

SLC SP02/2026

18 June 2026

Coverage: Wales

Theme: Children, Education
and Skills

Student Loans in Wales

Financial year 2025-26

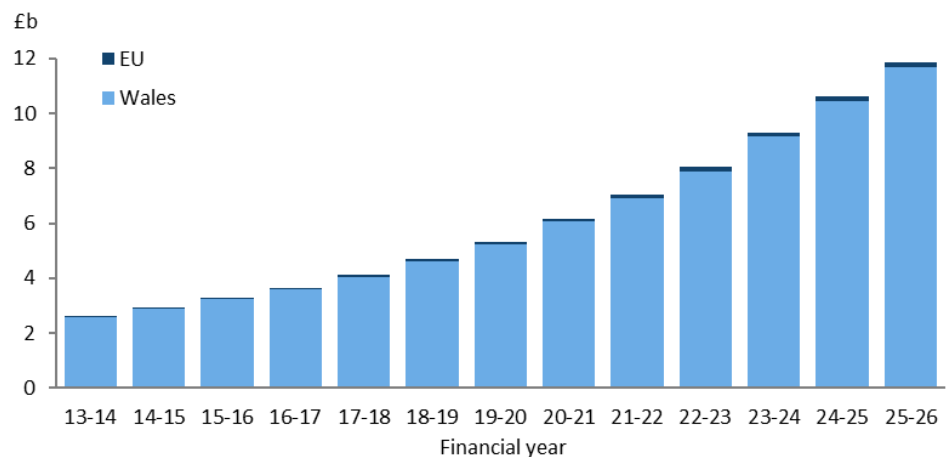
Income Contingent (ICR) Student Loan balance

Income Contingent student loan balance totals

£11.8 billion for higher education borrowers

Figure 1: Total balance of Income Contingent Student Loans at the end of financial year 2013-14 to 2025-26 (£ 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 £11.8 billion by 2025-26. When comparing this to the 2024-25 year-end figure of £10.6 billion, this is an increase of 11.6% (+ £1.2 billion). This increase is slightly lower than those noted previously, with increases averaging 14.7% over the preceding five financial years.

The EU borrower's balance has increased from £18.2 million in 2013-14, to £177.7 million by the end of financial year 2025-26. This is 2.9% higher than the 2024-25 year-end figure of £172.7 million (+ £5.0 million).

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

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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 loan balance, 75.9% 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 2025-26.

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 2025-26 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 2025-26 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 2025-26

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

- **Income Contingent student loan balance** totals £11.8 billion for higher education borrowers
- Plan 2 borrowing equates to 81.7% of the **total Income Contingent Student Loan balance**
- £916.6 million paid out in **undergraduate lending** in 2025-26, 2.9% higher than in the previous year
- Continued increase in **postgraduate borrowing** in 2025-26, up 12.0% to £77.8 million
- Continued reduction in RPI leads to a 15.8% fall in **total interest applied to higher education loans**, to £514.1 million in financial year 2025-26
- Provisional 13.9% increase in the **average higher education borrower's loan balance entering into repayment** in financial year 2025-26, at £44,830
- Provisional 5.0% decrease in the **average EU higher education borrower's loan balance entering into repayment** in financial year 2025-26, at £29,460
- 82.8% of all **ICR borrowers who are liable to repay are in the UK tax system** and 52.2% **made a repayment** in financial year 2025-26
- 5.9% increase in **higher education borrower repayments** in financial year 2025-26, rising to £242.6 million
- Provisional figures indicate that **HMRC repayments made by higher education borrowers** have remained stable when compared to the finalised figure for 2024-25, at £200.5 million
- Total amount **repaid by higher education borrowers via scheduled repayments directly to SLC** stabilises in 2025-26, at £8.7 million
- 4.3% decrease in total amount **repaid by higher education borrowers via voluntary repayments directly to SLC**, at £26.4 million
- Finalised data for 2024-25 indicates a 3.2% increase in the **average amount repaid by ICR loan borrowers via HMRC**, to £960

Income Contingent Student Loan balance by repayment plan

In the financial year 2025-26, there were three repayment plans.

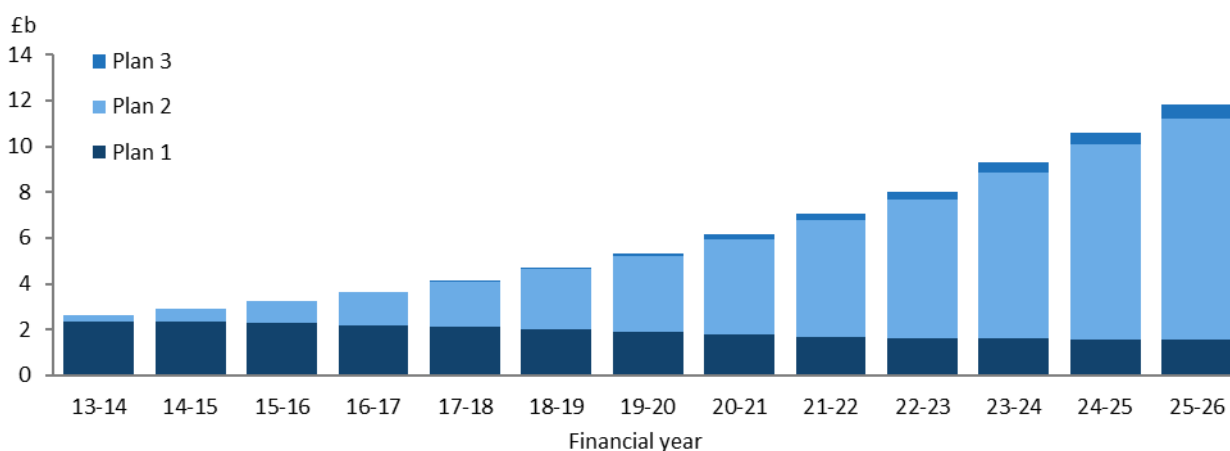
- Plan 1 - Students who began their courses before 1 September 2012
- Plan 2 - Those started after 1 September 2012
- Plan 3 - Students with postgraduate loans

Borrowers may be on multiple plans if they have studied multiple courses.

Plan 2 borrowing equates to 81.7% 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 2025-26 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 2025-26, this had reduced to just 13.1%. 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 2012/13, from this point the proportion of the balance attributed to Plan 2 loans has increased each year, from 10.2% in financial year 2013-14 to 81.7% by the end of 2025-26.

