



Welsh Government Learning Grants (Further Education), 2022/23

30 January 2024
SB 1/2024

£3.3m was paid out to FE students in **2022/23**
compared with
£3.6m paid out in **2021/22**



3,860

students applied for a WGLG in **2022/23**;
of these

3,015 (78%)

applications were successful

2,745 (91%)

of successful
applications were from
full-time students



260 (9%)

were from part-time
students

Source: Student Loans Company

Main points

- The number of applications for a WGLG decreased by 6% between 2021/22 and 2022/23. The number of successful applications decreased by 9% for the same period.
- 99% of applications from full-time students were successful and 74% of applications from part-time students were successful.
- 2,150 (78%) of successful full-time applications and 220 (84%) of successful part-time applications were from students with a household income of £6,120 or less, and were therefore awarded the full grant amounts of £1,500 and £750 respectively.
- 1,055 (39%) successful full-time applications and 30 (11%) successful part-time applications were from students aged 21 or under.

About this bulletin

Welsh Government Learning Grants for Further Education (WGLG) provide extra money for further education students who might otherwise experience financial difficulty when undertaking post-compulsory education courses.

The data included here are obtained from Student Loans Company (SLC). Unless otherwise stated, figures are for the 2022/23 academic year, as at the end of July 2023.

In this bulletin

Applications by:

Workstage	3
Gender	4
Household income	5
Notes	8
Key quality information	11
Further details	14

Policy and operational context

This statistical bulletin includes data on the Welsh Government Learning Grants for **Further Education** (WGLG). Information on Welsh Government Learning Grants for **Higher Education** is published by the Student Loans Company in the Statistical First Release '[Student Support for Higher Education in Wales](#)'.

Welsh Government Learning Grants for Further Education (WGLG) were introduced by the Welsh Government from academic year 2002/03 to provide extra money for students who might otherwise experience financial difficulty when undertaking post-compulsory education courses.

Initially the scheme only included students studying at further education institutions or higher education institutions. From 2003/04 the scheme was extended to include students at all learning centres (e.g. schools) providing Education and Learning Wales or Local Education Authority facilitated courses. From 2006/07 responsibility for the administration of applications of WGLG for students at further education institutions was transferred from local authorities to the Student Loans Company (SLC). Students qualify for the scheme if they are 19 or older, on an eligible course and meet the rest of the criteria (see [Notes](#) section for further information).

The number of WGLG awarded is influenced by the number of learners in post-16 education and the effect of minimum wage and/or employment levels on household income (used for means-tested allowances). Students can receive payments of up to £1,500 if they are in full-time education or up to £750 if they are in part-time education.

Further information on WGLG is on the [Student Finance Wales website](#).

Notes on the data

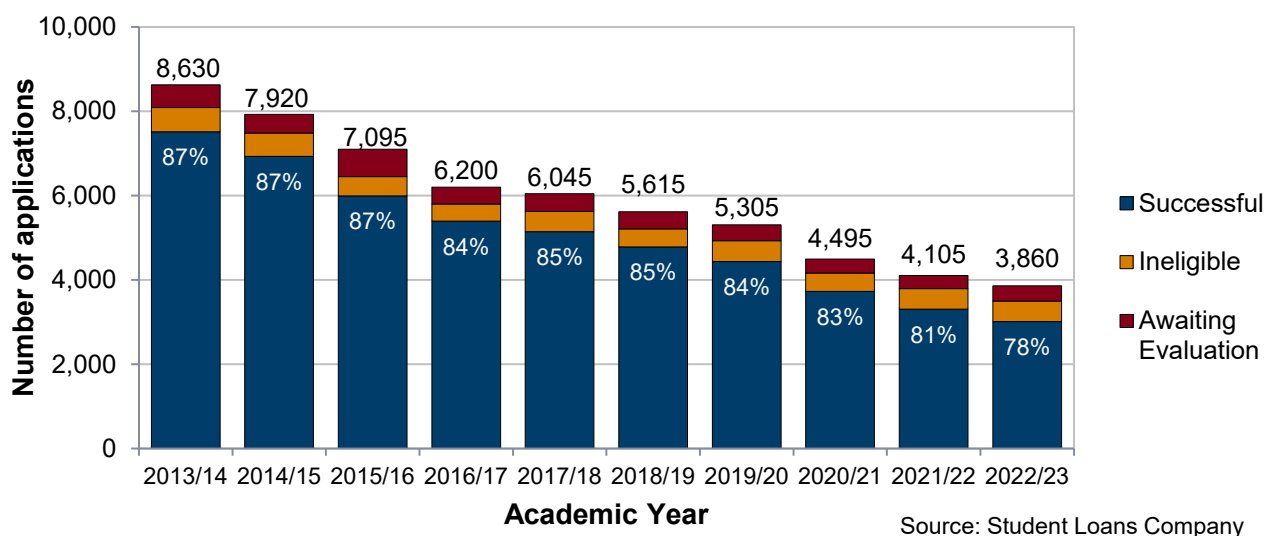
- Throughout the bulletin, data has been rounded to the nearest five.
- Totals and percentages have been calculated using unrounded data, so a total may not equal the sum of its parts.
- The academic year runs from 1 August to 31 July.
- The data for 2022/23 was extracted on 7th of November 2023 and is accurate as of that date.
- Part-time applications include applications where the course of study is below the threshold of taught hours (less than 275 hours per year).

