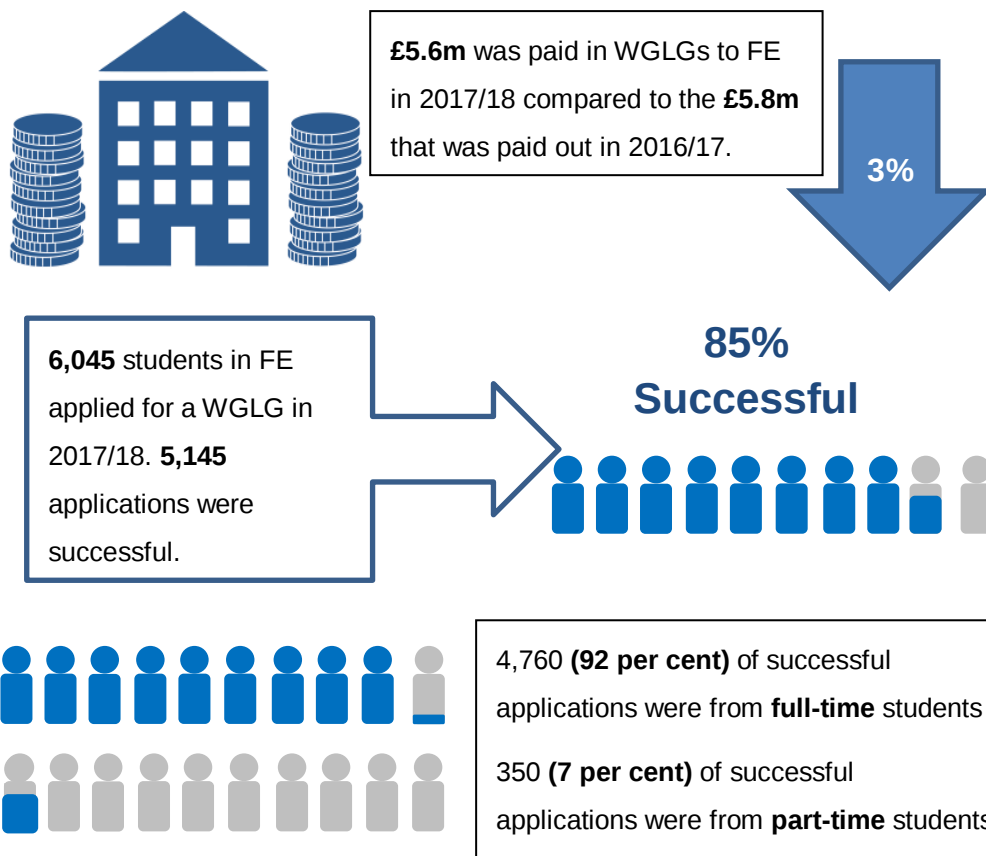




Welsh Government Learning Grants (WGLG): Further Education (FE), 2017/18

25 October 2018
SFR 102/2018



Key points

- 6,045 students in FE applied for a WGLG in 2017/18, a decrease of 3 per cent on 2016/17. Of these 5,145 applications were successful, a decrease of 5 per cent on 2016/17.
- 4,760 (92 per cent) of successful applications were from full-time students and 350 (7 per cent) of successful applications were from part-time students.
- 85 per cent of applications received were successful. This proportion has decreased slightly from 87 per cent in 2016/17. The proportion of successful applications from full-time students remains very high at around 98 per cent, with the corresponding figure for part-time students at 85 per cent.

About this bulletin

The data included here are obtained from Student Loans Company (SLC). Unless otherwise stated, figures are for the 2017/18 academic year, at the end of July 2018.

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Key points (continued)

- There was a decrease in the number of successful applications in 2017/18 compared with 2016/17. This resulted in £5.6 million being paid out in WGLGs to FE students in 2017/18, compared to the £5.8 million that was paid out in 2016/17.
- 3,700 (78 per cent) of successful full-time applications and 280 (81 per cent) of successful part-time applications were from students with a residual income of £6,120 or less, and were therefore awarded the full grant amounts of £1,500 and £750, respectively. These proportions have changed little since 2008/09.
- 2,015 (42 per cent) of successful full-time applications and 65 (19 per cent) of successful part-time applications were from students aged 21 or under.

Policy and operational context

Welsh Government Learning Grants (FE) 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 (ELWa) or Local Education Authority (LEA) facilitated courses. From 2006/07 responsibility for the administration of applications of WGLGs for students at Further Education Institutions was transferred from Local Authorities (LAs) to the Student Loans Company (SLC).