Following their introduction in academic year 2017/18, Plan 3 (postgraduate) loans equated to 0.5% of the higher education loan balance. By financial year 2025-26 this has increased to 5.2%. In financial year 2017-18 this included 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.

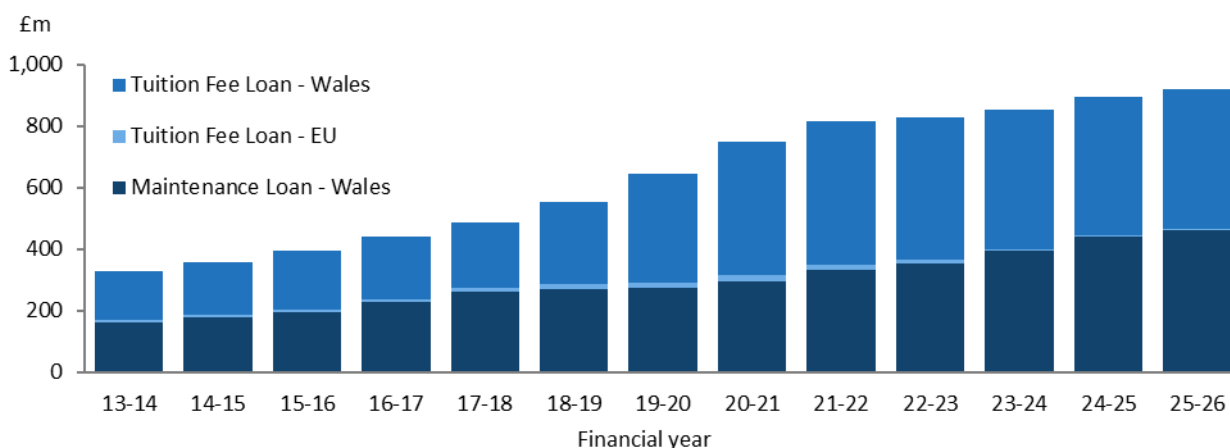
Total amount paid out in loans to student borrowers

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

£916.6 million paid out in undergraduate lending in 2025-26, 2.9% 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 2025-26 (£ million)

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



Source: [Table 1](#)

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

The total amount paid out in higher education undergraduate and postgraduate loans was £329.4 million in financial year 2013-14, increasing to £997.3 million by 2025-26. In comparison to the previous year, this was a 3.6% increase (+ £34.5 million). This increase follows a 5.3% rise in 2024-25 and a 2.5% increase in 2023-24.

Figure 3 shows the total amount paid out in the form of undergraduate loans has increased year-on-year, to £919.6 million by 2025-26. Compared to the previous financial year, there has been an increase of £26.1 million (+ 2.9%). This is a less significant increase than the 4.8% increase reported in the previous year, yet in line with the 3.0% increase in 2023-24.

£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. In financial year 2022-23, the total amount paid out saw its first decline, reducing by 0.9% to £463.3 million. This marked the beginning of a subtle downward trend, with two subsequent reductions of 2.0% and 0.9% respectively. 2025-26 reported a reversal to this trend, with a small increase of 1.1%, to £455.0 million. This could be attributed to the increase in Tuition Fees in academic year 2025/26, from £9,250 to £9,535.

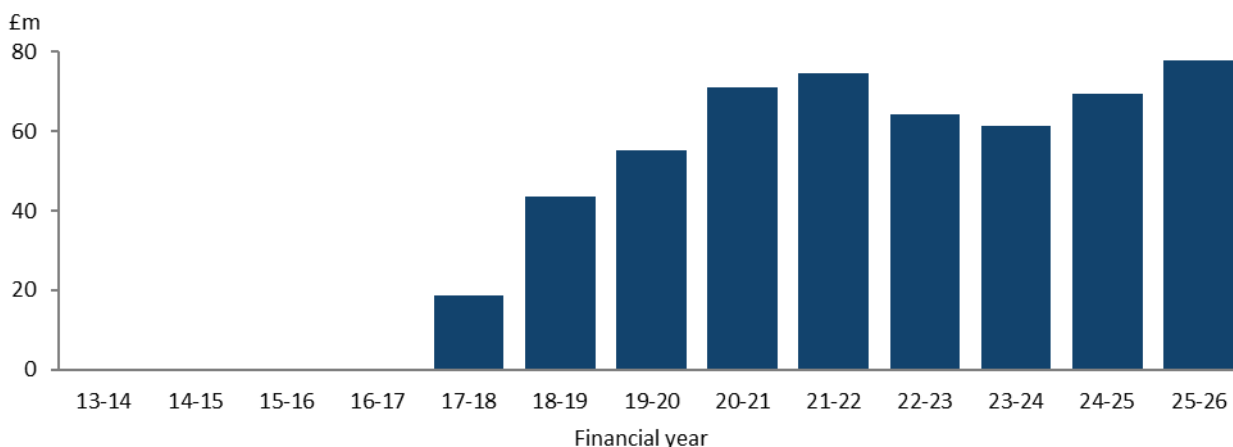
£5.4 million in Tuition Fee Loans was paid on behalf of EU-domiciled undergraduates in 2013-14, steadily increasing to peak at £19.1 million by 2020-21. The first reduction was noted in 2021-22 (down by 12.9% to £16.6 million) likely due to the discontinuation of EU student funding to new students. This marked the beginning of a sustained downward trend, with successive annual decreases bringing the total down to £1.5 million by 2025-26, a further 44.3% reduction on the previous year.

In 2013–14, £163.6 million was issued to undergraduate borrowers in the form of Maintenance Loans. Since then, the amount has increased annually - albeit at varying rates - reaching £463.1 million by 2025-26. In the most recent year, a 5.1% increase was recorded compared to 2024-25, less significant than the 12.2% rise observed the year before. This could be attributed to the 4% increase in the maximum loan available for academic year 2024/25 vs. the 2% increase for 2025/26, up to £11,345.

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](#).

Continued increase in postgraduate borrowing in 2025-26, up 12.0% to £77.8 million

Figure 4: Total amount paid out in loans to higher education postgraduate borrowers in financial years 2013-14 to 2025-26 (£ 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 first financial year of 2017-18.

In 2022-23 a first decrease was reported, of 14.1%, followed by a further 4.1% decrease in the following year, down to £61.5 million.

