



**Association of Directors of Adult Social Services response to the consultation on
“Reforming the Social Work bursary”.**

Background:

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) represents Directors of Adult Social Services in Local Authorities in England. As well as having statutory responsibilities for the commissioning and provision of social care, ADASS members often also share a number of responsibilities for the commissioning and provision of housing, leisure, library, culture, arts, community services and increasingly, Children’s Social Care within their Local Authority within their Councils.

ADASS recognises that student bursaries have proved to be a critical element in taking forward the vital and valued contribution that social workers make towards the reforms of social care. However ADASS appreciates that in the current economic situation there is a need to review their use and welcomes this consultation.

Response

ADASS endorses Option 1 (Introduction of a means-tested Undergraduate and Postgraduate Bursary with a cap on the number of students who receive a bursary). **ADASS Comment:** The offer of some support is better than no support, so means testing is the better compromise. For students, this option should have a disproportionate benefit on their actual disposable income, even if it's only a fraction of their total means.

Of the other options ADASS comments in descending order of preference:

- **Option 3** (Retain undergraduate bursary from the second year and postgraduate scheme remains as now with a cap on the number of students who receive a bursary). **ADASS Comment:** Deferring a bursary to year two detracts enormously from its immediacy as an incentive.
- **Option 2** (Retain the postgraduate bursary only with a cap on the number of students who receive a bursary). **ADASS Comment:** The availability of a bursary is more likely to be an incentive for undergraduates as opposed for post-graduates, who may have better incomes on average.
- **Option 5** (Create a new scheme based on successful completion of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment). **ADASS Comment:** Although this option retains the bursary in some form, it is not clear how such an option would incentivise students 3-4 years earlier, and if paid up front what would be the arrangements to seek repayment if the student did not successfully completed the ASYE?
- **Option 4.** (End bursary completely to reinvest in other social work training). **ADASS Comment:** Stopping the bursary is entirely inconsistent with the ambitions of the Social Work Reform Board to enhance the profession and encourage graduate entrants.

**ADASS Workforce Development Policy Network
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