

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

22 JANUARY 2004

NOTICE OF MOTION

STUDENT TOP-UP FEES

This Council notes that according to statistics from the National Union of Students

- The average cost of studying an undergraduate degree is now nearly £20,000.
- Increased studying and living costs in England and Wales has caused student debt to rise by 31% since 2002.
- In 1992 only a third of students owed money. Now 90% are in debt.
- Since the elimination of grants, student debt has increased by 544% and now totals over £5 billion.
- Parents are now paying more than £500 million towards university costs every year.
- Only 17% of university students are from working class backgrounds (a decrease of 3% in less than two years).
- Applications to medical school from students in the poorest social groups have decreased by 50% in five years..
- Two thirds of 2003 graduates moved back in with their parents to save money and pay off their debt.
- 57% of students who work do so to cover the cost of basic essentials, 11% are working to cover tuition fees
- 40% of all students now work while studying for an average of 13 hours a week.
- More than half of lower income students work for an average of 15 hours a week. Nearly half of them are concerned that working is adversely affecting their studies.
- Poorer students owe 15% more on graduation.
- Three quarters of working class young people who decide not to pursue higher education cite lack of money and fear of debt as the main reason.
- 83% of school leavers and further education students worry about the debts they will build up while at university. 75% believe that if student loans were abolished and grants brought back, more people would go to university.

Brighton and Hove is a university city, with approximately 32,000 students enrolled in higher education. The NUS estimate that students in the South East already face a shortfall of £4938 per annum in average expenses against potential income (including Student Loans). If Top up Fees are introduced, we could see students graduating with as much as £33,708 of debt by 2010

This Council believes:

- That 'Top up Fees' would provide a further disincentive to younger people from poorer backgrounds to go to university, thereby decreasing their university participation further
- The introduction of Top up Fees would increase the burden of debt on thousands of students.
- A university education should be accessible to those who have the ability to study, without choice restricted by ability to pay

This Council resolves:

- To publicly support the University of Sussex Students Union and the National Union of Students in their campaign against Top up Fees
- To instruct the Chief Executive to write a letter to Education Secretary Charles Clarke expressing this Council's opposition to top up fees on behalf of City Council
- To request our local MP's to oppose top up fees and lobby Ministers to that effect

Proposed by Councillor Keith Taylor

Seconded by Councillor Bill Randall