In 2024-25, a change in trend was reported as postgraduate loan take-up increased by 13.0%, followed by a further 12.0% increase in the most recent year, to £77.8 million. This increase can be attributed to a 12.7% increase in Postgraduate Masters Loans, coupled with a 2.0% increase in Postgraduate Doctoral Loans

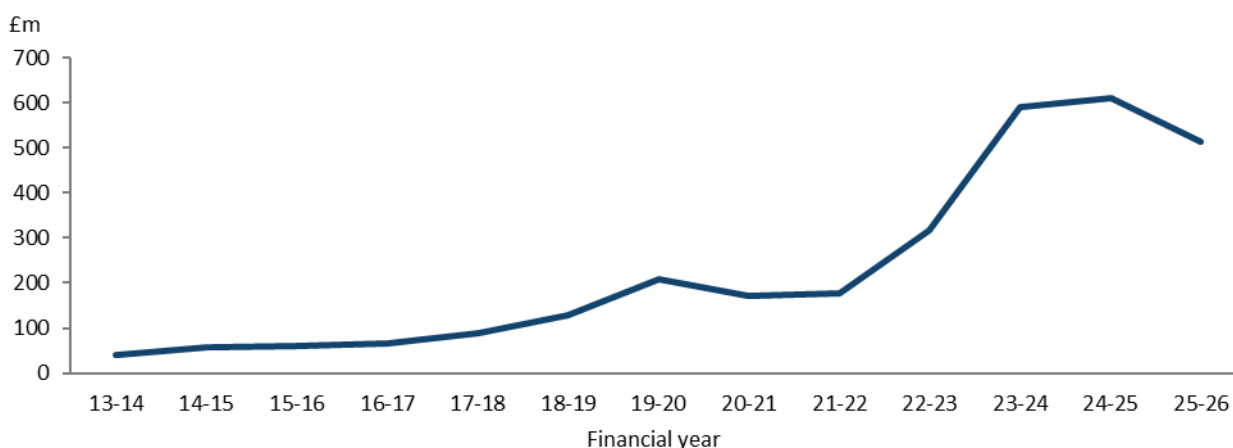
Interest added to Income Contingent Loans

The Retail Price Index (RPI), which measures inflation and changes in the UK cost of living, plays a key role in determining interest rates. The interest charged on higher education loans also depends on the repayment plan under which the loan falls. In the financial year 2025-26, there were three repayment plans.

- **Plan 1** interest is subject to a low interest cap, calculated as the lower of the applicable RPI or the Bank of England Base Rate plus 1%
- **Plan 2** loans, unlike other plans, apply a Variable Interest Rate (VIR), ranging from RPI to RPI + 3%, depending on the borrower's income and whether they are in study or post-study.
- **Plan 3** (Postgraduate loans) carry a fixed interest rate of RPI + 3%.

Continued reduction in RPI leads to a 15.8% fall in total interest applied to higher education loans, to £514.1 million in financial year 2025-26

Figure 5: Total amount of interest accrued on higher education loans in financial years 2013-14 to 2025-26 (£ million)



Source: [Table 1](#)

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

Figure 5 shows that interest accrued on higher education loans increased from £41.2 million financial year 2013-14, to £129.5 million by 2018-19. A sharp rise occurred in 2019-20, when accrued interest increased by 61.3% to £208.9 million. This was largely driven by the introduction of 'More Frequent Data Sharing' (MFDS), the more readily available data provided to SLC by HMRC. As a result, almost two years' worth of customers' PAYE repayments, and the associated interest calculations processed by SLC in both 2018-19 and 2019-20, were recorded within the 2019-20 financial year. Further details are provided in the [Additional information](#) section. The time series normalised in 2020-21, reducing to £171.3 million.

Despite a 14.4% increase in the total HE loan balance, total interest accrued increased by just 3.9% in 2021-22 to £178.0 million. This was primarily due to lower interest rates being applied for most of the year, following the introduction of caps on Plan 2 and Plan 3 loan interest rates.

The Welsh Government routinely monitors student loan interest rates against prevailing market rates for comparable commercial loans. Where the DfE considers that the maximum interest rate for Plan 2, Plan 3, or Plan 5 loans exceeds market norms, it applies a 'Prevailing Market Rate' (PMR) cap for a period of one month or longer. This mechanism ensures that borrowers are not charged interest rates significantly above those available in the wider commercial market.

During the 2021-22 financial year, interest caps were introduced for Plan 2 and Plan 3 loans, averaging

4.5%. In response to further increases in RPI, these rates were capped again in September 2022, maintaining an average of 6.5% for the remainder of the year. Interest rate caps continued throughout 2023-24, with average rates rising to 7.3%.

Despite the continued application of caps, total interest accrued rose sharply, by 78.9% in 2022-23 and by a further 86.0% in 2023-24, to £592.1 million. Without these caps, the sustained rise in RPI would have resulted in interest rates of approximately 13.5% for Plan 2 and Plan 5 loans, and around 16.5% for Plan 3 loans during 2023-24.

For the first five months of the 2024-25 financial year, interest rates remained capped at varying levels, averaging 7.9%. Caps were lifted on 1 September 2024 after the applicable RPI rate fell to 4.3%. Consequently, total interest accrued in 2024-25 was £610.4 million, representing a small 3.1% increase compared with the previous year.

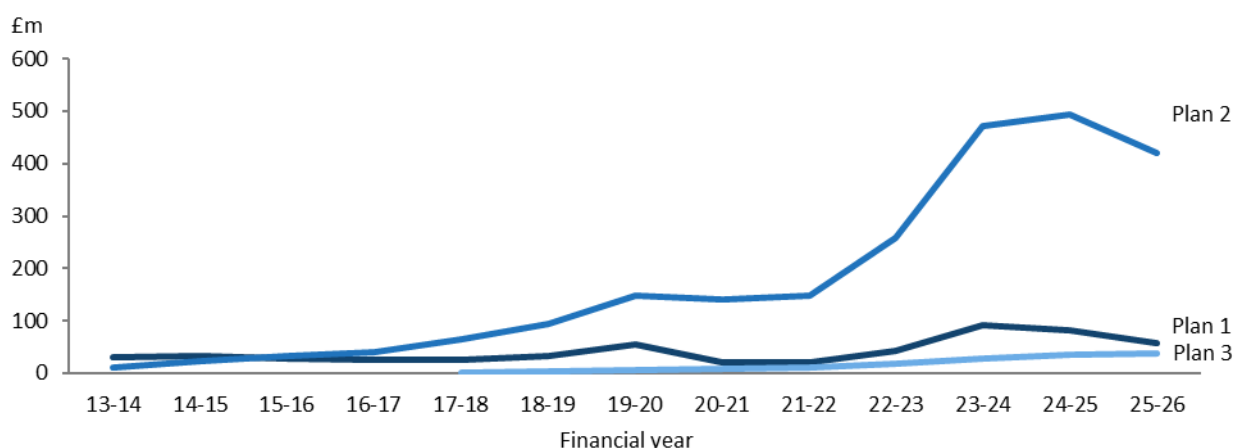
Following a further reduction in RPI to 3.2% in September 2025, total interest accrued, compared to the previous year fell by 15.8% in 2025-26, decreasing to £514.1 million.

