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MONEY BOX LIVE

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LEWIS: Hello. As half a million students start leaping the final exam hurdles between them and university, we're devoting today's Money Box Live to student finance. For the first time, many who start this September will pay up to £9,000 a year for their tuition. The total debt on graduation could be £40,000 or more in many cases. But what does a debt like that really mean and how will it affect your life? The rules are different of course in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In parts of the UK fees are less, or zero, depending where you live and where you go to study. There are grants available - that can keep the costs down - and individual universities can also offer help with fees or living expenses. One thing is for sure - it's all highly complicated and potentially expensive; so much so that some are considering opting out of it altogether and studying elsewhere in Europe where costs can be a lot lower. So whether you're a worried parent or a student at home studying for those vital exams, you can ask your question by calling Money Box Live now: 03700 100 444. With me today to answer them, David Malcolm who's Head of Social Policy at the National Union of Students. Claire Evenden is a Senior Student Finance Adviser at the University of Greenwich and from the National Association of Student Money Advisers (better known as NASMA). And in Edinburgh we have Miriam Craven who's a Manager with the Student Awards Agency for Scotland. And we're going to start with a couple of students. Martha is from Harrogate Grammar where Money Box Live came from not that long ago. Martha, your question?

MARTHA: Yes hello. I just wanted to ask. The money that you can get for a student

loan to live on, does that come directly into the student's account or does it go into the university? And how often do you get the payments? Do they come each month or ...

LEWIS: And this is for your living costs - your rent, your going out money (if I can put it like that) as well?

MARTHA: Yes. (*laughter*)

LEWIS: I'm sure you wouldn't spend it on that.

MARTHA: No, not at all.

LEWIS: Claire Evenden?

EVENDEN: Hello Martha.

MARTHA: Hello.

EVENDEN: The student loans and maintenance grant that you're entitled to for your living costs will be paid directly into your own bank account, and it'll be paid into the account details that you provide to Student Finance England on your application form. The frequency is normally termly, so you'll get the first payment in September when you register with your university. They will confirm your attendance. You'll then get a second payment in January and a third payment in April.

MARTHA: Oh okay.

LEWIS: That's if all goes well of course, which it doesn't always, does it?

EVENDEN: (*over*) Absolutely ... no. (*Martha laughs*)

LEWIS: Just let me bring in Miriam Craven in Scotland. Is it the same in Scotland? I

know Martha's in England, but is it the same in Scotland?

CRAVEN: Hi Martha.

MARTHA: Hello.

CRAVEN: No, I'm afraid it's slightly different in Scotland.

MARTHA: Oh right.

CRAVEN: The way we work it is that the student will get the money paid into their bank account on a monthly basis. They get a double instalment on the first month and then they get a single payment on the 7th of every month after that.

MARTHA: So what happens if you're an English student like myself wanting to go to university in Scotland, to Edinburgh in fact?

EVEN DEN: Well your money ...

CRAVEN: (*simultaneously*) Because you ... Sorry.

EVEN DEN: Sorry.

LEWIS: Go on, Miriam.

CRAVEN: Because you are actually applying to Student Finance England for your funding, you'll be paid in the same way. You'll be paid termly ...

MARTHA: Okay.

CRAVEN: ... because Scottish students will be applying to ourselves at SAS and

that's why we have slightly different payment rules for them.

MARTHA: Okay.

LEWIS: Okay, well thanks very much for that question, Martha. And I think one of your colleagues there, Sean, has also got a question from Harrogate Grammar. Sean?

SEAN: Hi there. I'm dyslexic and I've been having some trouble applying for the disabled students' allowance. What accreditation do I actually need, or diagnosis, to get the allowance? And what does that cover when I'm at uni?

LEWIS: David Malcolm, just tell us first what this allowance is and how much it is and how you apply.

MALCOLM: The disabled students' allowance is a payment that's available to students with a declared disability to help pay for equipment or personal support or other help that they might need in order to access education, and ordinarily the money is paid direct to suppliers of that equipment or that extra support. In your case, Sean, in order to evidence that you've got dyslexia, you'll need basically a medical report of some sort, usually an educational psychologist's report which you'll need to provide to the Student Loans Company, Student Finance England, in order for them to basically acknowledge that you've got that disability and then get you set up with an assessment to then work out what it is they supply you with.

LEWIS: If you're dyslexic though, as Sean is - I imagine, Sean, you've had a lot of problems sorting all that out?