Applications by work stage and mode of study

There has been a general downward trend in total WGLG applications since 2012/13. This reflects the demographic decline in post-18 learner numbers overall.

The maximum income threshold for successful claims has been frozen at £18,370 since 2011/12. The real-terms fall in this threshold may have led to fewer post-18 learners applying. Information on learner numbers by age and gender can be found on [StatsWales](#).

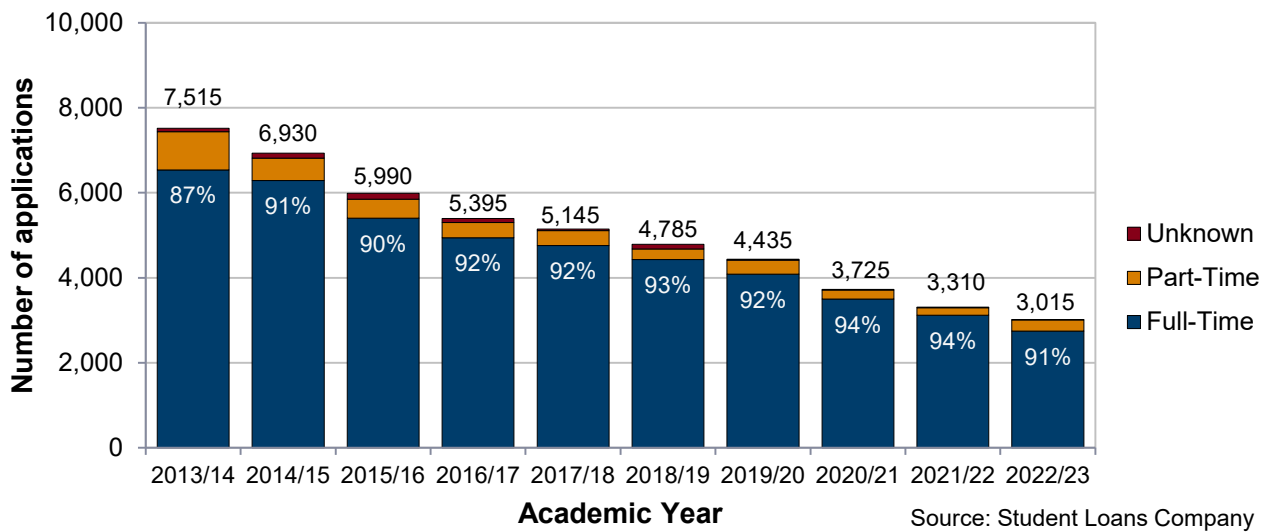
Chart 1: Applications by application work stage and the percentage of applications that were successful



In 2022/23:

- There were 3,860 applications for WGLG, a decrease of 6% compared to the previous academic year.
- 3,015 of these were successful applications, a decrease of 9% compared to the previous academic year (see [Table 1](#)).