The number of Welsh Government Learning Grants (FE) awarded is influenced by the overall numbers of learners in post-16 education, and the effect of minimum wage and/or employment levels on household income in determining eligibility 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 Welsh Government Learning Grants (FE) can be found on the [Student Finance Wales website](#).

WGLG (FE) applications by workstage and mode of study

There has been a downward trend in total WGLG (FE) applications since 2012/13. This has generally matched the demographic context, which showed declines in post-18 learner numbers between 2005/06 and 2015/16, although there was a rise in 2016/17. However, 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 unique learner numbers by age and gender can be found on [StatsWales](https://stats.wales.gov.uk/).

Table 1: Applications by outcome and mode of study, 2013/14 to 2017/18 (a)(b)

Academic Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Full-Time					
Successful	6,540	6,290	5,405	4,935	4,760
Ineligible	160	85	80	70	75
Awaiting Evaluation	10	10	10	*	*
Total	6,710	6,380	5,495	5,015	4,835
Part-time (c)					
Successful	900	525	445	365	350
Ineligible	120	70	50	55	60
Awaiting evaluation	0	0	0	*	0
Total	1,020	595	495	420	410
Unknown					
Successful	80	115	140	95	40
Ineligible	290	400	330	280	340
Awaiting evaluation	535	430	630	390	415
Total	900	945	1,105	765	795
All Successful applications	7,515	6,930	5,990	5,395	5,145
All Applications	8,630	7,920	7,095	6,200	6,045

(a) All figures as at 31 July.

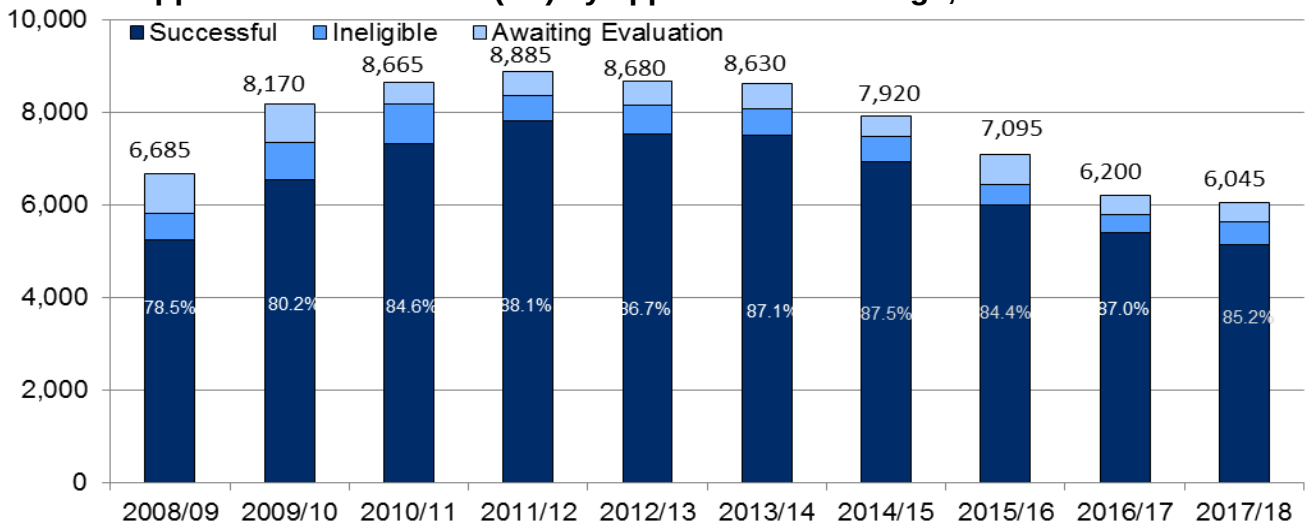
Source: Student Loans Company

(b) A "*" denotes a number less than 5 (but not zero).

(c) Part-time applications include applications where the course of study is below threshold of taught hours.

- 4,835 applications for financial assistance from full-time students, of which 4,760 (98 per cent) were successful.
- 410 applications from part-time students, of which 350 (85 per cent) were successful.