SEAN: Yes well something like that can cost as much as £400, an assessment like that, so surely it's defeating the point if you have to pay that much?

EVENDEN: If you speak to your disability and dyslexia team at your university, there is a fund called the Access to Learning Fund that can assist you with the cost of

the educational psychologist assessment. In some instances you can apply for some support from your institution before you start to get the assessment done early. Other universities don't allow you to do that and you might need to wait until you're a registered student, then have the test. Then they will be able to assist you in making your application to DSA after.

SEAN: Okay, thank you.

LEWIS: Does that help, Sean? I hope it does.

SEAN: Yes, that's great..

LEWIS: And just very briefly, Miriam, as we're trying to be pan-UK here, what are the rules in Scotland? Do you have a similar disability payment?

CRAVEN: Yeah, very similar. The student would get an educational psychologist's report. Then from that we would have the needs assessment, which tells us what the student needs. And, as Sean said, there is a cost to that, but students can apply to the discretionary funds at the universities in order to get that reimbursed.

LEWIS: Okay, thanks very much. And we've had the point made already about people who live in one country and then go to study in another. And there is a rather strange position, isn't there David Malcolm, for people who go to Scotland where there are no fees? The fees are paid by the state in Scotland - tuition fees, I should say - but if you come from England, Wales or Northern Ireland, you have to pay them.

MALCOLM: That's right.

LEWIS: You have to pay what you pay in your own country.

MALCOLM: Indeed. In Scotland fees can be charged to students from the rest of the UK up to £9,000, as in the case elsewhere, but Scottish students who study in

Scotland will have their fees paid for them. And a similar (although not quite as generous) arrangement in Wales and Northern Ireland for students who are from Wales and from Northern Ireland.

LEWIS: So it depends where you live. And I must say, on the website of NASMA, the student money advice service, there is a table and there'll be a link on our website. It still is remarkably complicated, but it shows you where you reside and where you study in each of the four UK countries and what you will or what you can get. It really is ridiculously complicated. And then of course there's this other confusion, summed up I think by Sarah who's emailed us. Her son is hoping to go to university. She lives in England. He wants to go to Scotland. And she says, 'And can it be true that if he were the son of my friend who lives in France, he'd get free tuition in Scotland?'
Miriam Craven?

CRAVEN: Yes, that is the case. Our funding is available for both Scottish and EU nationals.

LEWIS: But not English, Welsh or Northern Irish nationals. Isn't there a court case about this? It does seem unfair.

CRAVEN: No, there isn't. It's to do with the fact that EU law works differently to our own. So you have the situation where the devolved country (ourselves in Scotland) are allowed to set our own regulations; but then whatever regulations we set for our own home students, we have to give the same funding to EU nationals or the family member of an EU national.

LEWIS: Okay. And I'm going to read out another email from Monique, and we've had another one from David who is Austrian. His children hold Austrian birth certificates, though they live in the UK and are being educated here. And Monique has children who have dual English and German nationality. We always get the awkward cases on Money Box, don't we? What would their position be? Claire, what's your understanding of it? If you have dual nationality and you go to a Scottish university, what happens?

EVEN DEN: As far as I can understand, if they've got a German passport, so they are an EU national, then they will be able to get funding in Scotland as an EU national and are not required to have met the residency criteria within England. They can have lived in Germany.

LEWIS: And can they then, as Monique's children are both German and English, can they then apply to the English student finance organisation to get their living costs?

EVEN DEN: Apparently yes. So if they've lived in England for 3 years. They would need to meet the residency for Student Finance England, but they can apply for just the maintenance living costs from Student Finance England and apply for the tuition fee cost from Scotland.

LEWIS: Right. Well it is very complicated, but thanks to all of you who we've spoken to so far and those emails. I once joked on this programme that nowadays you need a degree in student finance, and I think actually David you said there was one. *(laughing)* I'm not in the least surprised. Anyway, thank you for all that. I hope that's clarified it. Things are complicated. If you don't have time to write it all down or you think my goodness, did I understand that, you can listen to the programme immediately afterwards, there'll be a podcast, and in a couple of days there'll be a transcript so you can read all the details in that. That's on our website: bbc.co.uk/moneybox. And now we're going to Ann who's in London. Ann, your question?

ANN: Oh good afternoon. Could you please tell me exactly what the interest rate is on the student loans from 2012 and exactly when it starts?