The total accrued interest to loans across all repayment plans in 2025-26 equated to 4.8% of the previous financial year's total higher education loan balance, compared to 6.4% in 2024-25.

Typically, regardless of interest rates, the total interest accrued will increase as the loan balance grows year after year. However, due to the notable reduction in the interest rates applied, this has offset the increase in the most recent year.

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.

Figure 6: Total amount of interest accrued on higher education loans in financial years 2013-14 to 2025-26 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.

The total amount of annual interest accrued to Plan 1 accounts averaged £29.9 million between 2013-14 and 2021-22. Plan 1 interest is subject to a low interest cap, calculated as the lower of the applicable RPI or the Bank of England Base Rate, plus 1%. As a result of the notable increases in both rates during financial year 2022-23, the interest applied to these loans increased by 117.6% to £42.7 million.

Owing to further rate increases in 2023-24, the amount accrued rose by a further 116.0% to £92.3 million.

From September 2024, interest rates applied to each plan type reduced, most significantly against Plan 1 loans which resulted in a decrease in the total interest accrued for financial year 2024-25 of 11.1%, down to £82.0 million. The further rate reduction in interest rate applied from September 2025 resulted in the total interest accrued in 2025-26 reducing by a further and more notable 29.5%, to £57.8 million.

11.2% of the total higher education loan interest accrued in financial year 2025-26 was attributed to Plan 1 loans (lower than the 13.4% attributed in the previous year). Interest represented 3.6% of the previous year's Plan 1 loan balance in 2025-26, compared to 5.1% in 2024-25.

Plan 2, 3 and 5 loan interest rates are linked to the Retail Price Index (RPI). However, during the 2021-22 financial year, interest rates on these loans were capped to protect borrowers from sharp increases in inflation. The caps were subsequently lifted but were reintroduced during 2022-23. They remained in place throughout 2023-24 and into 2024-25, before being lifted again in September 2024.

The total annual interest accrued on Plan 2 loan accounts increased from £10.1 million in 2013-14 to £147.0 million by 2021-22. Despite the application of interest rate caps, significant increases in the applicable RPI led to a 75.7% rise in Plan 2 interest accrued in 2022-23, followed by a further 82.7% increase to £472.1 million in 2023-24.

In 2024-25, following the first reduction in the applicable RPI and the lifting of interest rate caps, interest applied to Plan 2 (as well as Plan 3 and Plan 5) loans fell. This resulted in a small 4.6% increase in total interest accrued on Plan 2 loans, to £493.7 billion. Following a further reduction in RPI to 3.2% in September 2025, total interest accrued to Plan 2 loans, compared to the previous year fell by 15.0% in 2025-26, decreasing to £419.4 million.

During periods when interest rate caps were applied to Plan 2 loans, the variable interest element did not apply; as a result, all Plan 2 borrowers accrued interest at the same rate. Once the caps were lifted, the variable interest rate element was reintroduced.

In financial year 2025-26, Plan 2 loans accounted for 81.6% of the total higher education loan interest accrued, up from 80.9% in the previous year. Interest accrued on Plan 2 loans represented 4.9% of the previous year's Plan 2 loan balance, compared with 6.8% in 2024-25.

The total amount of annual interest accrued to Plan 3 loan accounts increased from £0.3 million in 2017-18 to £11.3 million by 2021-22. Despite the introduction of interest caps, interest increased by 52.1% in 2022-23 and by a further 60.9% to £27.7 million in 2023-24.

Although interest rates were reduced in the second half of 2024-25, the total amount of interest accrued continued to increase, albeit at a much slower rate, rising by 25.6%. This was followed by a further, yet much smaller increase of 6.2% in 2025-26, bringing total interest accrued on Plan 3 loans to £36.9 million.

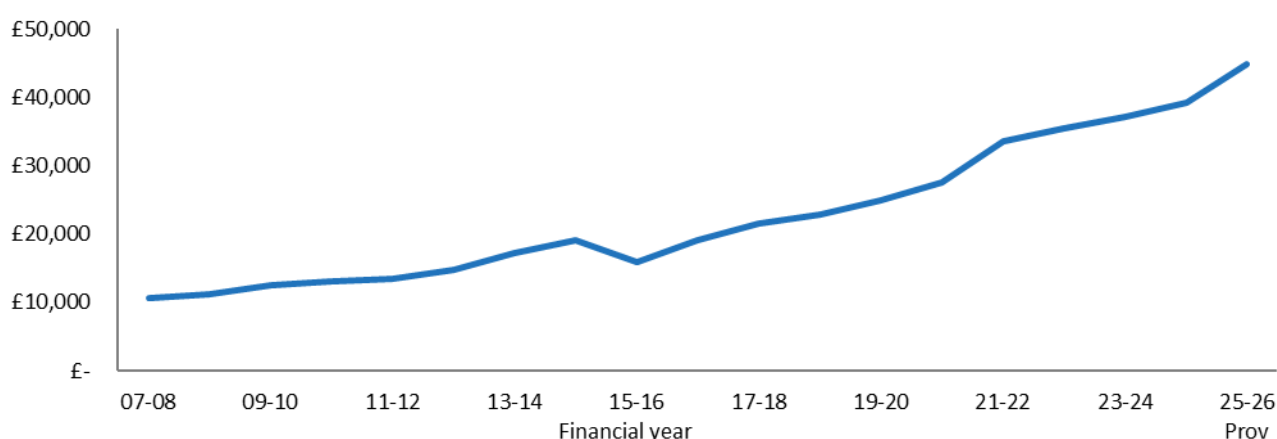
In financial year 2025-26, Plan 3 loans accounted for 7.2% of total higher education loan interest accrued, higher than the 5.7% recorded in 2024-25. Interest represented 7.1% of the previous year's Plan 3 loan balance in 2025-26, compared with 8.0% in 2024-25.

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 13.9% increase in the average higher education borrower's loan balance entering into repayment in financial year 2025-26, at £44,830

Figure 7: Average higher education loan balance on entry into repayment by financial year - 2006-07 to 2025-26: 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 a provisional position of £44,830 by end-2025-26. This figure will be finalised in our 2027 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 (from £19,020 to £15,980) was as result of the increase in the loan balance being offset by a larger increase in the number of borrowers.