Chart 2: Successful applications by mode of study and the percentage of applications from full-time students

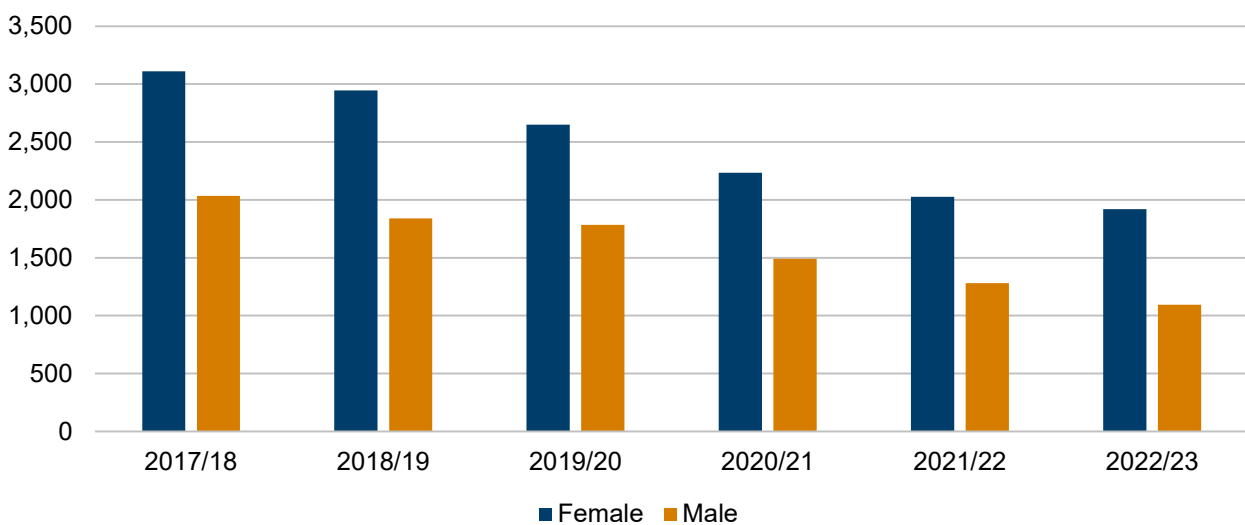


There were 3,015 successful applications in 2022/23:

- 91% (2,745) were from full-time students, a decrease compared to 2021/22.
- 9% (260) of successful applications were from part-time students, an increase compared to 2021/22 (see [Table 1](#)).

Successful applications by gender

Chart 3: Successful applications by gender



- In 2022/23, 64% (1,920) of successful applications for WGLG were from females, but this should be considered in the context of learner demography: in 2021/22 (the [latest figures](#) available), 59% of post-18 learners were female.

Amount paid by household income

Table 1: Amount paid by household income (a)(b)

	Amount Paid (£000s)			
	2021/22		2022/23	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
£0 - £6,120	3,095	85	2,840	145
£6,121 - £12,235	350	15	245	10
£12,236 - £18,370 (b)	95	5	85	5
Total	3,540	100	3,170	155
Percentage				
£0 - £6,120	87%	82%	90%	91%
£6,121 - £12,235	10%	15%	8%	6%
£12,236 - £18,370	3%	3%	3%	2%

Notes

Source: Student Loans Company

(a) Most of the payments will be associated with applications that are successful. Some however are currently in a state other than "Successful"

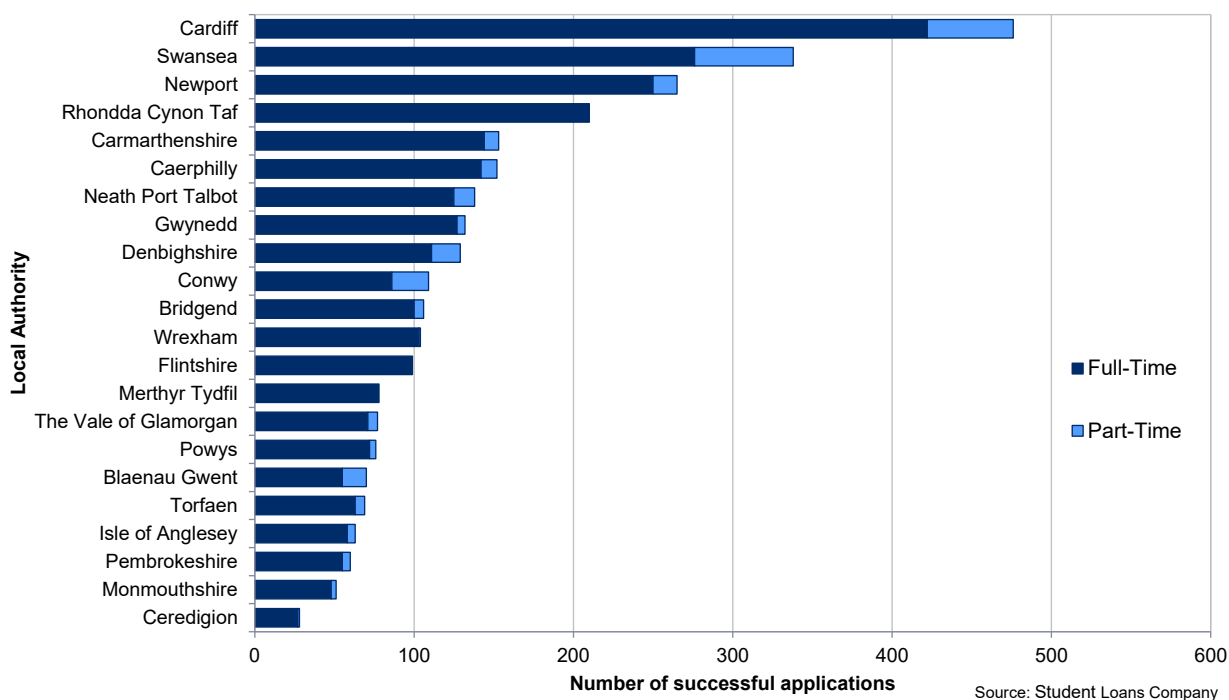
(b) Includes small amounts paid to those with income since identified as "£18,371+"