LEWIS: Right, I think David Malcolm is one of our experts on that.

MALCOLM: Assuming you mean for someone who starts their course in 2012, the interest rate would be based on the Retail Price Index, measured in March of this year and applied from September; and then once you've got the loan and you're studying, it'll be that figure plus 3%. So RPI in March was 3.6%. Therefore people start out

paying 6.6% on the student loan.

LEWIS: So just let me interrupt you there because in the past student loans, the interest was the rate of inflation - or roughly, I mean in theory - but in future it's going to be the rate of inflation plus 3% ...

MALCOLM: (*over*) At least whilst you're studying.

LEWIS: So that's the real rate of interest, isn't it?

MALCOLM: Yes, a more commercial rate. But once you've graduated or otherwise left the course, it will depend on your income at that stage whether you'll be paying RPI - the 3.6% in this case - or RPI plus 3%. And if you're earning between £21,000 and £41,000, after your course you'll pay an interest rate of somewhere between those two points, and then only if you're earning over £41,000 will you start to pay RPI plus 3.

LEWIS: Right.

ANN: And is that going to be ... Because that's incredibly complicated, isn't it, and no other loan works like that. I appreciate that the current student loan varies from year to year. So when is that 6.6 applied because a lot of people, a lot of people of my acquaintance think that the student loan is actually interest free because it's incredibly difficult to access this information. So when does it start? My understanding is it will start on the day that first amount of money hits your bank account.

EVENDEN: It does, yes. You start paying ...

ANN: (*over*) Yes. So it's a compound interest of 6.6% for the first year, and then for the second year it's again compound interest of 6.6% or it will be based on the RPI of March of the following year then? Is that we're saying?

EVEN DEN: Absolutely - yes, yes.

ANN: So every year the interest rate will change and nobody will have any control over that.

EVEN DEN: *(over)* The interest rate is charged, it would only be charged on the amount that was paid at that time. So in September when you get your first maintenance loan payment and your first 25% of tuition fee loan payment is made to you and to the institution, you will start paying interest at that rate on that element of the loan from that point.

LEWIS: So while you're at university it's Retail Price Index plus 3%. And then when you graduate or the spring after you graduate, I think it then reverts to this complicated system where it's Retail Prices Index plus nothing, 1, 2 or 3% depending on what you're earning afterwards. So you're quite right, Ann, it is very complicated - ridiculously so in some people's view - and that's how it is.

CRAVEN: *(over)* Could I just interrupt there, Paul?

LEWIS: Miriam, yes.

CRAVEN: It's a different situation in Scotland.

LEWIS: Oh thank goodness. Is it simpler?

CRAVEN: Well slightly. We haven't brought in any changes, so our interest rate is staying linked to the rate of inflation, so it's staying at the 1.5 that it currently is and it gets looked at once a year. Also interest rate is applied from once you first take out your student loan in exactly the same way. Our repayment works that you must be earning over £15,795 to enter repayment, and then it's taken away from source, from employment in the same way as it is in the rest of the UK. And the student has 35 years to pay off their student loan living in Scotland.

LEWIS: Okay, so that is slightly different. We haven't actually gone into repayments yet. Perhaps we should do that in a moment. And you're saying 1.5%. Now that's not the rate of inflation. That's because it cannot be more than 1% plus bank rate. Is that right?

CRAVEN: Yeah, exactly.

LEWIS: And that's 1 plus 0.5%, 1.5%. So that's a very good rate of interest. Claire?

EVENDEN: Yeah before we move on there, just because a lot of people do think about the interest being interest free and things like that, it's a similar situation where students worry that they've applied to student finance, then changed their minds and don't come to university and they think they're still liable for interest even though they've not done anything. That's not the case. If you never register and you never get a loan payment made, then you never owe interest on it.

LEWIS: Right, okay. Okay, so lots to find out. And we're going to take Helen next who's in Derbyshire. Helen, your question?

HELEN: Hello there. My daughter graduated last year. Is it worth repaying off the student loan now (if able) as interest is accruing, or would it be better not to as it will be written off eventually anyway? And if so, when would that be?

LEWIS: Right, now your daughter's just finished university, so she's under what I can call the old scheme ...

HELEN: (*over*) Yeah, the old scheme.

LEWIS: ... which is the one that doesn't start this September. Let me just bring John in who's in Woking, who I think has a granddaughter who's going to university, so we can compare the two schemes. John?

