 million in 2022-23 (+ 75.7%) and again by a further 82.7% to reach £472.1 billion in 2023-24.

79.7% of the total interest accrued in financial year 2023-24 can be attributed to Plan 2 loans, lower than the 81.2% in the previous year.

As a % of the previous financial year's loan balance, Plan 2 interest represented 7.8% in 2023-24, higher than the 5.1% reported in the previous year.

Plan 3 interest increased to £17.2 million in 2022-23 (+ 52.1%) and again by a further 60.9% to reach £27.7 million in 2023-24. This is also as a result of the increasing RPI (and resulting interest caps).

4.7% of the total interest accrued in financial year 2023-24 can be attributed to Plan 3 loans, slightly lower than the 5.4% reported in 2023-24.

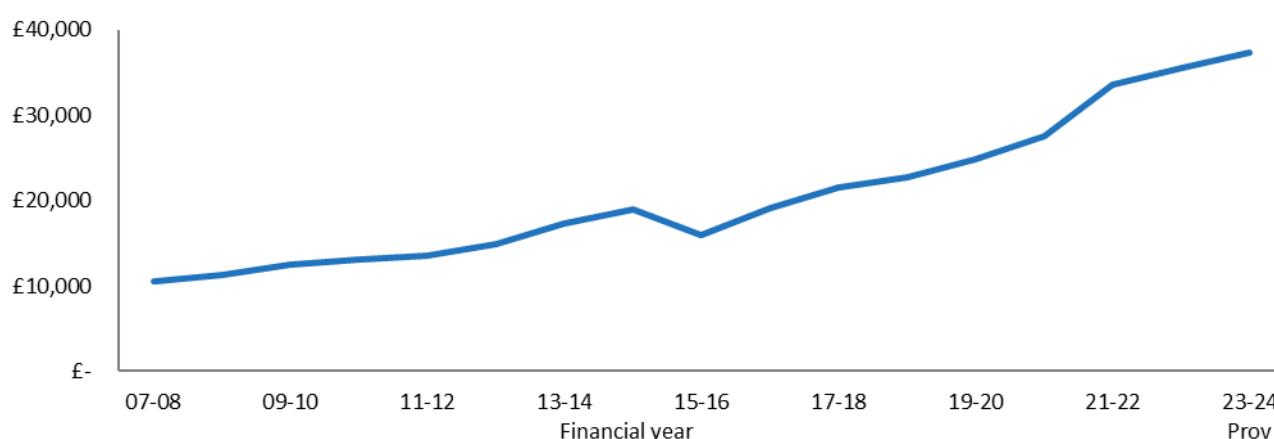
As a % of the previous financial year's loan balance, Plan 3 interest represented 7.7% in 2023-24, compared to 6.1% in the previous year.

## Average Income Contingent Loan balances

This section looks at the average loan balance for borrowers in the first financial year in which their liability to repay first began. A borrower usually becomes liable to repay the April following the completion, or withdrawal from their course, provided they are earning above the relevant income threshold. The average loan balance reflects the amount paid to borrowers, plus interest added whilst they were studying, minus any voluntary repayments made by borrowers prior to them becoming liable to repay. The figures in this section are calculated as at 30 April following the relevant financial year-end.

### Provisional 5.3% increase in the average higher education borrower's loan balance entering into repayment in financial year 2023-24, at £37,360

Figure 7: Average higher education loan balance on entry into repayment by financial year - 2006-07 to 2023-24: Wales & EU (£)



Source: [Table 5 \(iii\)](#)

[Download the data for Figure 7 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 7 indicates that the average loan balance for a higher education borrower entering into repayment has increased overall from £9,900 in financial year 2006-07, to reach a provisional position of £37,360 by 2023-24. This figure will be finalised in our 2025 publication.

The decrease in financial year 2015-16 can be predominantly attributed to the volume of 2012/13 cohort students becoming liable to start to repay their loans. The 2012/13 policy change encouraged an influx of new borrowers as these students were the first to have access to an increased non-repayable grant package, including a Tuition Fee Grant and the (then named) Assembly Learning Grant. The dip in the average was as a result of the increase in the loan balance, being offset by a higher increase in the number of borrowers with a loan balance.

The higher increase in financial year 2021-22 (21.9%) can be predominantly attributed to the students who were eligible for Tuition Fee Grants (which were discontinued in academic year 2017/18 following the [Diamond Review](#)), concluding their studies. Prior to 2017/18, a Tuition Fee Grant of £4,954 was available to students along with a maximum Tuition Fee Loan of £4,296. For students beginning a full-time course in academic year 2018/19, grants were no longer issued and instead an increased Tuition Fee Loan of £9,250 was made available. Prior to the Diamond Review, Tuition Fee Loans made up just 45% of the total tuition fee package (55% attributed to grants). By academic year 2023-24, this had increased to 99.8%.