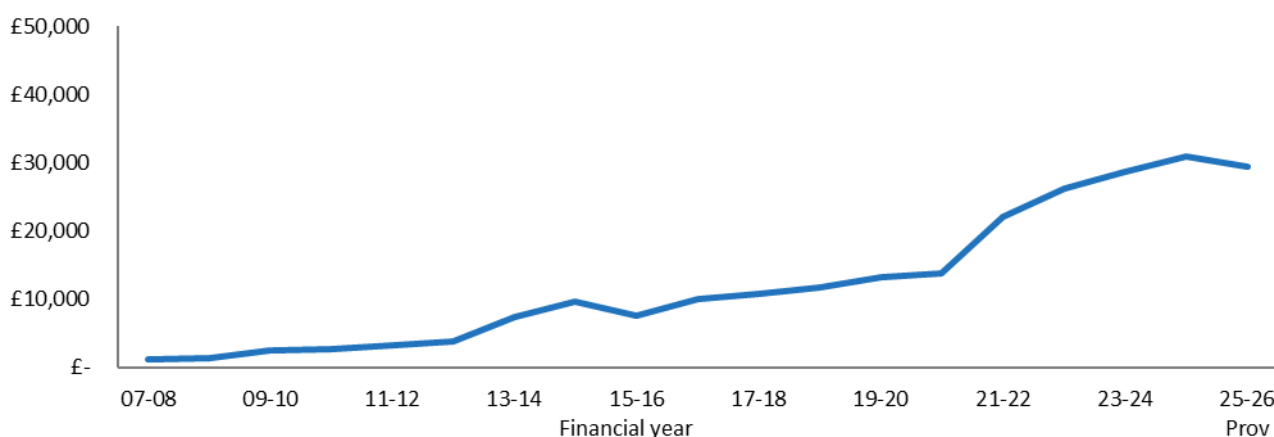
The higher increase in financial year 2021-22 (up 21.7%, to £33,590) can be predominantly attributed to students who were eligible for Tuition Fee Grants (which were discontinued in academic year 2017/18 following the [Diamond Review](#)), concluding their studies. Prior to 2017/18, a Tuition Fee Grant 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 2025-26, the proportion of loans has increased to 100% (to two decimal places).

In 2025-26, the average balance indicates a provisional increase of 13.9% in comparison to the previous year. This is higher than the 5.9% increase noted at the same point last year.

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.

Provisional 5.0% decrease in the average EU higher education borrower's loan balance entering into repayment in financial year 2025-26, at £29,460

Figure 8: Average higher education loan balance on entry into repayment by financial year – 2006-07 to 2025-26: EU only (£)



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

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

EU borrowers consistently have a lower average loan balance, predominantly due to not being eligible for maintenance funding.

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 a provisional position of £29,460 by 2025-26. This figure will be finalised in our 2027 publication.

In comparison with the previous year's repayment cohort, the average loan balance decreased by 5.0%. This is as a result of a greater reduction in the 2026 cohort's total outstanding balance compared to the decrease in the total number of EU borrowers with an outstanding balance. This is the continuing impact from the discontinuation of EU-funding for new students.

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 2025/26 remained eligible for tuition fee support for the duration of their course.

Variances are more volatile due to much lower numbers in the EU subset than in *Figure 7* where which includes all Wales-funded borrowers.

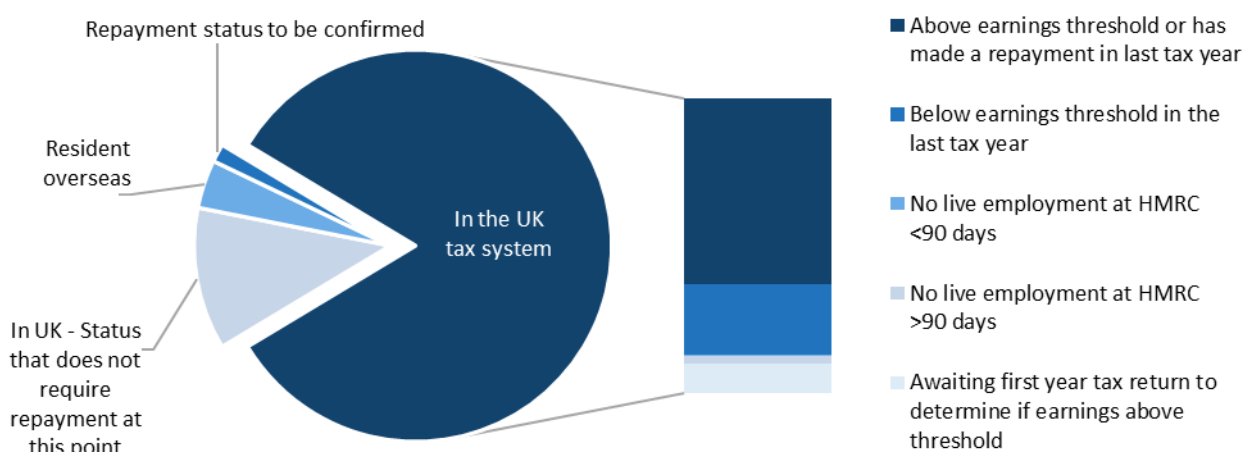
Income Contingent Loan borrower repayment status

This section looks at borrowers 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.

Note: Note: In the 2026 edition of this publication, we have made some changes to Table 3, which are reflected in *Figure 9*. The 'Account Closed' column has been removed following the scheduled deletion of closed customer accounts. As a result of these, and future deletions, the figures within this column are no longer considered to be representative of 'Fully repaid / cancelled' borrowers. Going forward, Table 3 will **only include borrowers with a loan balance**. SLC's deletion activity includes eligible fully settled customer accounts where more than six years have passed since full repayment. This approach aligns with SLC's Records Management Policy and Master Retention Schedule in accordance with GDPR requirements.

82.8% of all ICR borrowers who are liable to repay are in the UK tax system and 52.2% made a repayment in financial year 2025-26

Figure 9: ICR student loan borrowers by repayment status as at the beginning of FY 2026-27



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 of 30 April 2026 and have an outstanding balance. Included in these figures is the 2026 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, were in live employment and made a payment in financial year 2025-26 was 177,900, an increase in comparison to the end-April position in 2025, of 170,800 (+ 4.0%). The number of borrowers in the UK tax system but not yet required to make a repayment increased to 67,800 (+ 4.1%) in April 2026, compared to 65,100 in the previous year.

