

## STUDENT LIVING COST SUPPORT CUT TO LOWEST LEVEL IN SEVEN YEARS, SAYS IFS

A new report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies has revealed that student living cost support has fallen to a historic low.

Students from the poorest families living away from home during term time and studying outside London will be able to borrow £9,706 in the 2022/23 academic year. In real terms, this will be the lowest level in seven years.



While the IFS has called on the government to 'urgently review how maintenance entitlements are determined', NUS UK President Larissa Kennedy said: 'We're in a student cost of living crisis, which is pushing us to the brink.'

'We're hearing from students who are working 3 jobs to make ends meet, who can't even afford to travel to their university library, and who are cutting back on cooking food due to spiralling energy costs.'

'Our research has shown that thousands more are relying on foodbanks and buy now, pay later loans from companies like Klarna.'

'Rather than pressing ahead with plans which seek to gatekeep education from marginalised communities and

will cost current students and graduates £35 billion over the next five years. The Government needs to listen to students, unfreeze the parental earnings threshold and dramatically increase the level of maintenance support on offer for all students.'

'Students aren't cash cows. We are at breaking point, and we're desperate for something radically different.'

A spokesperson for the BDA Benevolent Fund, who have previously highlighted the financial plight facing students, said: 'The BDA Benevolent Fund has seen a huge increase in requests from dental students seeking support over the last two years. Students often cite the effect of the pandemic; the inability to work part time and the increased in costs of living as to why they aren't able to pay for their essential expenditures such as rent, food, travel and utility bills.'

'Whilst we will continue to be there to support those who need us due to hardship, we welcome changes to the student finance system and NHS bursary funding which mean that the majority of dental students aren't let down by the systems in place creating unnecessary stress and anxiety.'

Paul Blaylock, Chair of the BDA Student Committee, added: 'Dental students have faced eye-watering debts upon graduation for many years.'

'In many areas the maintenance loans available simply do not cover the cost of living, pushing students to seek out other, more expensive forms of credit. Dental students are racking up huge debts to barely scrape by.'

'While it is welcome that the dental students can still receive an NHS bursary, it is completely wrong that it actually means dental students are worse off in terms of meeting their living costs for that year through receiving that grant than they would be if they took out a loan.'

'The BDA has recently undertaken research to quantify the full burden of debt on dental students and will share our stark findings shortly.'