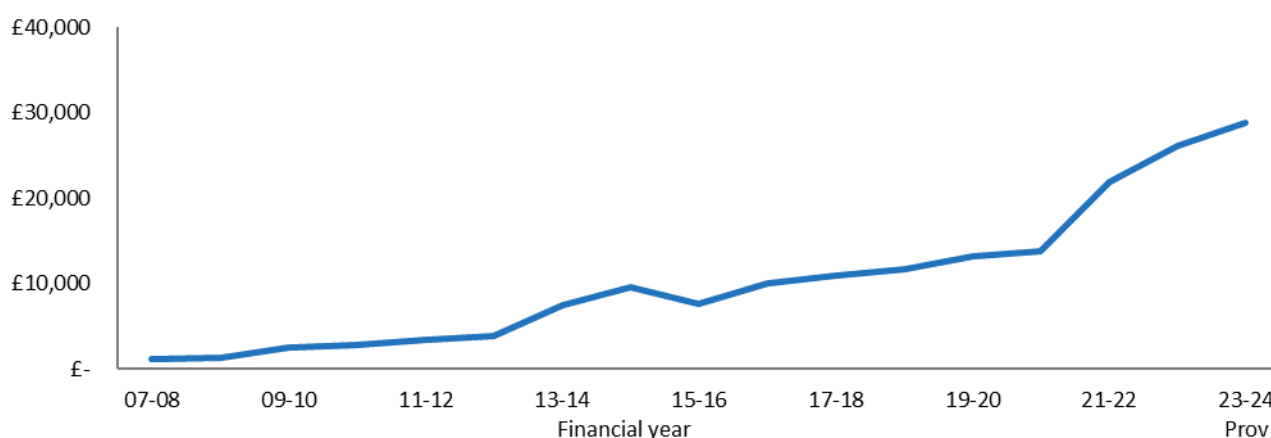
In 2023-24, the average balance indicates a provisional increase of 5.3% in comparison to the previous year. This is relatively in line with the increase noted in 2022-23 (of 5.7%).

Full-time students completing three- or four-year courses are included in these averages but are diluted by other borrower types such as those on longer or shorter courses, part time study and students that have withdrawn before completing their studies.

**Please note:** In order to bring this section of the publication in line with the published '[UK Comparison](#)' charts, we now refer to 'Financial years', as opposed to 'Repayment Cohorts'. No changes have been made to the average balance figures – these remain as previously published.

## Provisional 10.5% increase in the average EU higher education borrower's loan balance entering into repayment in financial year 2023-24, at £28,840

Figure 8: Average higher education loan balance on entry into repayment by financial year – 2006-07 to 2023-24: EU only (£)



Source: [Table 5B \(iii\)](#)

[Download the data for Figure 8 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Following a similar trend, *Figure 8* indicates that average loan balance for an EU higher education borrower entering into repayment has increased overall from £600 in financial year 2006-07, to reach a provisional position of £28,840 by 2023-24. This figure will be finalised in our 2025 publication.

In comparison to the previous year, the average loan balance increased by 10.5%. This is lower than the 19.1% increase reported in the previous year.

EU borrowers consistently have a lower average balance. This is predominantly due to these borrowers not being eligible for maintenance funding.

From academic year 2021/22, new EU students in Wales (without a '[settled](#)' or '[pre-settled status](#)') were no longer eligible for tuition fee funding. However, those continuing a course in 2023/24 remain eligible for tuition fee support for the duration of their course.

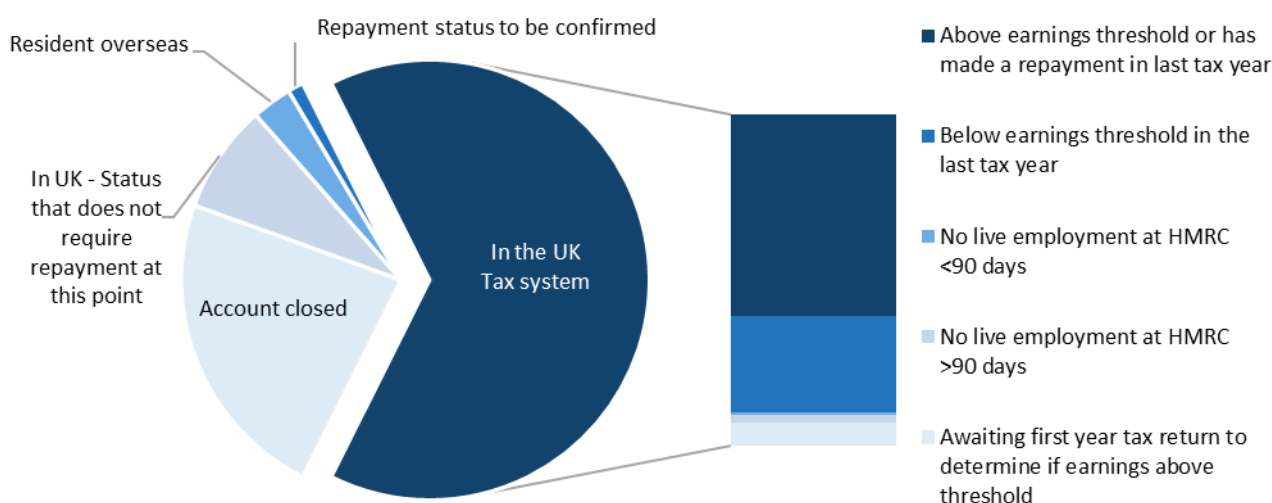
**Please note:** In order to bring this section of the publication in line with the published '[UK Comparison](#)' charts, we now refer to 'Financial years', as opposed to 'Repayment Cohorts'. No changes have been made to the average balance figures – these remain as previously published.