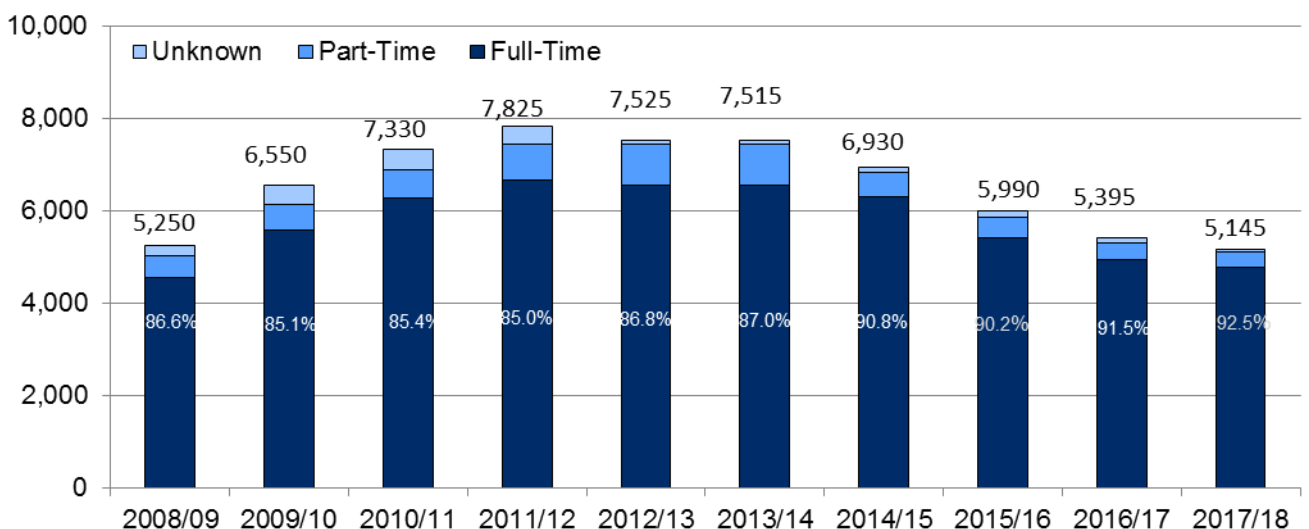
Chart 1: Applications for WGLG (FE) by application workstage, 2008/09 to 2017/18



Source: Student Loans Company

- 6,045 applications for WGLG (FE), a decrease of 3 per cent on the previous academic year (2016/17).
- 5,145 successful applications, a decrease of 5 per cent on the previous academic year [\[Table 1\]](#).

Chart 2: Successful applications by mode of study, 2008/09 to 2017/18



Source: Student Loans Company

- 4,760 of successful applications were from full-time students, a decrease of 4 per cent compared to 2016/17.
- 350 of successful applications were from part-time students, a 4 per cent decrease on 2016/17 [\[Table 1\]](#).

WGLG (FE) Successful applications by age and mode of study

Table 2: Successful applications by age and mode of study, 2013/14 to 2017/18 (a)(b)

