

CONSULTATION ON CROSS BORDER STUDENT FLOW: HIGHER EDUCATION TUITION FEES (reply date 30 May 2005)**Background**

Scottish ministers are committed to ensuring that Scottish (domiciled) students are not disadvantaged as results of the introduction of variable tuition fees in the rest of the United Kingdom in 2006 onwards. The main concern is that changes being made to tuition fees elsewhere in the UK pose a risk of reducing opportunities for Scottish students. The increases in fees in England could encourage substantially more students from the rest of the UK coming to study in Scotland potentially displacing Scottish applicants. This may be particularly acute in the demand for places in Scotland's medical schools.

Consultation

In carrying out the above consultation the Scottish Executive have asked interested bodies such as West Lothian Council to consider the following questions

General Fees

Do you agree with the principle on which the general fee should be based?

West Lothian Council supports the view of ministers that fee level should be set a level, which will maintain the broad parity between the cost of studying in Scotland and England, and therefore main current levels of cross border flows.

Medical Fees

Do you agree with the principle of using tuition fee levels to protect the interests of Scottish domiciled students by setting the fee levels to protect the interests of Scottish domiciled students by setting fee levels for medicine that are broadly comparable with those set elsewhere in the UK?

West Lothian Council takes the view that medical tuition fees are set at a level which will maintain parity between the cost of studying medicine in Scotland and England and therefore allows students to make choices on the basis of academic merit than cost. However in setting revised fee levels ministers should also be aware that any fee increase runs counter to moves to widen the participation in medicine from lower socioeconomic groups. Any fees increases due by students should reflect current family circumstances.

Implications for FE

Do you agree that the Executive should retain current tuition fee levels for HNs?

West Lothian Council agrees with the Executive proposal that there is no need to alter the current level of tuition fees for HNC/HNDs in Scotland?

Transition Arrangements

Do you agree that gap year students should be treated as having entered HE in 2005 – 2006 i.e. prior to the planned changes taking effect?

West Lothian Council agrees that gap year students should be treated as having entered a Scottish HEI in the year in which they are accepted by that institution.

David Mclean 20 May 2005