## Income Contingent Loan borrower repayment status

Borrowers are categorised by their repayment status as at the end of the financial year. This status may change throughout the year depending on their circumstances. Until their loan balance is fully repaid or cancelled, they can move into and out of any of the other statuses.

### 64.8% of all ICR borrowers who are liable to repay are in the UK tax system and 39.6% made a repayment in financial year 2023-24

Figure 9: ICR student loan borrowers by repayment status as at the beginning of FY 2024-25



Source: [Table 3A \(i\) and \(ii\)](#)

[Download the data for Figure 9 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 9 includes all ICR loan borrowers in all repayment cohorts who have become liable to repay as at 30 April 2024.

Included in these figures is the 2024 repayment cohort. This cohort has been in repayment for less than one month from the effective date of these statistics, therefore the profile of this repayment cohort is very different to that of earlier repayment cohorts.

The number of borrowers (who were liable to repay and) who were in live employment and made a repayment in financial year 2023-24 was 162,200, an increase in comparison to the end-April position in 2023, of 144,900 (+ 10.7%). As a % of all those liable to repay, this has increased from 37.4%, to 39.6%.

The number of borrowers in the UK tax system, yet not required to make a repayment increased to 77,000 (+ 10.1%) in April 2024, compared to 69,200 in the previous year. As a % of all those liable to repay, this increased from 17.9% to 18.8%.

The number of borrowers liable to repay showing no live employment for less than 90 days halved from 3,000 to 1,500 by 30 April 2024. As a % of all those liable to repay, this has in turn reduced from 0.8% to 0.4%.

Those showing no live employment for over 90 days was 6,700, 3.0% higher than the 6,500 noted in April 2023. As a % of all those liable to repay, this represents 1.6%, vs. 1.7% respectively in 2023.

At end-April 2024, of those overseas and above earnings thresholds for that country, the number who made a repayment decreased from 2,600 to 2,500 in comparison to April 2023. As a % of all those liable for repayment this reduced slightly from 0.7% to 0.6%.

The number of those overseas and above threshold yet in defaulted in arrears has decreased from 3,300 to 2,800. As a % of all those liable for repayment this has reduced from 0.8% to 0.7%.

23.1% of all borrowers who were liable to repay at end-April 2024 no longer retained any loan balance, mainly due to full repayment (slightly higher than the 22.3% in 2023).

At end-April 2024, of the 409,600 borrowers, 314,900 were still owing (up 5.7% and 4.6% respectively on 2023).

For 30 April 2023 figures, please refer to Table 3A (i) and (ii) in our previous year's [publication](#).



## Income Contingent Loan repayments

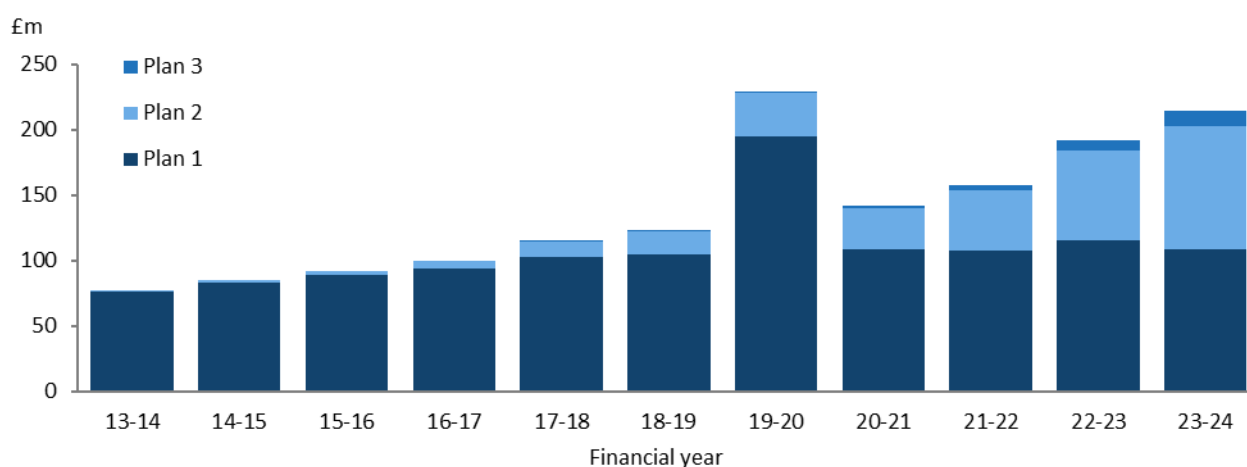
Borrowers normally become liable to make repayments from the April following the completion of, or withdrawal from their course, provided they are earning above the relevant income threshold.