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

- £3.3 million was paid in WGLGs to FE students in 2022/23, a decrease of 9% compared to the £3.6 million paid in 2021/22.

Successful applications by local authority

Chart 4: Successful applications by Local Authority and mode of study, 2022/23



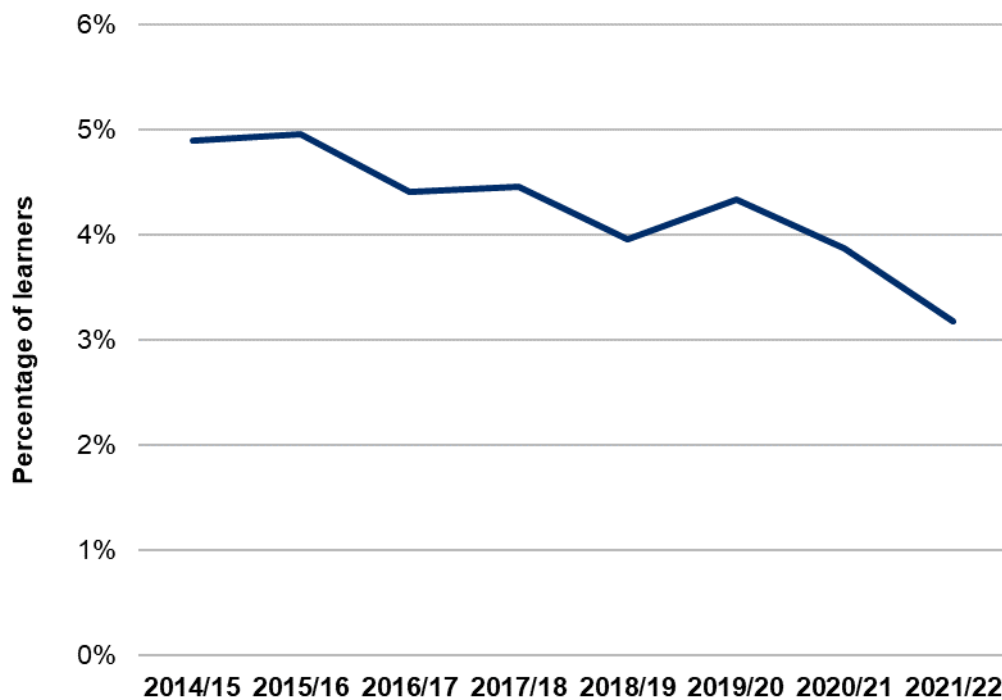
In 2022/23:

- The number of successful applications (including both full-time and part-time) ranged from 30 in Ceredigion to 475 in Cardiff.
- Cardiff accounted for 15% of all full-time successful applications.
- Swansea accounted for the largest share of part-time successful applications at 24%.
- The local authority with the highest proportion of part-time learners amongst their successful applications was Conwy and Blaenau Gwent at 21%.