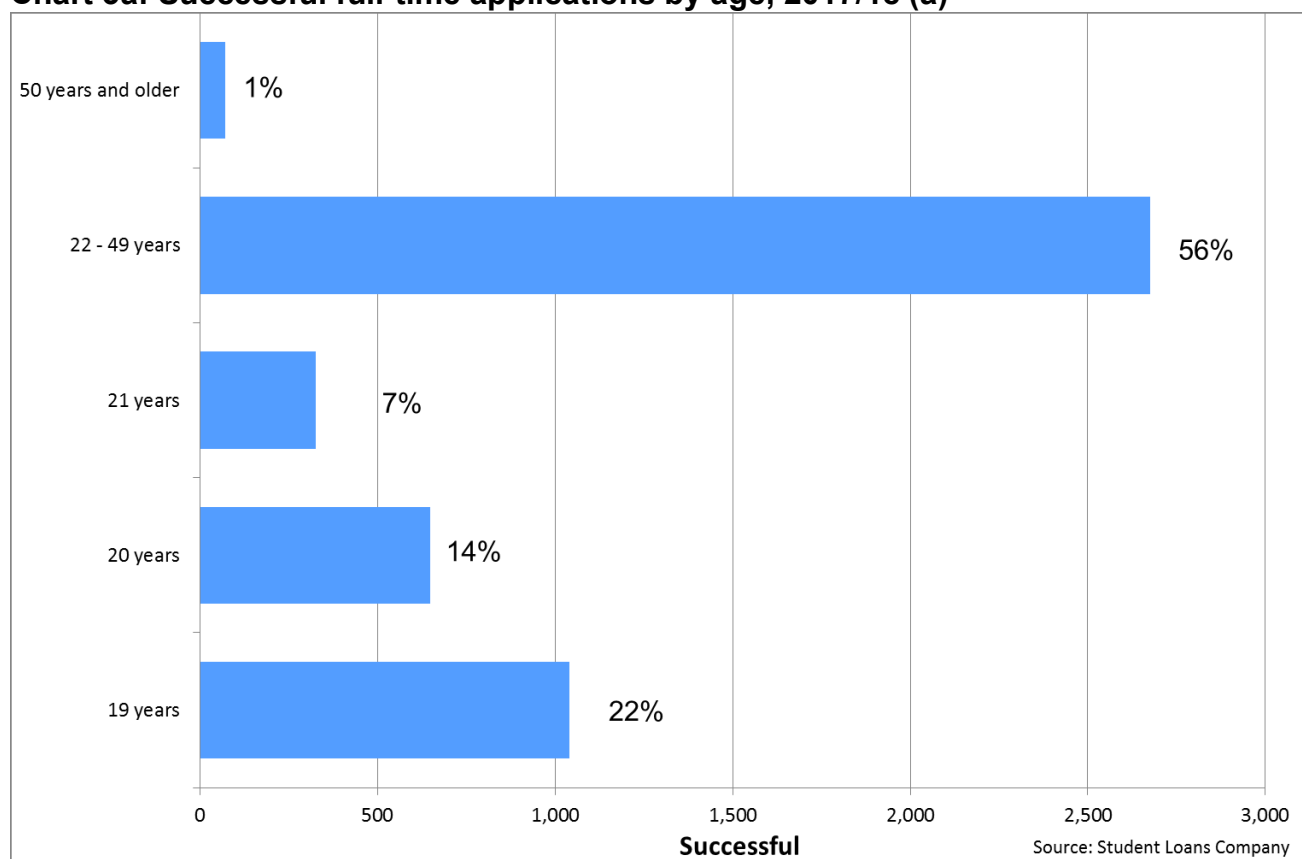
	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
19 years	1,550	75	1,560	30	1,225	35	1,225	20	1,040	35
20 years	830	55	775	30	655	20	560	15	650	15
21 years	545	35	460	20	405	20	345	15	325	20
22 to 49 years	3,490	630	3,385	395	3,030	320	2,725	275	2,675	265
50 years and over	120	100	105	50	90	55	80	35	70	15
Unknown	5	*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	6,540	900	6,290	525	5,405	445	4,935	365	4,760	350

(a) All figures as at 31 July.

Source: Student Loans Company

(b) A "*" denotes a number less than 5 (but not zero).

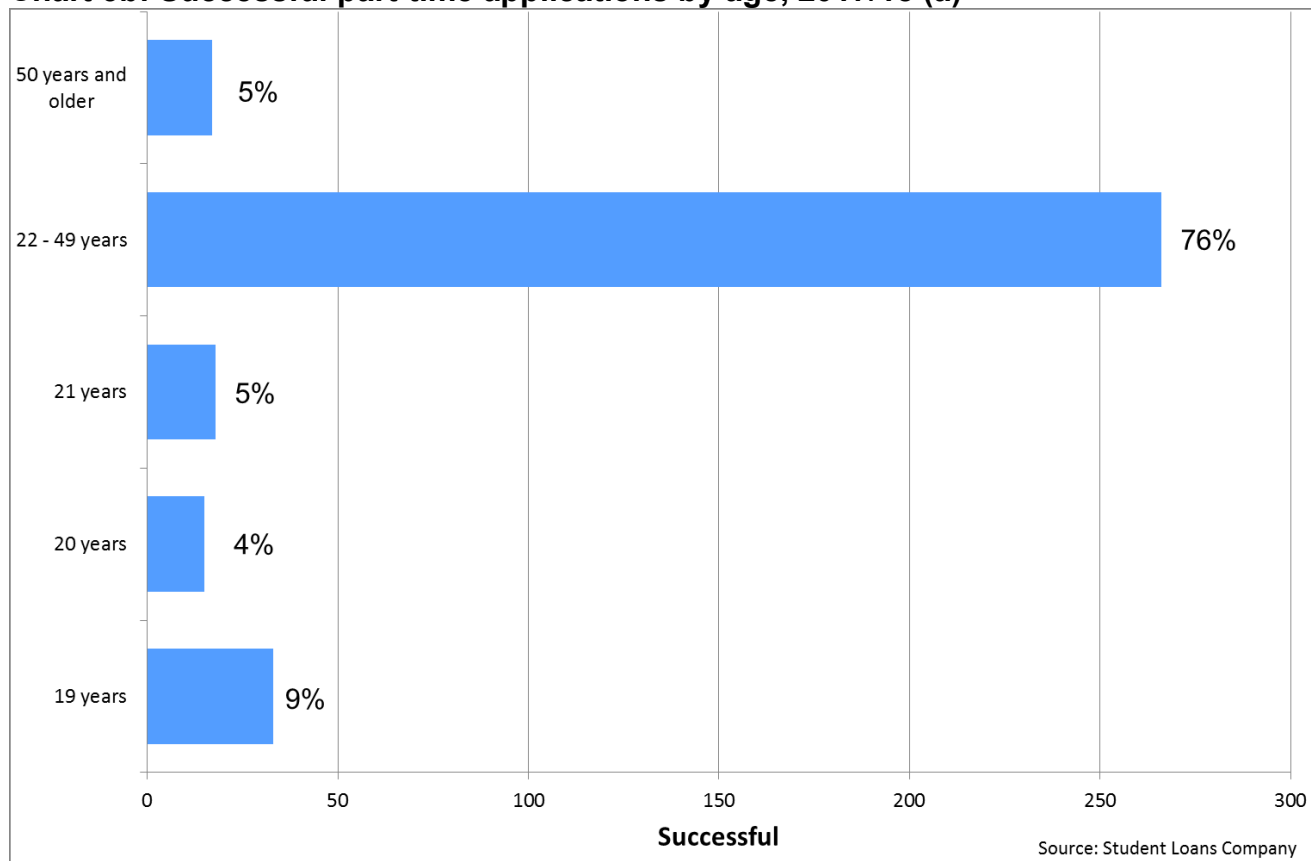
Chart 3a: Successful full-time applications by age, 2017/18 (a)