Repayments are either made via HMRC (either PAYE or Self-Assessment) or directly to Student Loans Company on a scheduled or voluntary basis. Repayment terms including thresholds and interest rates differ depending on the repayment plan type the loan falls under.

### 11.9% increase in higher education borrower repayments in financial year 2023-24, rising to £214.3 million

Figure 10: Total amount repaid by higher education borrowers in financial years 2013-14 to 2023-24 by repayment plan type (£ million)

The legend follows the same order as the stacks in the bars.



Source: [Table 1](#)

[Download the data for Figure 10 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 10 demonstrates that in financial year 2013-14, borrower repayments totalled £77.2 million. This steadily increased year-on-year to reach £122.1 million by 2018-19.

In 2019-20 a considerable increase of 87.4% (to £228.7 million) was reported. This was predominantly due to more readily available data provided by HMRC ([MFDS](#)). This meant that effectively, almost two years' worth of customer PAYE repayments (those processed by SLC in both 2018-19 and 2019-20) were included in the 2019-20 financial year. The time series normalised in 2020-21. Further detail on MFDS can be found in the [Additional information](#) section.

In 2022-23, a second notable increase of 22.0% was reported (+ £34.6 million) to £191.6 million. This could be attributed to several factors including the minimal change to repayment thresholds: The Plan 1 threshold increased by just 1.5% (compared to + 2.6% in 2021-22), and Plan 2 and Plan 3 thresholds remained unchanged to the previous year.

The total amount repaid in respect of higher education Income Contingent Loans in financial year 2023-24 totalled £214.3 million. This is 11.9% (£22.8 million) higher than noted in the previous year. The increase can be attributed to the growing proportion of Plan 2 and 3 loans entering repayment, coupled with continued freeze in these Plans' repayment thresholds.

However, this slower increase is likely as a result of the rise in the Plan 1 threshold to £22,015 (+ 8.3%).

Up until financial year 2016-17, over 94% of all higher education repayments related to Plan 1 loans. Each year, the share of Plan 1 loan repayments has decreased as these loans were replaced by Plan 2 loans (for new entrants in academic year 2012/13), falling to 51% by financial year 2023-24. In comparison, the share of Plan 2 repayments has increased from 6% in 2016-17 to 44% by 2023-24.

Since their introduction in academic year 2017/18, the share of Plan 3 loan repayments has increased from 0.1%, to 5% of all repayments made in 2023-24.

Plan 1 (loans prior to Sep-12) repayments decreased by 6.2% compared to 2022-23, down to £108.4 million. This follows a 7.7% increase in the previous year. This change in trend is likely attributed to the increase in the related repayment threshold to £22,015 (+ 8.3%).

As a % of previous financial year's loan balance, Plan 1 repayments remained relatively as reported in the previous year (6.7% vs. 6.8% in 2022-23).

Plan 2 (post Sep-12) repayments increased by 37.8% in 2023-24 to £94.3million, following a 49.6% increase in the previous year. These increases can be principally attributed to the growing Plan 2 loan balance becoming liable for repayment (65.8% of the total Plan 2 loan balance was liable for repayment by 2023-24).

As a % of the previous financial year's loan balance, Plan 2 repayments saw a slight increase at 1.6% (vs. 1.4% in the prior year).

Postgraduate (Plan 3) repayments increased by 54.6% in 2023-24 to £11.6 million, compared to a more significant 93.5% increase in 2022-23. These increases can be predominantly attributed to the growing Plan 3 loan balance becoming liable for repayment. For example, 63.7% of the total Plan 3 loan balance was liable for repayment in 2022-23, this increased to 71.6% by 2023-24).

As a % of previous financial year's loan balance, Plan 3 repayments increased from 2.6% in 2022-23 to 3.3%).

Repayments will continue to increase due to the growing proportion of a rising total loan balance which is liable for repayment, irrespective of other factors.

82.8% of repayments were received via HMRC (vs. 83.8% in 2022-23) and the remaining 17.2% were made directly to SLC (vs. 16.2% in 2022-23). This split does not take into account refunds made.