Percentage of learners receiving WGLG

Chart 6 shows the proportion of learners in further education that receive WGLG. This chart uses the Life Long Learning Wales Record (LLWR) for student numbers. The latest year available in LLWR is 2021/22. This data is available on [StatsWales](#).

Chart 5: Historical post-18 FE learners successfully claiming WGLG



- The total number of successful applicants in 2021/22 was 3,310.
- Since 2015/16 the percentage of post-18 learners receiving WGLG has generally declined by a small amount from 4.9% in 2014/15 to 3.2% in 2021/22. This could be due to income thresholds being frozen since 2011/12.

Notes

1. Welsh Government Learning Grant for Further Education eligibility criteria

The grant is available to eligible students studying in Wales or elsewhere in the UK. For a grant to be awarded both the student and course criteria must be satisfied. The Welsh Government Learning Grant for Further Education scheme has various student and course criteria, including:

Student criteria

1. Nationality and residency: UK citizens living in Wales may be eligible for WGLG. Students living in Wales who are not UK citizens may still be eligible to get WGLG – more information can be found on the [Student Finance Wales](#) website.
2. Age: 19 or over on 1st September

Course criteria

Students do not have to study in Wales to get WGLG, but must be studying at a school or college involved in the WGLG scheme.

The course must:

- require attendance for at least 275 hours during the academic year
- be at a participating school or college
- lead to a nationally recognised qualification, up to and including Level 3 qualifications

Calculation of level of award is based on the residual household income of the student or student's family. Residual household income is calculated by taking gross income (before tax and National Insurance) and deducting certain allowances.

For all FE students, where a student is on an eligible course, awards are calculated on the following basis:

Value of Welsh Government Learning Grant by mode of study and residual income

Further Education Cumulative contact hours in the academic year	Residual household income			
	Between £0 - £6,120	Between £6,121 - £12,235	Between £12,236 - £18,370	£18,370 or over
275-499 (part-time)	£750	£450	£300	Nil
500 or more (full-time)	£1,500	£750	£450	Nil

2. Data source

WGLG applications and payments are administered by the [Student Loans Company](#) (SLC). Data held on WGLG students is entered by SLC staff onto an administrative database for the purpose of assessing and paying WGLG to students. This data is also stored in a management information data warehouse for the purpose of management reporting, operational performance reporting, audit of processes, statistics, future policy planning and forecasting.

These statistics make use of that data to report on key aspects of the scheme:

- trends in applications and approvals
- age, gender and mode of study
- household income ranges
- learning centre type
- Local Authority

Detailed analyses are available in this annual Bulletin and data published on [StatsWales](#).

Data collection

The data in this release were collected via the SLC management information system and were extracted on 07 November 2023. All information is based on applications received by 31 July 2023.

Further information including the numbers of WGLG administered by the SLC can be found on the [StatsWales website](#).

Validation and verification

Processes and systems which enable customer and application assessment data to be held electronically are subject to periodic audit and integrity checks. SLC Internal Audit ensures that the processes governing data entry and application assessment are adhered to. Data integrity validation rules are used to identify and correct errors in data. Management Information extracted from SLC systems are subject to quality assurances prior to distribution: statisticians within the Welsh Government review the data and query any anomalies with the SLC before tables are published.

Publication

Once the data has been finalised, the release is compiled and the key points and commentary are drafted. The release is independently checked and a final sense check is carried out by the relevant statistician prior to publication on the website.

Disclosure control and confidentiality

All the figures are rounded to the nearest 5 for confidentiality. Due to rounding, the sums of some rows or columns may not add to the total figure given. Numbers less than 5, but not zero, are represented by '*'. A '-' denotes a percentage less than 0.5 (but not zero).

3. Definitions

3.1 Students who have withdrawn

The data represented in this release on successful applications refer to applicants who have been approved for a WGLG during the course of the academic year. Students who have withdrawn from their course are not removed from the analysis. Furthermore, figures on successful applications represent the total value of the approved WGLG and have not been adjusted for unpaid or recovered instalments.

3.2 Awaiting evaluation

Applications 'awaiting evaluation' are incomplete, missing either information from the application or supporting evidence. At the cut-off date (31st July for the most recent year) these were the approximate numbers:

Academic Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Awaiting Evaluation	395	420	400	380	330	305	365

3.3 Mode of study 'unknown'

Data provided by the SLC on applications for WGLG showed approximately 5 successful applications in 2022/23 where the mode of study was 'unknown'. These are included in Table 1, but are excluded in other tables showing figures by mode of study.