The number of borrowers liable to repay showing no live employment for less than 90 days indicates a small 1.4% reduction to a rounded 2,000 at 30 April 2026. Those showing no live employment for over 90 days was 7,300, 7.3% higher than the 6,800 noted in April 2025.

At end-April 2026, of those overseas and above the earnings threshold for that country, the number who made a repayment increased from 2,600 to 2,800 in comparison to April 2025. The number of those overseas and above the earnings threshold who have defaulted in arrears has increased from 3,500 to 4,200.

Income Contingent Loan repayments

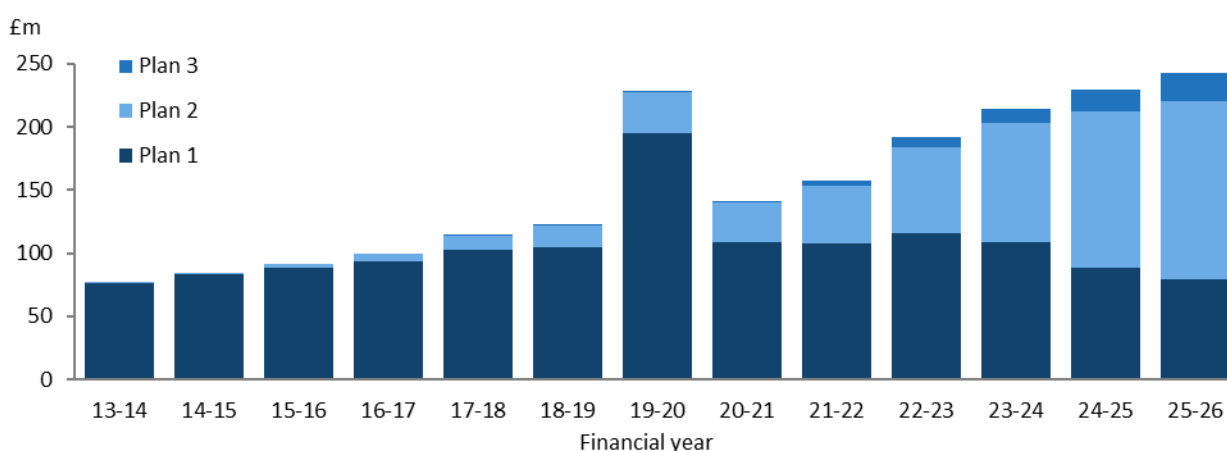
Borrowers normally become liable to make repayments from the April following the completion of, or withdrawal from their course, provided they are earning above the relevant income threshold.

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.

5.9% increase in higher education borrower repayments in financial year 2025-26, rising to £242.6 million

Figure 10: Total amount repaid by higher education borrowers in financial years 2013-14 to 2025-26 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, higher education borrower repayments totalled £77.2 million. This steadily increased to £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. Further detail on MFDS can be found in the [Additional information](#) section. The time series normalised in 2020-21.

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

Over the subsequent two years, increases continued (up by a further 11.9% and 6.9% respectively). These could be attributed to the growing proportion of Plan 2 and 3 loans entering repayment, coupled with continued freeze in the associated repayment thresholds.

Increases are however slowing, likely as a result of the continued and notable increases in the Plan 1 threshold (up 9.0% to £22,015 in 2023-24, then up by a further 13.5% to £24,990 in 2024-25). A further 4.3% increase in the Plan 1 threshold, coupled with the first increase in the Plan 2 threshold since 2021-22

(also increased by 4.3%)) has contributed towards the smaller 5.9% (£13.5 million) increase in total repayments reported in 2025-26, at £242.6 million.

Plan 1 (loans prior to Sep-12) repayments in financial year 2025-26 were 10.3% lower in comparison to the previous year, at £79.6 million. This follows an 18.2% decrease in the previous year. These are likely attributed to the continued increases in the Plan 1 repayment threshold (up to £26,065 for 2025/26), along with the reducing Plan 1 loan balance.

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, falling to 33% by financial year 2025-26. As a % of the previous financial year's Plan 1 loan balance, repayments are somewhat lower than in 2024-25 (5.0% vs. 5.5% respectively).

Plan 2 (post Sep-12) repayments increased by 14.3% in 2025-26 to £141.1 million, following a 30.9% increase in the previous year. This reduced increase can be principally attributed to the increase in the Plan 2 repayment threshold for academic year 2025/26, up from £27,295 to £28,470.

The % of the Plan 2 balance which is liable for repayment in 2025-26, increased from 69.3% to 71.9% in comparison to the previous year.

The proportion of total repayments attributed to Plan 2 has increased from just 6% in 2016-17 to 58% by 2025-26. As a percentage of the previous financial year's Plan 2 loan balance, repayments remained relatively constant at 1.7%.

Postgraduate (Plan 3) repayments increased by 29.2% in 2025-26 to £21.9 million, compared to a more significant 45.9% in 2024-25 and 54.6% in 2023-24. These increases can be predominantly attributed to the growing Plan 3 loan balance becoming liable for repayment (increasing to 76.2% in 2025-26), coupled with the repayment threshold remaining at £21,000.

Since the introduction of Plan 3 loans in academic year 2017/18, the share of related repayments has increased from 0.1%, to 9.0% in the most recent year. As a % of previous year's Plan 3 loan balance, repayments increased from 3.9% in 2024-25, to 4.2%.

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

83.9% of all repayments were received via HMRC (vs. 82.5% in 2024-25) and the remaining 16.1% were made directly to SLC (vs. 17.5% in 2024-25). This split does not take into account refunds made.

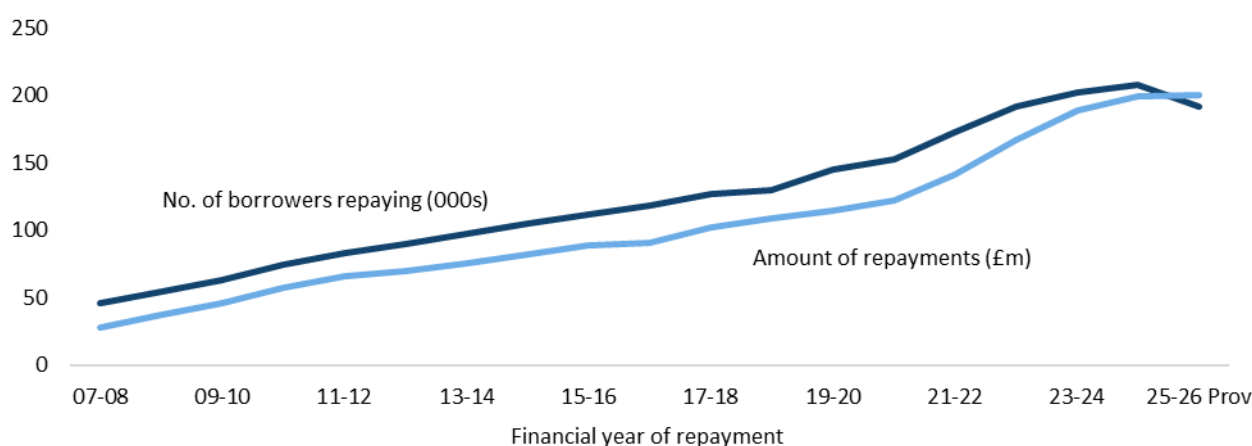
For more information on repayment plans and thresholds, please refer to the [Income Contingent Student Loan repayment plans & interest rates and calculations section](#) on GOV.UK.