JOHN: Yes, hope so. My granddaughter hopes to start at university in September and because she's going to study veterinary science, we're speaking about 6 years, not 3. Because of my background, I hate the idea of indebtedness, and I've rearranged the family finances so that she can pay in advance or she doesn't need to take out the loan. She can avoid that necessity, and our intention was that that is what she should do. But advice from other quarters says that well it may be foolish to pay up immediately when the system is such that after you've graduated, you have to get into the position where you're earning a decent income before you start paying back; and indeed you may find (if you never get into a well paid job) after 30 years, the whole thing is wiped out anyway. So my question is: is it wise to pay up on the spot if you're in a position to do that, or would it be better to wait and see and repay later when of course the interest we've been talking about would increase the sum that you owe very considerably in the long-run?

LEWIS: Indeed. Okay, John.

JOHN: What should we do?

LEWIS: Okay, we'll get some advice on that. So let's start with John because John's talking about the new system and that's the one people will be least familiar with. And David Malcolm, my understanding is that even the Government admits that probably half of all new graduates won't pay off their loan in full, so some of it will be written off. Just explain the rules to us. What happens when you've graduated in 3 - or in his granddaughter's case 6 years time. What happens?

MALCOLM: Well basically once your granddaughter would graduate, the loan repayments would start from the following April if she was earning over £21,000 of income, although it probably will be a slightly higher amount by that point because the threshold will rise with average earnings every year from 2016. And she will then start to repay and, as you say, if she still has any balance outstanding 30 years after, at that point - 30 years after the April following her graduation or otherwise leaving the course - whatever's left over will be wiped out. As to whether it's of financial benefit to you, certainly the Government wants families to be in a position where they don't

have to pay any money upfront and that's why they have the system that they do. And it's one of those things where it's placing a bet in effect about what the future income will be and whether you actually save money in the long-run on what you've put out. And so it's one of those things that's difficult to say. Veterinary science, perhaps it's something that you'll get a higher income and therefore it might be worthwhile, but it's difficult to know.

LEWIS: Yes and Claire Evenden, the repayment is 9% of your income over £21,000.

EVENDEN: It is.

LEWIS: So it's like a graduate tax in a way, isn't it?

EVENDEN: It is.

LEWIS: And it's deducted at source from your pay. You never see it. It just disappears.

EVENDEN: Absolutely. Yeah and as your income goes higher and above the £21,000, you start making repayments; but if it goes below the £21,000, your payments would stop.

LEWIS: So if you lose your job or you stay off work to have a baby or whatever, have a sabbatical.

EVENDEN: Absolutely, anything - work part-time. As long as you're earning less than £21,000, you don't make any repayments at all for that period until you know your salary goes back above £21,000. It's definitely up to the individuals really to decide whether or not it is a good idea, so to say why is difficult really.

LEWIS: You see John, I'm just thinking that if your granddaughter's doing veterinary science, she's going to be there for 5 years you say ...

JOHN: Six.

LEWIS: ... or 6 years. Six nines are 54 and it'll be a bit more than that because that will go up with inflation.

EVENDEN: Yes.

LEWIS: If you've got that sort of money, I just wonder if just putting it in a bank account and letting her draw on it as she wants later on might be a better idea.

JOHN: Well that's what we're doing. I mean it's currently invested in unit linked savings certificates. So you know the RPI side of it is covered, but there's the 3%, of course, going on.

LEWIS: Yes. So I think you know that might hedge your bets in a way because if you pay it all and then your granddaughter - I mean you'll probably never know this - but doesn't really work all her life (*John laughs*) ...

EVENDEN: There's no penalties to pay in one go afterwards either currently ...

LEWIS: (*over*) No. There were going to be, but they abandoned them.

EVENDEN: There was going to be.

MALCOLM: And it may be worth waiting to see because obviously veterinary science will be quite an intensive course, so if your granddaughter can't work part-time and so on, she may need help with costs.

JOHN: I thought ...

LEWIS: (*over*) I must move on, John, because we've got a lot of callers waiting if you don't mind, but thanks very much for your call. I'm going to go back to Helen

now. Now Helen, your daughter has finished university. She's under the old system.

HELEN: Yes.

LEWIS: I'm going to bring in Miriam Craven here because the old system (as we call it Miriam) is the current system in Scotland, and I think it's very similar. What's your advice about paying off an existing student debt?