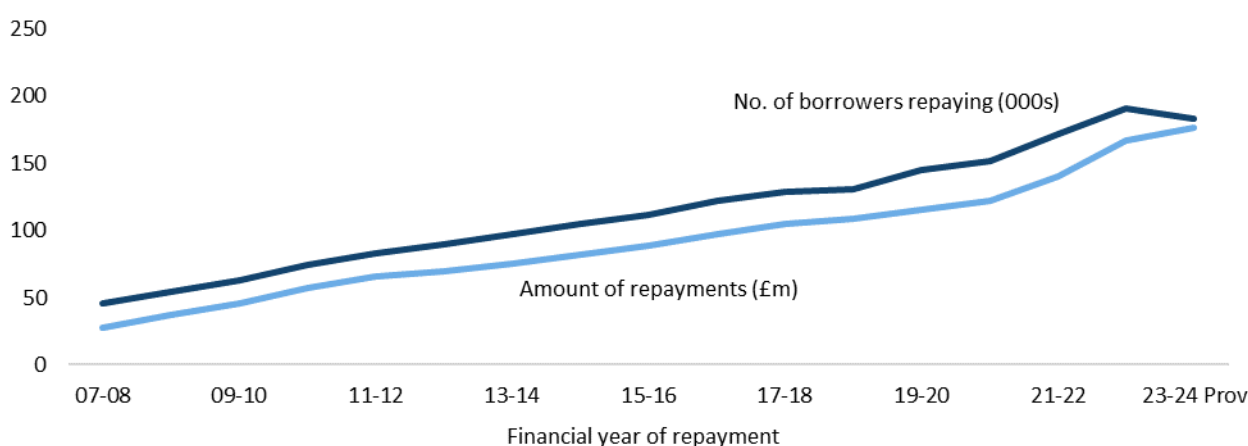
For more information on repayment plans and thresholds, please refer to the [Income Contingent Student Loan repayment plans, interest rates and calculations](#) section on GOV.UK.

## Income Contingent Loan repayments by repayment method

Repayments can be made via three methods, via HMRC (for UK taxpayers who are paid via PAYE or self-employed submitting Self-Assessment), along with scheduled and voluntary repayments which are made directly to SLC (outside of the HMRC deduction system). Scheduled repayments are made by borrowers nearing the end of their repayment term or from those overseas. Borrowers can opt to move onto a direct debit scheme paid directly to SLC to avoid overpayment via PAYE deductions. Voluntary repayments are additional repayments which a borrower can choose to make at any time and can be paid alongside scheduled repayments and those via HMRC.

### A provisional 5.4% increase in total amount repaid by higher education borrowers via HMRC in financial year 2023-24, reaching £176.4 million

Figure 11: Number of ICR student loan borrowers who made a scheduled repayment via HMRC & total amount repaid by financial year of repayment 2006-07 to 2023-24



Source: [Table 4A \(i\)\(ii\)](#)

[Download the data for Figure 11 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 11 demonstrates that the number of higher education borrowers making repayments via HMRC has increased year-on-year, from 35,700 in financial year 2006-07, to 190,800 by 2022-23. The total amount repaid has also steadily increased, from £18.5 million to £167.4 million.

As at end-April 2024, the provisional number of borrowers who made a repayment via HMRC in financial year 2023-24 was 183,200. This is 4.0% lower than the final figure for 2022-23 (down 7,600). The provisional amount repaid was £176.4 million, 5.4% higher (+ £9.1 million) than the final figure for the 2022-23.

Annual increases in repayments made via HMRC can be predominantly attributed to the growing proportion of loans becoming liable for repayment, up to 72.0% of the total loan balance by 2023-24.

The most recent financial year's figures are marked as 'provisional' due to the 2023-24 Self-Assessment earnings information being received from HMRC after Table 4A's 30 April 2024 effective date. The movement between the provisional and final figures for financial year 2022-23 was an additional 10.0% in regard to the number of borrowers making a repayment (from 173,400), and an additional 7.7% in the amount repaid (from £155.5 million).

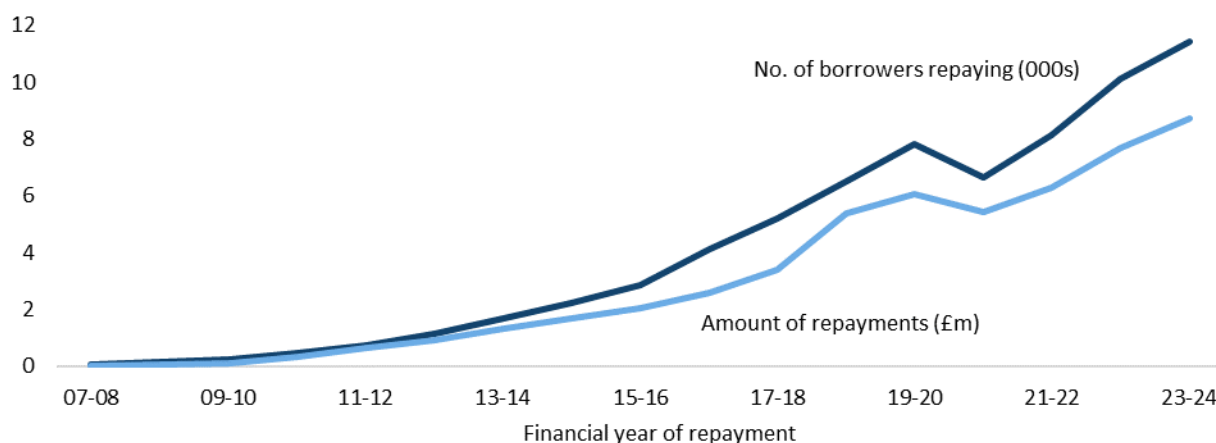
The provisional position for financial year 2022-23 can be found in the previous year's [publication](#). 2023-24's figure will be finalised in our 2025 publication.

