

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

13th July 2018

Dear Consultant,

RE: STUDENT FINANCE.

Thank you for contacting me recently about student finance; your comments upon which I read with great interest.

Participation in higher education has increased since 2010 and I am encouraged that the cap on student numbers has been removed, enabling thousands more students to benefit from a higher education. I also welcome the fact that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are going to university in record numbers.

Higher education must remain financially sustainable. Graduates generally earn more than people without a degree, so it is right they contribute to the costs of studying when they are earning as graduates. From the 2016-17 academic year, maintenance grants were replaced by maintenance loans for new students from England.

At the same time, the overall maintenance support available to low income students has increased to £8,430 a year for those who started courses in 2017/18, who live away from home and study outside London. This means all new students, irrespective of income, have access to more cash-in-hand than ever before to help meet living costs.

There is a progressive repayments system for student loans, and graduates only start repaying them when they earn over the repayment threshold. Repayments cease if earnings fall below the repayment threshold. I am encouraged by the Prime Minister's decision to raise this threshold to £25,000 and allow this to be adjusted in line with average earnings on an annual basis. Grants for students who are carers, disabled, or have dependants, will continue to be available.

I am encouraged that while the Department for Education looks at the system again, tuition fees will be frozen at their current level and the planned rise with inflation will be scrapped.

These changes will help ensure our world class universities are sustainably funded, enable more people to benefit from a higher education, and uphold the principle that students do not need to pay up front for their tuition.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes

Tom

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE