

## Over-repayment of income contingent loans through PAYE Financial years 2015-16 to 2024-25

### Introduction and context

The Student Loans Company (SLC) publishes official statistics about the financial support received by students / learners and the progress of student loan balances and repayments. To supplement this information, given the level of public interest in this area, an ad hoc publication regarding over-repayment of Income Contingent Loans was added to our official statistics collection on 27 May 2021. SLC has since published this on an annual basis.

Student loan over-repayments occur due to the nature of the Income Contingent Repayment (“ICR”) (post-1998) student loan repayment scheme, where repayments are made through the UK tax system via PAYE.

This is an ad hoc publication from SLC to provide the number of customers who have over-repaid their student loan at the end of their repayment term and the total amount over-repaid. The average over-repayment amount, the amount over-repaid pending a refund, the number of customers pending a refund and the number of customers refunded has also been provided.

The data covers full financial years 2015-16 to 2024-25. The data represents those repaying via Pay-As-You-Earn (“PAYE”) only and not those customers with a Self-Assessment repayment within the financial year, as this data is received from HMRC at a later point. This data excludes Mortgage Style Loan balances, ICR Advanced Learner Loans and Repayment of Teacher Loans (RTL).

The data shows a total count for UK domiciled students funded by Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland and the Student Awards Agency Scotland. The time period covered by the publication is from 2015-16 to 2024-25. This data includes Plan 1, Plan 2, Plan 3 (postgraduate loans) and Plan 4 (Scotland loans post-April 2021) repayment plans. Plan 2 customers entered repayment in 2016. Information on which repayment plan you are on can be found in the [repaying your student loan](#) section of GOV.UK.

**Please note:** Any / all repayments made relating to Plan 5 loans are included in this (voluntary repayments) data, as these loans are not liable to start repayment until April 2026.

### Overview

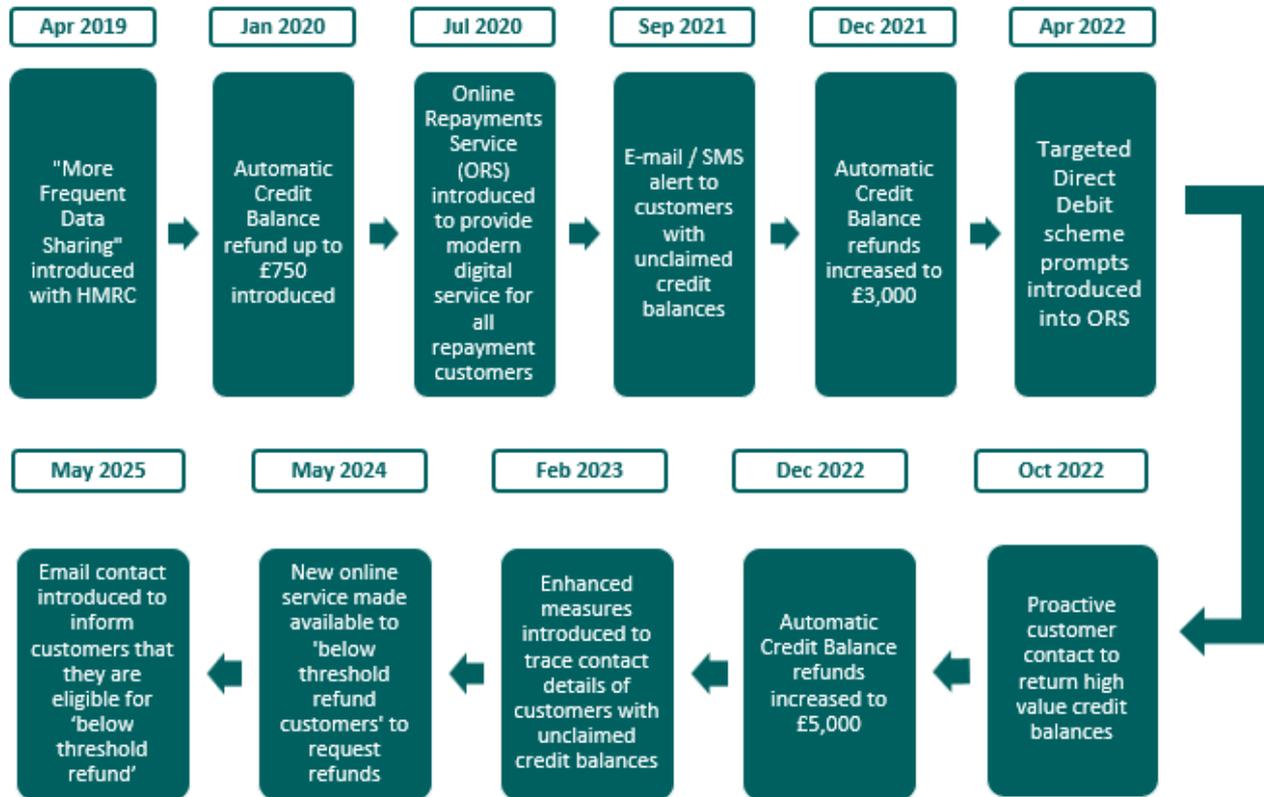
The total amount over-repaid in financial year (FY) 2024-25 was £23.9 million, of which £22.3 million (93.0%) has been refunded to the customer (an average of £990 per customer). Of the remaining refunds pending, the average refund is £50.

The total over-repaid amount represents 0.4% of the total repayments made in FY 2024-25 and 0.01% of the total loan book balance as at 31 March 2025, with the amount over-repaid being reduced by 55.3% since 2015-16.

**Over-repayments are entirely avoidable if customers join the [direct debit scheme](#)** in the final stages of their loan term.

## Improving customer experience

A wide range of improvements have been made to the journey and experience of customers as they move through the final stages of loan repayment. SLC is committed to the ongoing improvements across the Repayment customer journey and a timeline of these activities across all repayment scenarios is shown below:



For further detail on these improvements, please refer to the relevant section below.

**More Frequent Data Sharing (MFDS):** Prior to April 2019, SLC received repayment information from HMRC on an annual basis. SLC now receives information weekly allowing the Online Repayment Service to maintain a near real time balance allowing SLC to advise HMRC to stop repayments, via the employer, as soon as a repayment clears the customers outstanding balance and automatically refund any credit balance accrued.

**Automatic Credit Balance refunds:** In 2020, SLC introduced automatic credit balance refunds. SLC validates the bank account held on the customer account and automatically refunds any credit balance, removing the need for the customer to contact SLC. Auto refund is the default mode of refunds for all customers. SLC requires customers to keep their details up to date in their online account - **if contact details are incorrect, this results in a delay of any refunds being issued.**

**Online Repayment Service ("ORS")** - SLC launched this digital service in 2020, which is designed to enable customers to better manage the end of their repayment journey. Through ORS, customers can update their contact details and will have greater visibility of the final stages of their loan repayment, allowing them to make the decision to join the direct debit scheme at the right time. Customers can see whether they have over-repaid/are in credit by visiting ORS. Further information on claiming a refund can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

**Online service for below threshold repayments** - In 2024, SLC introduced a simple, easy to use service to allow customers to request a 'below threshold refund' using their online account. A below threshold refund is a correct repayment that may be taken if a customer's earnings are above the pay period threshold (e.g. due to overtime or bonus) but their total income for the year is below the annual threshold. SLC proactively contacts customers who are eligible for a below threshold refund\* following the end of the tax year. Annual earnings information is received

from HMRC throughout the year, and SLC will continue to proactively communicate with customers as eligible refunds are identified.

In the communication, SLC invites customers to request a refund via their online account. Customers are reminded that they must keep their contact and banking details up to date in their online account.

**Direct Debit Scheme:** Over-repayments are entirely avoidable. SLC routinely advises customers to join the direct debit scheme in the final months prior to repaying their loan. Customers are reminded to keep their contact details up to date to ensure they receive these communications.

Once the customer has repaid the set amount over the agreed time via direct debit, the balance will be cleared, and an over-repayment avoided.

If a customer does not respond to the offer of the direct debit scheme, when an additional payment is taken, it creates a credit balance. SLC will then instruct HMRC to issue a Stop Notice to the employer to advise them to stop taking deductions.