Income Contingent Loan repayments by repayment method

Repayments can be made by 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.

Provisional figures indicate that HMRC repayments made by higher education borrowers have remained stable when compared to the finalised figure for 2024-25, at £200.5 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 2025-26 (provisional)



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 from 35,700 in financial year 2006-07, to 208,000 by 2024-25. The total amount repaid has also steadily increased, from £18.5 million to £199.6 million.

As at end-April 2026, the provisional number of borrowers who made a repayment via HMRC in financial year 2025-26 was 191,800. This is 7.8% lower than the final figure for 2024-25 (- 16,200). Yet the provisional amount repaid was £200.5 million, 0.4% higher (+ £0.8 million) than the final figure for 2024-25. This could be attributed to the 4.3% increase in both the Plan 1 and Plan 2 income thresholds, reducing the number of borrowers with earnings above the repayment threshold.

The most recent financial year's figures are marked as 'provisional' due to the 2025-26 Self-Assessment earnings information being received from HMRC after Table 4A's 30 April 2026 effective date. **These provisional figures are therefore subject to change.**

The movement between the provisional and final figures for financial year 2024-25 was an additional 9.9% in regard to the number of borrowers making a repayment, and an additional 7.0% in the amount repaid. This movement is in line with 2023-24's finalisation.

The provisional position for financial year 2024-25 can be found in the previous year's [publication](#). 2025-26's figure will be finalised in our 2027 publication.

Generally, annual increases in repayments made via HMRC can be predominantly attributed to the growing proportion of higher education loans becoming liable for repayment, up to 75.9% of the total loan balance by 2025-26.

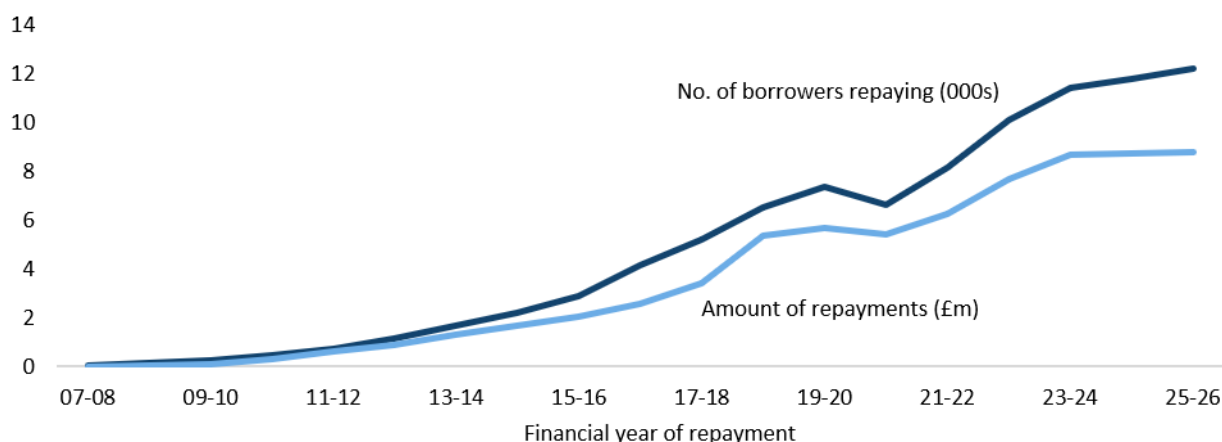
Note: The impact of [MFDS](#) for the 2019–20 financial year is not reflected in *Figure 11* as repayment figures were refreshed in the following year, with repayments attributed to the financial year to which they pertain, rather than the year in which they were reported to the SLC.

Scheduled repayments made directly to SLC

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 encourages 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.

Total amount repaid by higher education borrowers via scheduled repayments directly to SLC stabilises in 2025-26, at £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 2025-26



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 12,200 by 2025-26. Increases were reported each year, with the exception of financial year 2020-21, where numbers reduced by 700 (down 9.8%).

The total repaid via scheduled repayments follows the same trend, increasing overall from just 5,000 in 2006-07, to £8.8 million by 2025-26. An outlying decrease of £0.2 million was reported in financial year 2020-21 (down 4.3%).

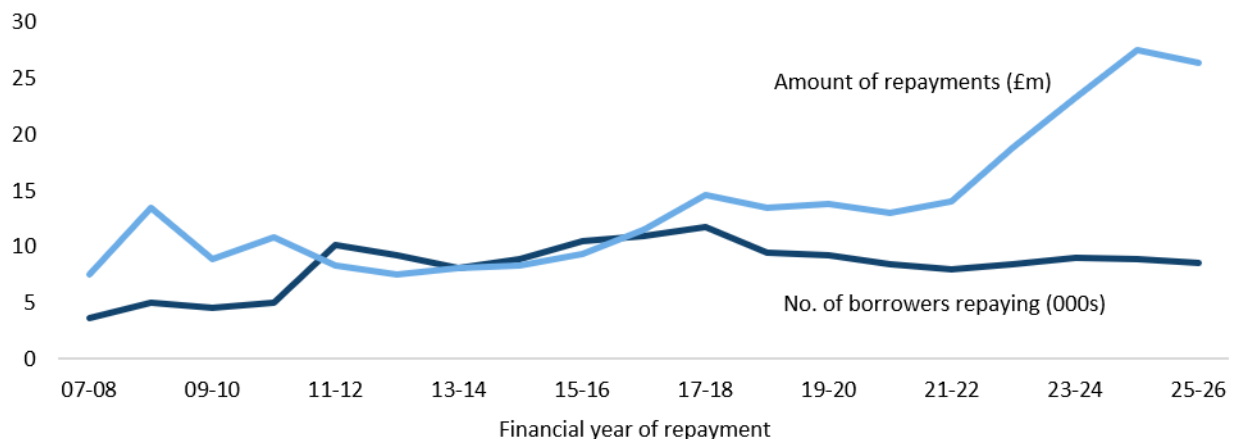
When comparing 2025-26 to the previous year, there has been a 3.8% increase in the number of borrowers making scheduled repayments (+ 400) and a 0.5% increase in the amount repaid (+ £0.03 million).