CRAVEN: I think again it comes down to a personal individual's choice as to whether they decide to make the payment in full. You can make additional payments at any stage as well, so you can have the monthly amount coming out through your wages, but then phone up and maybe make an additional payment once a year or whenever you feel that you have extra money, so you can pay it off quicker that way. Some people opt just to pay the interest in addition every year or some other people just opt to let it just come off monthly till the term ends. Or if you want, you could pay it off in full, but the choice really comes down to the student and the parent.

LEWIS: And of course Helen, if you're still there ...

HELEN: Yes I am, yes.

LEWIS: ... your daughter's loan, the interest on it is very low. It's 1.5% at the moment, and again if you put the money in the bank you could get double that or before tax anyway.

EVEN DEN: Yeah. And I think with young people that have just graduated, it's the property market; trying to get started to find somewhere to live is really a challenge. It might be worthwhile considering if it's a better option to use that lump sum if you've got it available, to put a deposit on a property or something like that, and pay the loan through your income in the usual way.

LEWIS: Yes, so a better use of the money perhaps. People don't like these loans but,

as I said earlier, in some ways they're better looked on as a graduate tax because it's taken out of your earnings, you never see the money ...

EVEN DEN: (*over*) They are, absolutely.

LEWIS: ... it doesn't count on your credit record, does it David?

MALCOLM: No, no.

LEWIS: That's right, isn't it?

MALCOLM: Well in very, very limited circumstances.

LEWIS: Yeah, but normally. And it doesn't affect your ability to borrow except that your income will be slightly lower, so a mortgage application would have to take it into account.

MALCOLM: Your monthly income would be that little bit lower, but it wouldn't take into account the balance of the loan.

LEWIS: Yeah, so I think ...

CRAVEN: (*over*) And I think ... Sorry.

LEWIS: Yes Miriam, go ahead.

CRAVEN: If you look at the fact that repayment is based on 9% of your annual income over £15,795, for example in Scotland, that means if that student say graduates and is earning £17,000 - or just around £18,000 is probably a better example - they're just paying back £15 a month. So if you think of that in terms of you know a month to month basis, it's not having a massive impact. Now yes as the salary goes up, the repayments will go up, so at about £30,000 you are possibly

looking at more like £100, £115 a month, so that is different. But I think it is manageable in terms of what the student is taking in based on that salary ...

EVENDEN: Helen's daughter ...

CRAVEN: (*over*) ... for a graduate, sorry.

EVENDEN: Helen's daughter also would be paying the loan repayments on earnings over £15,000 at the moment, but that is due to go up, so that's something she should consider as well.

LEWIS: Yes. And I'll just mention because Victoria's also emailed us and she's talking about keeping her earnings below £21,000, but Victoria's also a graduate so in her case it'll be ...

EVENDEN: (*over*) It's £15,000.

LEWIS: ... £15,000 rather than £21,000. The £21,000 is for people going to university this year, so it won't actually affect anybody till they graduate in 3 years, or in some cases, as we've heard, 6 years time. Okay, thank you very much for those calls Helen and David. I hope we've sorted those out for you. And we're going now to talk to Nick in London. Nick, your question?

NICK: Oh good afternoon, Martin. My daughter is lucky enough to be bilingual and she's also got dual nationality. My question is a double question: depending on her results (and she's got about a year to run yet) would she be eligible for a student loan for university a) in the EC and b) outside the EC?

LEWIS: Okay. And we've also got Mary who's also in London ringing about her daughter who's in a very similar position. Mary?

MARY: Yes hi there, good afternoon. Yes, we just heard this morning that our

daughter got into Eindhoven Design Academy, which is fantastic. A big long shot ...

LEWIS: In the Netherlands?

MARY: Yes, in the Netherlands. And suddenly thought right, okay, now what do we do, how do we pay for this and how does she pay for it?

LEWIS: Okay, well apart from the panel here, we also have our phone-a-friend. We have Mark Huntington who's a founder of A Star Future, which is an advisory service for British students looking to study abroad. He's on the telephone. Mark, can I just bring you in here first? Grants for study in Europe and all the arrangements you have to make.