(a) All figures rounded to the nearest whole number (i.e. percentages may not sum to 100)

- 2,015 (42 per cent) of successful full-time applications were from students aged 21 or under.

Chart 3b: Successful part-time applications by age, 2017/18 (a)



(a) All figures rounded to the nearest whole number (i.e. percentages may not sum to 100)

- Charts 3a and 3b together show the lower representation of the younger age group in the part-time population. There are anyway far more full-time applicants (93 per cent), see [Table 2](#).

WGLG (FE) Successful applications by gender

Table 3: Successful WGLG FE applications by gender, 2013/14 to 2017/18 (a)(b)

Academic Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Female	4,750	4,325	3,790	3,290	3,110
Male	2,770	2,605	2,200	2,105	2,035
Total	7,515	6,930	5,990	5,395	5,145

(a) All figures as at 31 July.

Source: Student Loans Company

(b) Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

- 3,110 (60 per cent) successful applications for WGLG (FE) were from females.

WGLG (FE) Successful applications and amount paid

Table 4: Successful applications and amount paid by household income, 2016/17 to 2017/18 (a)(b)

	Number				Amount Paid (£000s)			
	2016/17		2017/18		2016/17		2017/18	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
£0 - £6,120	3,795	285	3,700	280	4,950	175	4,785	170
£6,121 - £12,235	735	45	660	50	470	20	420	20
£12,236 - £18,370	405	30	400	20	150	10	150	5
Total	4,935	365	4,760	350	5,570	200	5,355	195

Percentage

£0 - £6,120	77%	79%	78%	80%	89%	87%	89%	87%
£6,121 - £12,235	15%	13%	14%	14%	8%	9%	8%	10%
£12,236 - £18,370	8%	9%	8%	6%	3%	4%	3%	3%

(a) All figures as at 31 July.

Source: Student Loans Company

(b) A ** denotes a number less than 5 (but not zero).

- An overall total of £5.6 million was paid in WGLGs to FE students in 2017/18, a decrease of 4 per cent on the £5.8 million paid in 2016/17.
- 3,700 (78 per cent) of successful full-time applications and 280 (80 per cent) of successful part-time applications were from students with a residual income of £6,120 or less, and were therefore awarded the full grant of £1,500 and £750, respectively.

WGLG (FE) Successful applications by type of institution

Table 5: Successful applications by institution and mode of study, 2013/14 to 2017/18 (a)(b)

	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Welsh Institutions	6,480	895	6,240	520	5,385	440	4,910	355	4,745	340
<i>of which (per cent)</i>										
FE Institutions (c)	98%	70%	97%	95%	99%	95%	99%	93%	99%	95%
HE Institutions	1%	-	-	1%	-	1%	-	1%	-	-
Other Learning Centres	1%	30%	1%	4%	1%	3%	-	4%	1%	3%
English Institutions	55	*	50	*	20	*	30	5	15	5
Total	6,540	900	6,290	525	5,405	445	4,940	365	4,760	350

(a) All figures as at 31 July.

Source: Student Loans Company

(b) A '-' denotes a percentage less than 0.5 (but not zero), a ** denotes a number less than 5 (but not zero).