4. Equal Opportunities

1,950 Equal Opportunities monitoring forms were received in 2022/23, which equates to 50% of all applications received. It is not known whether these applications have been approved, rejected or are currently being processed, since the data are disassociated from the application process, and not all forms were fully completed.

The data as at 1st September 2023 show that of the applications for which an equal opportunities form was completed:

- 24% classed themselves as disabled.
- 4% said they were Black or British Black.
- 18% made up the groups who were of Mixed ethnicity, Asian or Asian British and Chinese or other ethnic group.
- 79% classed their ethnicity as White.
- 1% of forms received did not answer the ethnicity question.

Quality information

These statistics adhere to the Welsh Government's Statistical Quality Management Strategy. They are produced in accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics independently under the responsibility of the Welsh Government Chief Statistician.

They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. Here are further details of how we adhere to the dimensions:

1. Relevance (the degree to which the statistical product meets user needs for both coverage and content)
2. Accuracy (the closeness between an estimated result and the (unknown) true value)
3. Timeliness and punctuality (timeliness refers to the lapse of time between publication and the period to which the data refer, whilst punctuality refers to the time lag between the actual and planned dates of publication)
4. Accessibility and clarity (accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format(s) in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information, whilst clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice)
5. Comparability and coherence (the degree to which data can be compared over time and domain and the degree to which data that are derived from different sources or methods, but which refer to the same phenomenon, are similar)

Relevance

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor educational trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. Some of the key users are:

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the Senedd
- Officials in the Welsh Government
- Other government departments
- Further Education Institutions, Work-Based Learning providers, schools and local authorities
- Wales Audit Office
- Students, researchers, academics and universities
- Individual citizens, private companies, and the media

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- general background and research
- inclusions in reports, articles and briefings
- advice to Ministers
- to inform and monitor the education policy development and decision-making process in Wales
- to forecast future expenditure of student support schemes in Wales

1. Accuracy

Statisticians within the Welsh Government review the data and query any anomalies with the SLC before tables are published. The figures in this release reflect the final position as at the end of the 2022/23 academic year (31 July 2023), and are correct as at 07 November 2023.

2. Timeliness and punctuality

The data in this statistical release is available in September and the release is usually published in November. Publication of this release was postponed to January this year to allow sufficient time to compile and quality assure the data.

3. Accessibility and clarity

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website. It is accompanied by more detailed tables on [StatsWales](#), a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data.

4. Comparability and coherence

Strengths

- Outputs have been developed to meet the internal and external user need in Wales.
- The data is derived from well-understood SLC systems.
- Detailed statistics are provided via our [StatsWales](#) website.

Limitations

- WGLG for Further Education has been available to students aged 19 and over at the start of the academic year since 2006/07. Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is available for 16-18 year olds. Further information on EMAs was published in November 2023 in the statistical first release '[Education Maintenance Allowances Awarded in Wales, 2022/23](#)'.
- Data provided by the SLC on applications for WGLG from students at Further Education institutions showed approximately 5 successful applications in 2022/23 where the mode of study was 'unknown' and are included in Table 1, but are excluded in other tables showing figures by mode of study.

National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics

Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in a letter of 03 May 2012 following a compliance check by the Office for Statistics Regulation ([Assessment Report 76](#)) against the Code of Practice in December 2010. This is the last time these statistics underwent a full assessment.

Since then we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Replaced pie charts with bar charts making comparisons within and between charts easier.
- Introduced chart showing the successful applications by gender.
- Introduced a chart showing proportion of all learners successfully claiming WGLG over time.
- Replaced tables with charts to simplify the release and allow visualisation of the key messages, with tables available on Stats Wales
- Introduced a description and link to the Well-being of Wales report.
- Improved accessibility by including alt text for charts and tables.
- Added graphics to the key points at the start of the release.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

Further details

The document is available at:

<https://gov.wales/welsh-government-learning-grants-further-education>

Tables associated with this bulletin containing a greater amount of detail are available on the Welsh Government's interactive data dissemination service, [StatsWales](#).

Further information about the WGLG (FE) scheme can be found on the [Student Finance Wales website](#).

Information on WGLG HE is published by the Student Loans Company in the SFR '[Student Support for Higher Education in Wales](#)'.

Next update

November 2024

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to HigherEducationAndStudentFinance.Stats@gov.wales.

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