## What can you use these statistics for?

These statistics can be used as a reference to the number of Student Loans Company (SLC) customers who made over-repayments at the end of the financial years 2015-16 to 2024-25, the total amount over-repaid, the average over-repayment, the amount pending a refund, the number of SLC customers pending a refund and the number of customers refunded.

The data used in this publication is sourced from Student Loans Company's 'Customer Ledger Account Servicing System' (CLASS). This system holds information on customers who have received funding from SLC. Due to this, these statistics cannot be used to analyse trends or to draw conclusions regarding the full UK education funding landscape.

## Caveats and data definitions

- The data excludes Mortgage Style loan balances, ICR Advanced Learner Loans, Repayment of Teacher Loans (RTL) and customers with a Self-Assessment repayment within the financial year.
- Balances at the start of the financial year are based on customer's interest transactions records and balances across the financial year are calculated from the starting balance along with the customer's account transactions. This means that where the 'Total Over-Repaid Amount' and 'Over-Repaid Pending Refund' figures are quoted, the difference is not necessarily the refund amount. All other account activity will be captured including write-offs, other payments etc.
- Customers are only counted as over-repaying when their credit balance exceeds £5 and so if a customer goes further into credit by more than £5 within a financial year then they will be included.
- A customer is only counted once in each financial year.
- Customers who are in credit by at least £5 and who over-repay by more than £5 in successive years will be counted in each of those years.
- Customers must have made a PAYE repayment within the financial year.
- The 'Total Over-Repaid Amount' is the total PAYE repaid amount causing a customer's balance to go into/further into credit. Where a customer's balance is in debit & a PAYE puts them into credit, only the credit causing part of the repayment is included.
- The 'Average Over-Repayment' is the mean given by 'Total Over-Repaid Amount' divided by 'No. of Customers'.

## Results

**Figure 1: Total over-repayment amount, total number of customers who made an over-repayment, average over-repayment amount, total amount over-repaid pending refund, total number of customers pending a refund and total number of customers refunded for financial years 2015-16 to 2024-25 – All domiciles**

Coverage: Students domiciled in the UK and EU in repayment of a student loan(s)

Effective date: 31 January 2026

Financial year of repayment	Total over-repaid amount	No. of customers	Average over-repayment	Over-repaid pending refund	No. of customers pending refund	No. of customers refunded
2015-16	£ 53,573,080	88,443	£ 606	£ 2,436,220	4,399	84,044
2016-17	£ 51,744,032	87,246	£ 593	£ 2,167,695	4,456	82,790
2017-18	£ 38,743,161	69,871	£ 554	£ 1,845,105	3,514	66,357
2018-19	£ 29,354,224	52,265	£ 562	£ 1,740,644	2,988	49,277
2019-20	£ 23,259,041	54,697	£ 425	£ 1,204,534	3,699	50,998
2020-21	£ 17,115,475	45,408	£ 377	£ 655,608	2,904	42,504
2021-22	£ 20,685,158	52,453	£ 394	£ 922,645	3,712	48,741
2022-23	£ 23,599,403	58,038	£ 407	£ 997,641	4,714	53,324
2023-24	£ 23,524,024	59,727	£ 394	£ 1,274,077	12,762	46,965
2024-25	£ 23,948,587	58,532	£ 409	£ 1,665,700	35,992*	22,540

\* For FY 2024-25, there has been a shorter period since the customer has gone into over-repayment. Therefore, the number of customers pending a refund is higher in comparison to previous years. This number will considerably reduce over the coming year. For example, in the 2025 version of this publication the data showed that 36,000 were pending a refund from FY 2023-24. Figures in this publication show that this has since reduced to 12,800 (- 64%) and will continue to reduce.

### Note:

'Total over-repaid amount' / 'No. of customers' / 'Average over-repayment' figures for financial years 2015-16 to 2019-20 have been reinstated from our 2025 publication due to the scheduled deletion of customer accounts (and therefore over-repayment data). SLC's deletion activity includes eligible full-settled customer account's details where customers have gone past 6 years post-full repayment. This is in line with SLC's Records Management Policy / Master Retention Schedule with respect to GDPR. Note that figures relating to pending refunds for these years have been updated.

Domiciles included: England, EU (Outside UK), Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Mixed.

