



Department
of Health &
Social Care

From Edward Argar MP
Minister of State for Health

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The Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
By email to: george.howarth.mp@parliament.uk

A. H. 2022

Dear *George*,

Thank you for your correspondence of 9 May to Sajid Javid on behalf of a number of your constituents, about support for medical students. I apologise for the delay in replying.

I read the correspondence with care and appreciate your constituents' concerns. The Government is committed to supporting medical students. Those that attend years 1-4 of a standard medical degree course qualify for a fee loan to meet the full costs of their tuition, and a partially means-tested loan for living costs from Student Finance England. Students required to attend for more than 30 weeks and three days in an academic year qualify for additional means-tested living costs support as a long courses loan. Students with adult or child dependants can apply for fully means-tested grants and those who are obliged to incur additional costs while studying as a result of a disability can apply for disabled students' allowances.

Maximum grants and loans for living costs were increased by 3.1 per cent this academic year, and we have announced that they will increase by a further 2.3 per cent next year. In addition, we are freezing maximum tuition fees for the 2022/23 to 2024/25 academic years. By the 2024/25 academic year, maximum fees will have been frozen for seven years, meaning reduced debt for students in real terms. We are also reforming student loans so new borrowers starting from the 2023/24 academic year onwards will not, under the new terms, be required to repay more than they have borrowed when adjusted for inflation.

For the fifth year of a standard medical degree course, and years 2-4 of accelerated medical programmes, the Government pays students' tuition fees through a non-repayable bursary, funded by Health Education England through the NHS Business Services Authority. Every eligible student receives an NHS Bursary at a minimum of £1,000 plus a means-tested bursary of up to £3,191.

The NHS Bursary provides additional allowances for childcare, travel and accommodation, to help students manage shortfalls between their income and expenditure. Students eligible for bursary support, for an academic year of their course, can also apply for a reduced rate non-means tested loans for living costs from Student Finance England.

If a student is struggling financially and is eligible for the NHS Bursary, the Exceptional Support Fund is available where they may be able to claim for any sum between £100 and £3,000, dependent on their financial circumstances. Additionally, Travel and Dual

Accommodation Expenses can provide reimbursement of costs that are incurred while on a practice placement.

In our guidance to the Office for Students (OfS) on funding for the 2021/22 financial year, we made clear that it should protect the £256million allocation for the student premiums, to support disadvantaged students and those that need additional help. The 2022/23 financial year guidance states that universities will still be able to support students in hardship through the student premium. The Strategic Priorities Grant guidance letter to the OfS, asks that it looks to protect the student premium in cash terms in 2022/23.

Additionally, the Government is making available discretionary funding of £144million to support vulnerable people and those on low incomes, including students, who do not have to pay council tax. The Government has also announced that households will get £400 of support with their energy bills through an expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme. As well as doubling the £200 of support announced earlier this year, the payment will now be made as a grant that will not be recovered through higher bills in future years.

The Department for Education has secured up to £75million to deliver a National Scholarship Scheme, which will support students to reach their full potential whilst studying in higher education. The scholarship aims to address the ongoing financial barriers that can prevent high-achieving, disadvantaged students from reaching their full academic potential and is in addition to the significant sector interventions already in place.

I hope this reply is helpful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Argar', written in a cursive style.

EDWARD ARGAR MP