## Scheduled repayments made directly to SLC

Direct ('scheduled') payments are repayments which have been made directly to SLC from borrowers who have arranged a repayment schedule. This includes those who have joined the 'direct debit scheme'. SLC routinely advises customers to join the direct debit scheme when they become eligible to do so, 23 months prior to the repayment of their loan. Also included in this data are borrowers who reside overseas, who are liable to repay, and are doing so via a repayment schedule. Both UK and non-UK EU domiciled borrowers may make scheduled overseas repayments.

### 13.0% increase in total amount repaid by higher education borrowers via scheduled repayments directly to SLC, reaching £8.7 million

Figure 12: Number of higher education ICR loan borrowers who made a scheduled repayment directly to SLC & total amount repaid by financial year of repayment 2006-07 to 2023-24



Source: [Table 4C \(i\)\(ii\)](#)

[Download the data for Figure 12 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 12 shows that the number of higher education borrowers making scheduled repayments directly to SLC increased overall from just 20 in financial year 2006-07 to 11,400 by 2023-24. Increases were reported each year, with the exception of financial year 2020-21, where numbers reduced by 1,200 (- 15.0%).

The total repaid via scheduled repayments followed the same trend, increasing overall from just £5,000 in 2006-07, to £8.7 million by 2023-24. An outlying decrease of £0.6 million was reported in financial year 2020-21 (- 10.5%).

When comparing 2023-24 to the previous year, there has been a 13.1% increase in the number of borrowers making scheduled repayments (+ 1,300) and a 13.0% increase in the amount repaid (+ £1.0 million). These increases are lesser than those reported in the previous two financial years (of 24.1% and 22.7% respectively).

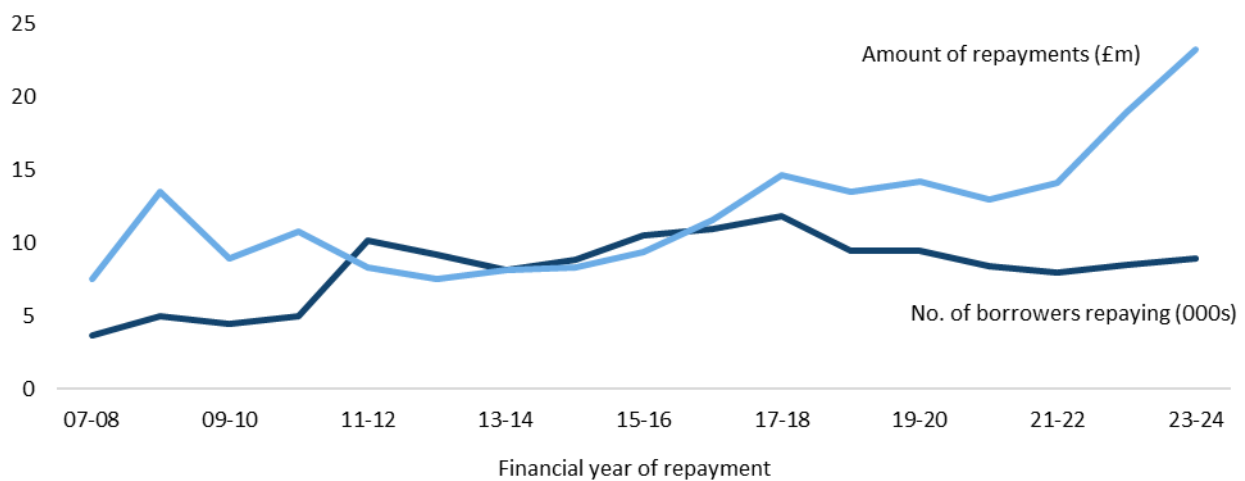
Increases could be in part attributed to a rise in take-up for the 'direct debit scheme'. SLC writes to every customer when they are within 12 months from repaying their balance inviting them to switch to direct debit payments to avoid over-repaying. By March 2024 the sign-up for this scheme had reached 33% of those invited to participate.

## Voluntary Repayments made directly to SLC

Voluntary repayments are repayments which have been made directly to SLC from borrowers who are **not yet liable to repay**. Borrowers who are making repayments via HMRC can also make additional voluntary repayments.

### 23.1% increase in total amount repaid by higher education borrowers via voluntary repayments directly to SLC, reaching £23.3 million

Figure 13: Number of higher education ICR loan borrowers who made a voluntary repayment directly to SLC & total amount repaid by financial year of repayment 2006-07 to 2023-24



Source: [Table 4E \(i\)\(ii\)](#)

[Download the data for Figure 13 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 13 demonstrates that trends in voluntary repayments made directly to SLC are significantly more volatile than HMRC and scheduled repayments. Therefore, variances to the previous year are not necessarily evidence of a trend.