Mixed domiciled refers to customers who have received funding through two or more funding bodies.

Any movement from previously released figures in this area are resulting from late posting of transactions, adjustments or reversals occurring after run date.

Constituent parts (Figure 2) may not add to totals due to rounding.

**Figure 2: Total over-repayment amount, total number of customers who made an over-repayment, average over-repayment amount, total amount over-repaid pending refund, total number of customers pending a refund and total number of customers refunded for financial years 2015-16 to 2024-25 - by domicile**

Coverage: Students domiciled in UK and EU in repayment of a student loan(s) – by domicile

Effective date: 31 January 2026

Domicile	Financial year of repayment	Total over-repaid amount	No. of customers	Average over-repayment	Over-repaid pending refund	No. of customers pending refund	No. of customers refunded
England	2015-16	£ 42,621,979	67,549	£ 631	£ 1,811,751	3,014	64,535
	2016-17	£ 40,243,835	65,228	£ 617	£ 1,511,246	2,989	62,239
	2017-18	£ 27,727,659	48,202	£ 575	£ 1,121,121	2,121	46,081
	2018-19	£ 19,189,614	32,333	£ 593	£ 975,880	1,662	30,671
	2019-20	£ 15,844,420	34,275	£ 462	£ 649,295	2,075	32,200
	2020-21	£ 12,135,666	30,047	£ 404	£ 395,352	1,818	28,229
	2021-22	£ 15,159,052	36,991	£ 410	£ 692,908	2,460	34,531
	2022-23	£ 17,533,520	41,888	£ 419	£ 748,517	3,286	38,602
	2023-24	£ 17,147,280	43,885	£ 391	£ 1,017,574	9,292	34,593
2024-25	£ 17,718,497	44,000	£ 403	£ 1,320,595	26,974*	17,026	
Northern Ireland	2015-16	£ 1,754,797	3,020	£ 581	£ 64,505	195	2,825
	2016-17	£ 1,999,956	3,347	£ 598	£ 85,348	212	3,135
	2017-18	£ 1,994,774	3,345	£ 596	£ 96,419	208	3,137
	2018-19	£ 1,776,747	2,996	£ 593	£ 83,674	168	2,828
	2019-20	£ 1,515,184	3,116	£ 486	£ 80,812	244	2,872
	2020-21	£ 1,229,154	2,736	£ 449	£ 24,738	181	2,555
	2021-22	£ 1,483,607	3,158	£ 470	£ 29,206	212	2,946
	2022-23	£ 1,726,379	3,448	£ 501	£ 37,654	265	3,183
	2023-24	£ 1,650,400	3,199	£ 516	£ 49,247	685	2,514
2024-25	£ 1,921,908	3,244	£ 592	£ 60,354	2,057*	1,187	
Scotland	2015-16	£ 6,297,347	13,071	£ 482	£ 433,243	916	12,155
	2016-17	£ 6,329,094	13,423	£ 472	£ 456,995	955	12,468
	2017-18	£ 5,696,476	12,958	£ 440	£ 482,050	889	12,069
	2018-19	£ 5,163,254	11,854	£ 436	£ 495,431	873	10,981
	2019-20	£ 3,396,630	11,898	£ 285	£ 342,359	1,017	10,881
	2020-21	£ 1,716,441	8,071	£ 213	£ 176,084	616	7,455
	2021-22	£ 1,614,732	7,013	£ 230	£ 135,622	639	6,374
	2022-23	£ 1,561,361	6,917	£ 226	£ 142,715	627	6,290
	2023-24	£ 1,481,106	6,649	£ 223	£ 107,855	1,459	5,190
2024-25	£ 1,260,560	5,600	£ 225	£ 154,434	3,816*	1,784	
Wales	2015-16	£ 2,370,184	4,046	£ 586	£ 90,309	230	3,816
	2016-17	£ 2,515,137	4,292	£ 586	£ 74,004	234	4,058
	2017-18	£ 2,537,259	4,313	£ 588	£ 104,914	246	4,067
	2018-19	£ 2,388,852	3,959	£ 603	£ 144,961	233	3,726
	2019-20	£ 1,820,388	4,135	£ 440	£ 90,833	277	3,858
	2020-21	£ 1,506,889	3,281	£ 459	£ 42,569	206	3,075
	2021-22	£ 1,770,684	3,864	£ 458	£ 40,948	289	3,575
	2022-23	£ 2,058,762	4,151	£ 496	£ 47,890	416	3,735
	2023-24	£ 2,232,387	4,378	£ 510	£ 59,639	919	3,459
2024-25	£ 2,227,462	4,169	£ 534	£ 86,573	2,208*	1,961	
EU (outside UK)	2015-16	£ 464,817	663	£ 701	£ 30,241	39	624
	2016-17	£ 596,363	844	£ 707	£ 36,579	53	791
	2017-18	£ 719,073	940	£ 765	£ 37,863	42	898
	2018-19	£ 733,302	1,000	£ 733	£ 37,586	45	955
	2019-20	£ 590,251	1,120	£ 527	£ 36,635	72	1,048
	2020-21	£ 450,316	1,107	£ 407	£ 14,365	71	1,036
	2021-22	£ 530,821	1,225	£ 433	£ 22,490	92	1,133
	2022-23	£ 563,477	1,387	£ 406	£ 18,612	95	1,292
	2023-24	£ 569,430	1,311	£ 434	£ 28,176	331	980
2024-25	£ 557,678	1,208	£ 462	£ 37,420	779*	429	
Mixed	2015-16	£ 63,956	94	£ 680	£ 6,172	5	89
	2016-17	£ 59,648	112	£ 533	£ 3,523	13	99
	2017-18	£ 67,920	113	£ 601	£ 2,738	8	105
	2018-19	£ 102,455	123	£ 833	£ 3,111	7	116
	2019-20	£ 92,169	153	£ 602	£ 4,600	14	139
	2020-21	£ 77,009	166	£ 464	£ 2,500	12	154
	2021-22	£ 126,263	202	£ 625	£ 1,471	20	182
	2022-23	£ 155,904	247	£ 631	£ 2,253	25	222
	2023-24	£ 443,421	305	£ 1,454	£ 11,586	76	229
2024-25	£ 262,483	311	£ 844	£ 6,324	158*	153	

