# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Student support for higher education students in the 2023/24 academic year** |
| **DATE**  | **19 January 2023** |
| **BY** | **Jeremy Miles MS, Minister for Education and Welsh Language** |

During a cost of living crisis, it is more important than ever that every measure is taken to ensure that everyone, no matter their background, can access higher education.

In 2018, the Welsh Government introduced a progressive and equitable student support system that is unique in Europe for financing full and part time undergraduates and postgraduates. This system is based on supporting students with the cost of living while they study.

We have taken the decision that the rate of support for students is linked to the value of the National Living Wage – this will increase substantially in the 2023-24 financial year. Despite continuing budget pressures, I can confirm today that we have ensured that the value of support is increased accordingly at this time of exceptional cost-of-living pressures.

This means that the rate of maintenance support paid to full and part-time higher education students from Wales will increase by 9.4% for the 2023/24 academic year, subject to regulations being made early in February. In contrast, the UK Government has announced a 2.8% increase for students ordinarily resident in England.

Our financial support for students has increased steadily in recent years. This increase will apply to full and part-time students who began a course on or after 1 August 2018.

The Welsh Government continues to provide the most progressive student finance system in the UK. Welsh undergraduate students have less to repay on average than their English peers as they can access our generous living costs package of grants and loans. The highest level of grant support is given to those students most in need. A substantial part-time student support package is available, enabling students of all backgrounds to undertake part-time study.

Living costs should never be a barrier to studying at university. The increase in support I am announcing today will ensure that students from all backgrounds are able to access higher education.