HUNTINGTON: Right, well coming back to Nick's individual situation. One thing is absolutely clear - it doesn't matter what nationality we're talking about, it doesn't matter how bilingual his daughter is, the second she leaves the UK she won't be accessing British student finance unless she does it as an Erasmus exchange as part of a British university degree. Now that doesn't mean that you won't be eligible for a certain amount of support - it depends on which country you go to. And he didn't say which nationality he was talking about, but it is literally different for every country in Europe.

LEWIS: Let's ask. Nick, where does your daughter want to go to university or don't you know yet?

NICK: Well she doesn't really know yet, but ...

LEWIS: Okay, well let's ask Mark where would be best.

HUNTINGTON: Well in certain countries in Europe if you have dual nationality, then when you get there you're actually treated exactly the same way as a local. So that means if you were going to go to a country like Denmark for example, you would

actually be eligible for very, very generous student finance in terms of grants more specifically than loans. In other countries, student finance is much more means tested; so depending on the family income, then you might find you were getting a certain level of support or not. But it really does vary a lot by country.

LEWIS: Right.

EVENDEN: It's also important to remember that the subjects of the courses offered in English or in another language are quite limited depending on which country you go to. Not all countries run all programmes.

LEWIS: No, but there are courses Mark, aren't there, in English in some European countries?

HUNTINGTON: There are an increasing number. I mean I'm basically at the University of Groningen today in the Netherlands and they've got nine individual bachelors right now and will have probably another three by 2013 in some science subjects as well. There are an increasing number. If you're studying in the local language, then obviously you've got access to everything. So in the case of Nick's daughter, if she was going to go and study in German in Germany, then there are literally thousands to choose from. But you're absolutely right - if you're looking at English courses in Europe right now, at bachelors level, then there are probably round about 1100 to 1200 courses available right now.

LEWIS: And apart from the attraction perhaps of studying in Europe, is it also because it's cheaper; there are no £9,000 tuition fees as there are in parts of the UK?

HUNTINGTON: Well I think this is again a very important thing to look at from a financial point of view and again you know with some of the comments that have been made earlier about paying for education upfront, investing in people's education. One thing you've got to bear in mind is that while say the overall price of a Dutch 3 year degree, I would estimate as being somewhere in the region of £25,000 as opposed to currently, what, £50,000 in the UK, the big difference is usually you're

going to have to find that cash upfront or you're at least going to have to be able to finance a little bit of it. Although the Netherlands is not perhaps the best example of that because coming onto Mary's situation, if her son or daughter has now been accepted to go to Eindhoven Design Academy, then she should very simply be able to apply for what's called collegegeldkrediet, which effectively is a tuition fee loan, and that is available to anybody with an EU passport. So ...

LEWIS: (*over*) Okay, I'm going to interrupt you there, Mark, if you don't mind. I want to squeeze one more question in. But thanks for all that and there's more information on your website, A Star Future, I'm sure. Thank you Mary and Nick. I hope that answered your answers. Alice, you're our last caller, but please be brief because we've got to be off air in a minute and a half.

ALICE: Okay. I'm in Year 13 and I've applied for deferred entry for university. And while I had loads of help with UCAS, no-one was able to tell me about whether I needed to apply this year for finance or next year, in my year of entry; and because I'm going to South Africa next year, I don't know whether (if I do have to apply next year) whether I'd be able to do it or whether someone in the UK would have to do it for me.

EVENDEN: You can do it from South Africa yourself. You don't need to apply this year if you're not going this September. You would wait until next year and apply. The deadline for continuing ... sorry for new students, which you'll be classed as, is generally the end of May, but you can fill in the application form anyway because it's an online application.

LEWIS: Okay. And can I just ask Miriam in Scotland very briefly, is it the same in Scotland if people were having a gap year?

CRAVEN: Yes, it would be the same - you'd wait until the year that you're actually planning to start your course. And we open for applications in April, and to get your funding ready for the start of your course you need to apply by 30th June.

LEWIS: Okay. Alice, thanks for your question. That's brought us to a nice conclusion. That is all we have time for. My thanks to Miriam Craven from Student Awards Agency for Scotland; Claire Evenden of NASMA; David Malcolm from the National Union of Students; and our phone-a-friend, Mark Huntington of A Star Future. Thanks to you for all your calls and emails. More about student finance on our website: bbc.co.uk/moneybox. You can sign up for the podcast and read a transcript of all this in a few days time. I'm back at noon on Saturday with Money Box and I'm here to take more of your calls on Money Box live next Wednesday afternoon.

Subject: paying for care.