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 liable to repay and are making repayments via HMRC can also make additional voluntary repayments.

4.3% decrease in total amount repaid by higher education borrowers via voluntary repayments directly to SLC, at £26.4 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 2025-26



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 both 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 £26.4 million between financial year 2006-07 and 2025-26 yet has fluctuated significantly throughout this time-period.

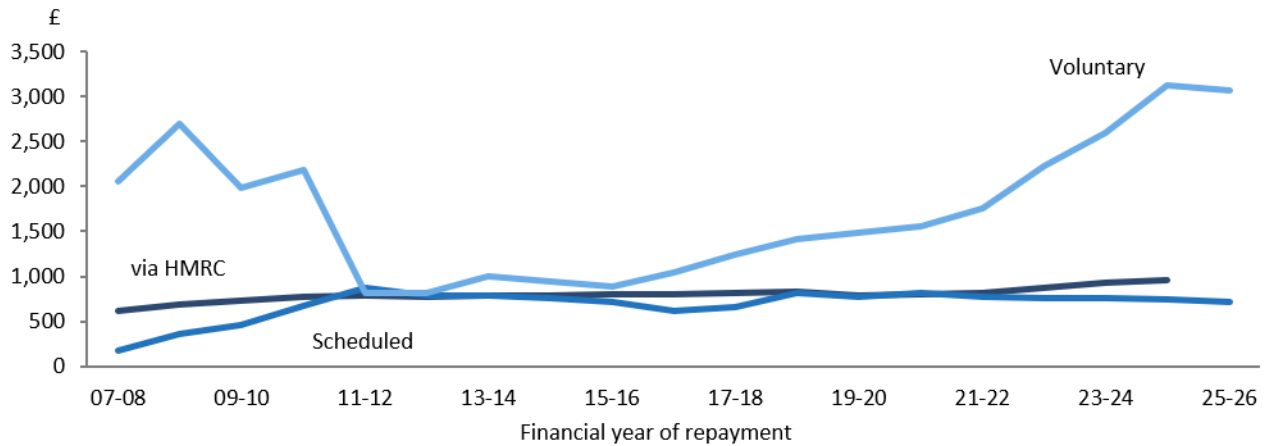
The number of borrowers making voluntary repayments increased overall from 3,100 in 2006-07, to 8,600 by 2025-26, also fluctuating, but to a lesser extent than the amount repaid.

When comparing 2025-26 to the previous year, there has been a 2.7% decrease in the number of borrowers making voluntary repayments (- 200) and a 4.3% increase in the amount repaid (+ £1.2 million).

Average amount repaid by repayment method

Finalised data for 2024-25 indicates a 3.2% increase in the average amount repaid by ICR loan borrowers via HMRC, to £960

Figure 14: Average annual amount repaid by ICR student loan borrowers by repayment method and financial year of repayment 2006-07 to 2025-26 £



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 2025-26 financial year are not included in Figure 14 as the average is considered to be provisional until all Self-Assessment data is included. This figure will be finalised in the 2027 publication.

The average finalised repayment made via HMRC has increased overall from £520 in 2006-07 to £960 by 2024-25. When comparing to 2023-24, this is a £30 increase (+ 3.2%).

The average scheduled repayment made directly to SLC was just £200 in financial year 2006-07. This fluctuated throughout the years, yet by 2025-26 was £720. In comparison to 2024-25, this is 1.9% lower (- £60).

The average voluntary repayment has fluctuated between £810 (in financial year 2011-12) and £3,120 (in 2024-25). In comparison to 2024-25, there has been a decrease of 1.9% (- £60). 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

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](https://www.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.

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 because 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 earlier years (pre-2018-19) 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

As part of the same series this publication belongs to, SLC also publishes statistics on student loans for higher education for England, Northern Ireland and Scotland. These are released at the same time as part of the series entitled [Student loans for higher and further education](#). SLC also publishes a series named [Student support for higher education](#) covering higher education funding for Wales, England and Northern Ireland, individually. The latest releases of this series were published on the 27 November 2025 covering academic year 2024/25.

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 in August 2025 covering academic session 2024/25.

SLC also releases several 'official statistics in development' publications, covering themes including withdrawals, over-repayments etc. These can also be found in our '[Other statistics](#)' section of GOV.UK.

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

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:

- [Cross country comparisons](#) – First introduced in 2014, providing a cross-country comparison of the total loan balance, in 2018 additional comparisons were introduced showing the average borrower balance on entry into repayment, average repayment (via HMRC, scheduled and voluntary).
- **Postgraduate loans** - An additional breakdown for Plan 3 postgraduate loans was added, as loan payments have been made to borrowers in this education sector from September 2017. From 2019, this was split out into Masters and Doctoral loans.
- **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.
- **Expanded main publication** - Our main publication was completely redesigned in 2020. We introduced more charts along with written insight and analysis on all key elements in the excel tables, along with headlines to summarise the latest trends.
- **HTML** - From 2022 we began to produce an HTML version of the main publication document.
- **Accessibility** - In 2023 we made considerable strides in improving the accessibility of the publication. For more information, please refer to the [introductory section](#).
- **Executive Summary** - Additionally, in 2023, we incorporated an '[Executive summary](#)' towards the beginning of the publication. This summarised all the headlines, with individual links to the detailed insights within the document.

- **Changes to Table 3, 4 & 5** – To maintain statistical integrity, small changes have been made to tables within these sections following the routine deletion of closed customer accounts and associated financial transaction data in accordance with GDPR requirements.
 - In [Table 3](#), the ‘Account Closed’ column has been removed, and the table will now include only borrowers with an outstanding loan balance. As accounts continue to be deleted, this column would no longer provide an accurate representation of ‘Fully repaid / ‘Cancelled’ borrowers.
 - In [Tables 4 and 5](#), financial years up to and including 2018–19 have been reinstated from the 2025 edition of this publication and will continue to be included going forward. As there is no material change in these earlier years, and given ongoing data deletions, their accuracy would otherwise diminish over time. The latest rolling seven-year period will be refreshed annually.

Definitions

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