(c) Includes students on courses at the Workers Educational Association (WEA) and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA).

- 99 per cent of successful full-time applications were from students attending FE Institutions, with none from HE Institutions and less than 1 per cent from Other Learning Centres (which include Community Colleges and Community Education Centres) – similar to the proportions seen in previous years.
- 95 per cent of successful part-time applications were from students attending FE Institutions, with none from HE Institutions and 3 per cent from Other Learning Centres.

WGLG (FE) Successful applications by local authority

Table 6: Successful applications by Local Authority and mode of study, 2013/14 to 2017/18 (a)(c)

	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Isle of Anglesey	100	35	115	10	85	10	95	10	90	10
Gwynedd	140	35	165	15	130	20	130	20	135	5
Conwy	280	65	320	30	275	15	210	25	210	20
Denbighshire	315	35	305	15	260	5	220	10	220	5
Flintshire	450	*	380	*	330	*	260	*	230	*
Wrexham	305	15	325	10	250	5	240	*	195	10
Powys	140	15	125	5	105	10	95	*	105	5
Ceredigion	115	15	95	5	95	10	80	*	105	*
Pembrokeshire	180	10	150	5	130	*	105	*	95	5
Carmarthenshire	310	25	295	20	220	25	210	20	220	30
Swansea	485	50	465	45	340	95	350	65	340	70
Neath Port Talbot	300	50	290	50	250	15	215	25	205	15
Bridgend	240	50	230	45	240	5	240	*	235	*
Vale of Glamorgan	260	20	250	15	200	10	185	*	180	10
Cardiff	935	305	945	130	825	115	720	105	720	90
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	595	100	540	45	510	20	470	10	445	10
Merthyr Tydfil	185	15	170	10	165	15	130	15	115	10
Caerphilly	380	15	320	10	290	10	310	10	295	*
Blaenau Gwent	190	10	155	5	125	10	120	0	100	*
Torfaen	170	10	180	15	150	15	150	10	125	10
Monmouthshire	80	5	75	*	75	*	75	5	60	*
Newport	360	10	380	35	340	20	335	20	325	15
Wales (b)	6,525	900	6,275	525	5,390	445	4,930	360	4,740	345

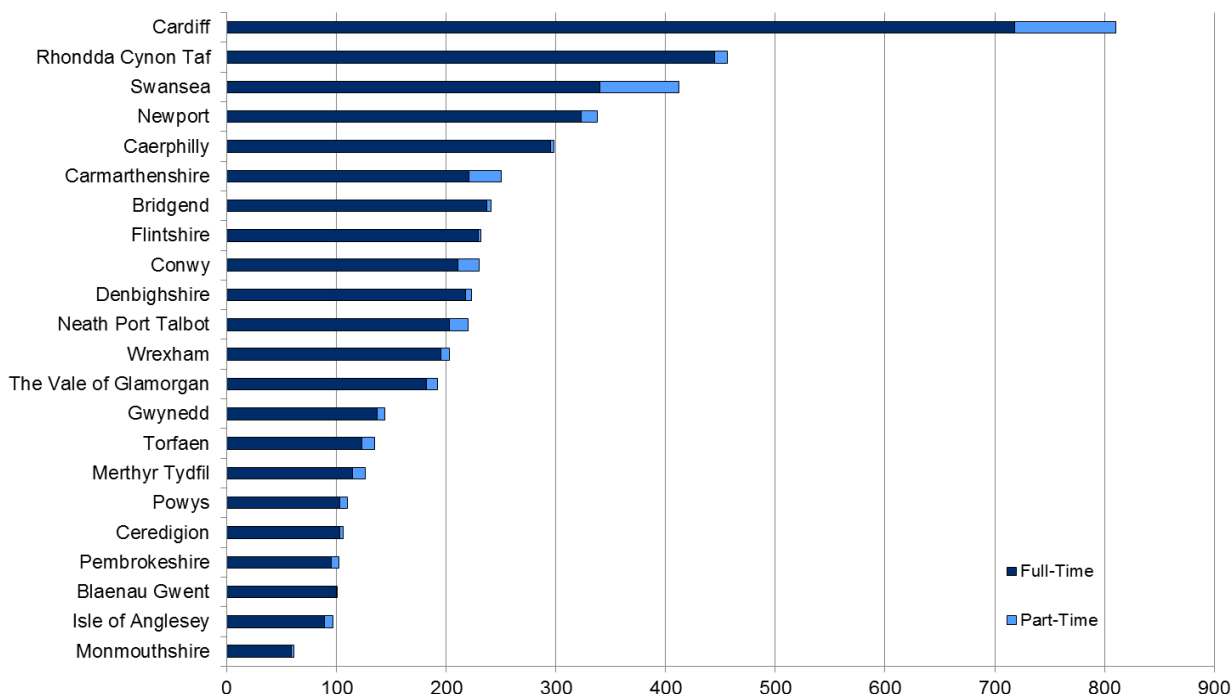
(a) All figures as at 31 July.