Overall, the total amount of voluntary repayments made has increased from £7.2 million to £23.3 million between financial year 2006-07 and 2023-24 yet has fluctuated significantly throughout this time-period.

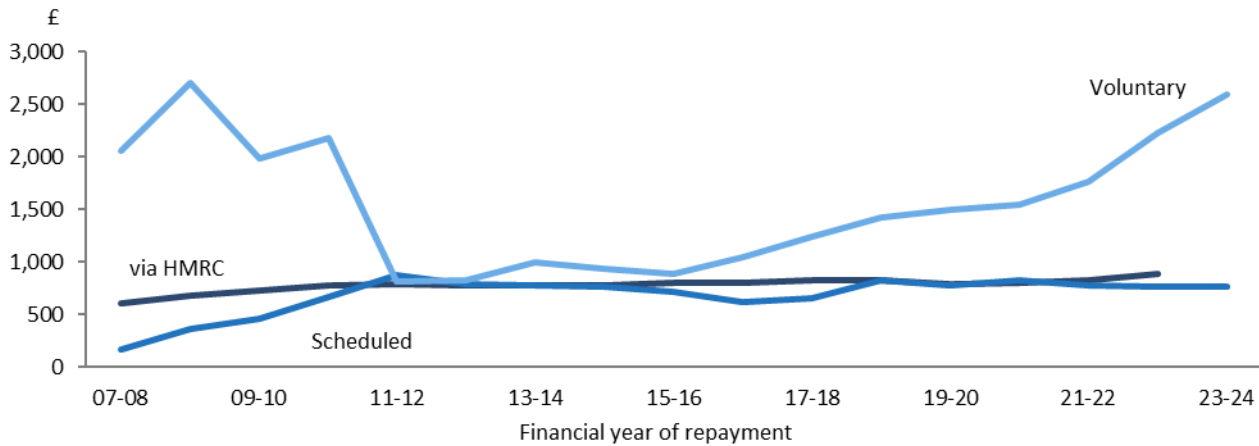
The number of borrowers making voluntary repayments increased from 3,100 in 2006-07, to 9,000 by 2023-24, also fluctuating, but to a lesser extent than the amount repaid.

When comparing 2023-24 to the previous year, there has been a 5.8% increase in the number of borrowers making voluntary repayments (+ 500) and a significant 23.1% increase in the amount repaid (+ £4.4 million).

## Average amount repaid by repayment method

### 7.3% increase in the average amount repaid by ICR loan borrowers via HMRC to £880 in financial year 2022-23

Figure 14: Average annual amount repaid by ICR student loan borrowers by repayment method and financial year of repayment 2006-07 to 2023-24 £



Source: [Table 4A \(iii\), 4C \(iii\) and 4E \(iii\)](#)  
[Download the data for Figure 14 \(ODS, 6KB\)](#)

Figure 14 indicates the average amount repaid by repayment method.

**Please note:** Repayments made via HMRC within the 2023-24 financial year are not included in the average as this is considered 'provisional' until all Self-Assessment data is included. This amount will be finalised in the 2025 publication.

The average repayment made via HMRC has increased overall from £520 in 2006-07 to reach £880 in 2022-23. When comparing to 2021-22, this is a £60 increase (+ 7.3%).

The average scheduled repayment made directly to SLC was just £200 in financial year 2006-07. This has fluctuated throughout the years, yet by 2023-24 reached £760. In comparison to 2022-23, this remained unchanged.

The average voluntary repayment has fluctuated between £810 (in financial year 2011-12) and £2,700 (in 2008-09). In 2023-24, the average was £2,590 (£360 / 16.1% higher than in the previous year). The significant reduction in the average voluntary repayment amount in financial year 2011-12 reflects the introduction of the Partial Cancellation Scheme whereby borrowers may be eligible to have up to £1,500 of their first Maintenance Loan written off by the Welsh Government after they make their first repayment.

Trends in voluntary repayments made directly to SLC are significantly more volatile than scheduled and HMRC repayments.

For both HMRC and scheduled repayments, this average includes only those borrowers who have become liable to repay (usually the April following the completion, or withdrawal from their course, provided they are earning above the relevant income threshold). For voluntary repayments, this includes all ICR borrowers who made a repayment (including those who are not yet liable to repay).

## Additional information

### Office for National Statistics decision on student loans

In December 2018 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reached a decision to partition UK student loans into lending (government assets) and expenditure (government spending) on the Government accounts. Up until this point they had been classed entirely as lending. This decision was implemented in September 2019.

This decision was based on the fact that repayments associated with ICR loans are conditional on a borrower's future income, and under certain conditions the loan obligation itself may be cancelled. These cancellation conditions are reported on Table 1 and 2 of this publication.

It has been calculated that the treatment of student loans in this manner will better reflect the government's financial position. Government revenue will no longer include interest accrued that will never be paid due to the conditional nature of ICR repayments. Government expenditure related to the cancellation of student loans is also accounted for in the periods that loans are issued, rather than decades afterwards. The ONS decision on student loans has no effect on the figures produced within this publication. Further information on the ONS decision and the methodology used to partition student loans can be found on the [ONS website](#).