\* For FY 2024-25, there has been a shorter period since the customer has gone into over-repayment. Therefore, the number of customers pending a refund is higher in comparison to previous years. This number will considerably reduce over the coming year

**Note:**  
 'Total over-repaid amount' / 'No. of customers' / 'Average over-repayment' figures for financial years 2015-16 to 2019-20 have been reinstated from our 2025 publication due to the scheduled deletion of customer accounts (and therefore over-repayment data). SLC's deletion activity

includes eligible customer records where customers have gone past 6 years post-full repayment. This is in line with SLC's Records Management Policy / Master Retention Schedule with respect to GDPR. Note that figures relating to pending refunds for these years have been updated. Mixed domiciled refers to customers who have received funding through two or more funding bodies. Any movement from previously released figures in this area are resulting from late posting of transactions, adjustments or reversals occurring after run date.

As a supplement to this publication, we have provided additional summary and domicile tables. Within the accompanying [excel file](#), you will find:

- **Over-repayment of income contingent loans through PAYE - in bands of £250**

## Definitions

Domicile	The country in which the applicant would normally reside in the three years prior to the start of the course.
Over-Repayment	Over-repayment occurs when a customer is repaying through the PAYE system and their balance goes into/further into credit.

## Data sources

This publication uses data from SLC's administrative systems. For details of the administrative data sources used in our publications refer to the [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. Please refer to our [Quality guidelines](#) for further information.

## Related statistics publications

SLC publish statistics on student loans for higher and further education for England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, which includes further details about repayments. These are published at the same time as part of the series [Student loans for higher and further education](#). The latest release of this series covers financial years up to and including 2024-25, published on 19 June 2025.

### Issued by:

The Student Loans Company  
10 Clyde Place, Buchanan Wharf, Glasgow G5 8AQ

**Press Office:** [press\\_office@slc.co.uk](mailto:press_office@slc.co.uk)

**Lead Official for Statistics:** [enterprise\\_data\\_analytics@slc.co.uk](mailto:enterprise_data_analytics@slc.co.uk)

**Online:** [SLC Statistics](#)