Source: Student Loans Company

(b) Total may not match exactly due to rounding.

(c) A * denotes a number less than 5 (but not zero).

Chart 4: Successful applications by Local Authority and mode of study, 2017/18



Source: Student Loans Company

- The number of successful applications by local authority, where mode of study is known, ranged from 60 in Monmouthshire to 810 in Cardiff. Cardiff accounted for 15 per cent of all full-time successful applications and 27 per cent of all part-time successful applications.

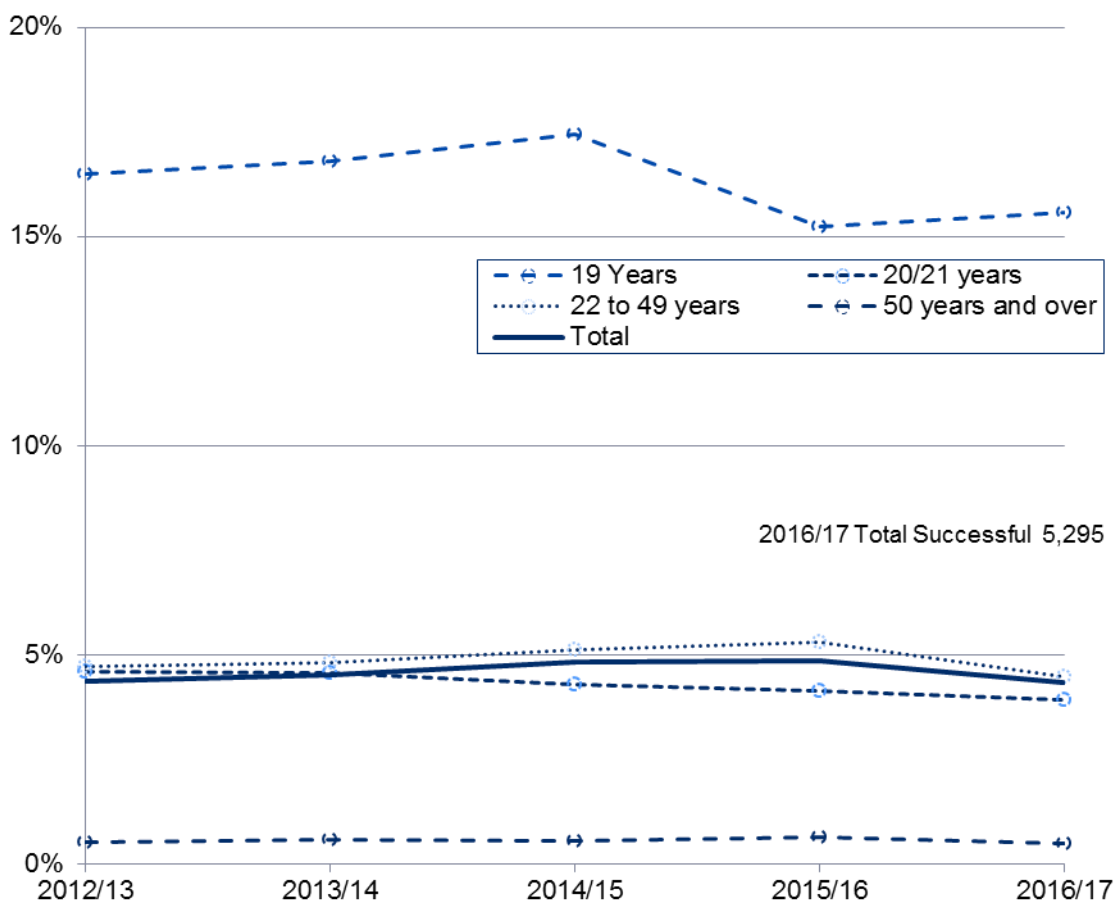
- The local authority with the highest proportion of part-time learners amongst their successful applications was Swansea, at 17 per cent.

WGLG (FE) Historical Percentage of Learners

The trend shows declines in post-18 learner numbers between 2005/06 and 2015/16, although the number rose in 2016/17 (the latest year for which LLWR figures are available). The overall number of post 18 learners was 122,160 in 2016/17.