### Data sources

This publication uses data from SLC's administrative systems. For details of the administrative data sources used in our publications refer to our [Statement of Administrative Sources](#).

### Data quality

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. Refer to our [Quality Guidelines](#) for further information.

### Revisions and estimates

Revisions within the data are denoted with an [r]. Further details can be found on our [revisions policy](#). In previous years we have had to mark the figures relating to self-assessment repayment as estimated [e] due to this being provided later than anticipated. From 2018-19 this has been provided as expected, allowing this to be included as final figures.

### Related statistics publications

SLC publish statistics on the repayment of Student loans for higher education for England, Northern Ireland and Scotland as part of the same series this publication belongs to. These are published at the same time as part of the series [Student loans for higher and further education](#). SLC also publish statistics on higher education funding in the series [Student support for higher education](#). The latest releases of this series were published on the 30 November 2023 covering academic year 2022/23.



The Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) publish details of higher education funding in Scotland in their publication Higher education student support in Scotland. The [latest release](#) of this series was published on 30 August 2023 covering academic session 2022/23.

The Welsh Government also publish statistics on student finance. These are held on a designated [website](#).

## The MFDS Effect on repayments data in financial year 2019-20

Repayments of Income Contingent Loans are shown in this publication in the financial year they are posted to customer accounts. As SLC were previously notified of repayments by HMRC usually within one year of the financial year ending, the repayments shown in a given financial year (prior to FY 2019-20) were mainly for the year before. The same was also true for the associated interest calculations being applied to these customer accounts.

In the first financial year of receiving this information at a greater frequency (FY 2019-20) more repayments data was evident than in previous financial years. Almost two years' worth of customer PAYE repayments and interest calculations (those processed by SLC in both FY 2018-19 and 2019-20) were included.

HMRC still provide SLC with annual information within one year of the financial year ending, which is reviewed and applied to customer accounts like before. This end of year file will be the end of financial year position for the borrower. This could result in minor adjustments to customer balances. These adjustments will be included in the following year's reporting data.

It should be noted that this did not adversely affect the borrower's balance – this effectively brought a more up-to-date representation of loan balances at that point in time.

The figures / trends in this publication which have been affected by MFDS are clearly marked throughout this publication but for additional information in regard to MFDS please refer to [GOV.UK](#).

## The MFDS effect on interest rate calculations in financial year 2019-20

The interest applied to accounts, like repayments, is reported within this publication in the financial year it was posted to the customer's account, and not necessarily the year the interest was accrued. For PAYE repayers this is dependent on when repayment information is received from HMRC and thus affected by the introduction of MFDS in the 2019-20 financial year (explained above).

Pre MFDS, PAYE repayment information was received by SLC annually from HMRC for each borrower, usually after the end of the financial year. At this point the account was re-calculated using the repayment information supplied and interest backdated and applied. This would be reported within this publication in the following financial year data.

With the introduction of MFDS and repayments information more readily available, interest is also calculated and applied to the accounts more readily. **This resulted in a change in time series for financial year 2019-20 for interest applied**, as almost two years' worth of customer PAYE repayments and interest calculations was included (those processed by SLC in both FY 2018-19 and 2019-20).

From the 2020-21 financial year, the time series normalised with a single years' worth of repayments information and resulting interest calculations being included (just those processed by SLC within that financial year).



From financial year 2019-20 onwards Plan 2 customers interest is calculated at RPI rate only, for repayments information received within the same financial year for which it applies. The variable interest rate (VIR) portion (0-3%) of the interest rate is applied to the accounts once the year end repayment amount is known from the end of year file. This is supplied by HMRC annually usually after the end of financial year. This means the VIR portion of the interest calculation will be in the following reporting financial year within this publication. For further information on VIR, please refer to the [Income Contingent Student Loan repayment plans & interest rates and calculations](#) section on GOV.UK.

## Notes on policy

The statistics on student loans in this release were compiled by the Student Loans Company (SLC). They include public sector loans only, which are repaid on an Income Contingent basis. Responsibility for the Income Contingent Loan balance was transferred to the Welsh Government in 2006.

## National Statistics

This is a National Statistics publication. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

This publication series was awarded National Statistics status in October 2011 following a full assessment against the Code of Practice, which can be found on the Statistics Authority [website](#). Tables 3, 4 and 5 were awarded National Statistics status in April 2014 having initially been assessed as a separate publication, which can also be found on the [website](#). These tables were subsequently merged into this publication.

Since the assessments by the Office for Statistics Regulation we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made several improvements including the following:

- **Postgraduate loans** - An additional breakdown for Plan 3 postgraduate loans has been added, as loan payments have been made to borrowers in this education sector from September 2016.
- **Direct repayments** – From 2017 onwards we have included tables to show borrower numbers for borrowers repaying directly to SLC. In 2018 we disaggregated these tables further to show borrower numbers for those making scheduled and voluntary payments.

## Definitions

For definitions of terms used in our publication, please refer to our [Definitions](#) page.