Chart 5 shows the historical percentage of learners receiving WGLG (FE). The overall percentage has generally been stable at around 5 per cent, but fell slightly in 2016/17. However the percentage receiving WGLG (FE) is higher for 19 year olds, remaining above 15 per cent throughout the period, in spite of a fall in 2015/16.

Chart 5: Historical post-18 FE learners successfully claiming WGLG (FE), 2012/13 to 2016/17



Source: Student Loans Company, LLWR

Notes

1. Welsh Government Learning Grant (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 WGLG (FE) scheme has various student and course criteria, including:

Student criteria

1. Residence: To be eligible for a grant the first condition is that a student must be ordinarily resident in Wales on the first day of the first academic year of the course. The second condition is that the student must have been ordinarily resident, for the three years prior to that date, in either (a) the UK or (b) the European Economic Area (EEA), depending on nationality status.
2. Age: 19 or over at the start of the academic year for further education courses. There are no age criteria for WGLG higher education courses.

Course criteria

Further Education: The course is supported through the Education directorate which requires regular attendance at a Further Education Institution or Other Learning Centre and involves at least 275 taught hours in each academic year.

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	Residual household income			
Cumulative contact hours in the academic year	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 (FE) applications and payments are administered by the Student Loans Company (SLC). Data held on WGLG (FE) students is entered by SLC staff onto an administrative database for the purpose of assessing and paying WGLG (FE) 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 and mode of study
- household income ranges
- learning centre type
- local authority.

Detailed analyses are available in an annual Statistical First Release and data published on [StatsWales](#).

Data collection

The data in this release were collected via the SLC management information system and were extracted on 1 August 2018. All information is based on applications received by 31 July 2018.

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

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 (31 July for the most recent year) these were the approximate numbers:

2006/ 07	2007/ 08	2008/ 09	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12	2012/ 13	2013/ 14	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18
825	665	875	815	480	525	510	545	440	640	395	420

Due to the transfer of administration of the WGLG (FE) from LAs to the SLC in 2006/07 it is possible that in the past applications with missing information or evidence were treated differently, with some LAs cancelling an application after a certain period of time.

3.3 Mode of study ‘unknown’

Data provided by the SLC on applications for WGLGs from students at Further Education institutions showed approximately 40 successful applications in 2017/18 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

3,786 Equal Opportunities monitoring forms were received in 2017/18, which equates to 63 per cent 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 1 September 2018 show that of the applications for which an equal opportunities form was completed:

- 14 per cent classed themselves as disabled;
- 85 per cent classed their ethnicity as white;
- 10 per cent made up each of the groups who were of mixed race, Asian or British Asian and ‘Chinese or other ethnic origin’;
- 5 per cent said they were ‘Black or British Black’.

Key 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 Relevance (The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs for both coverage and content); Accuracy (The closeness between an estimated result and the (unknown) true value); Timeliness and Punctuality (Timeliness refers to the lapse of time between publication and the period to which the data refer. Punctuality refers to the time lag between the actual and planned dates of publication); 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. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice); Comparability and Coherence (The degree to which data can be compared over time and domain / 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 National Assembly for Wales
- 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.

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 2017/18 academic year (31 July 2018), and are correct as at 1 August 2018.

Timeliness and punctuality

This release has met the previously announced date of publication.

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.

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 on [StatsWales](#).

Limitations

- When the WGLG was introduced for Further Education institutions, the grant was available to students aged 18 and over at the start of the academic year. From 2006/07, the student eligibility criterion for WGLGs for Further Education institutions was changed to students aged 19 and over at the start of the academic year, due to the extension of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) to include 18 year olds. As a result, figures on applications and awards for students at Further Education institutions for years from 2006/07 onwards will be lower than for previous years and are not directly comparable. Further information on EMAs was published in September in the statistical first release '[Education Maintenance Allowances Awarded in Wales, 2017/18](#)'.
- The data in this release presents information on applications by mode of study for students in Further Education. Prior to 2006/07 there were Assembly Learning Grants awarded to students entering Higher Education so releases at that time would have included such information.
- To link to information on the HE scheme that exists now, the considerable 'WGLG HE' student support, see '[Further Details](#)'.

Related articles

Information on Educational Maintenance Allowances (for younger FE learners) was published in September 2018 in the statistical first release: [‘Education Maintenance Allowances Awarded in Wales, 2017/18’](#).

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 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.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being 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 Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being 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 well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Further details

The document is available at:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/assembly-learning-grants-awarded/?lang=en>

Tables associated with this bulletin containing a greater amount of detail are available on [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

October 2019

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to post16ed.stats@gov.wales.

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