

Tuition fees divide changes the way students in Scotland and England view their education



Report says working-class students in England are 'resigned to debt'

JAMIE MERRILL | Wednesday 16 September 2015

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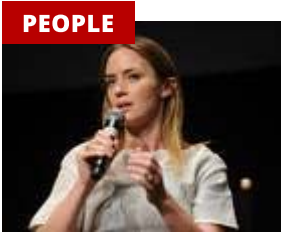
The tuition fees divide between English and Scottish students has left a generation young people north and south of the border with radically different ideas of who should pay for education, a new report has found.

While students in England have been increasingly resigned to tuition fees and believe they are “investing” in their own education, students in Scotland, where there are no fees, are believe it is the duty of the state to pay for their education, the report found.

This comes amid increasing concerns from left-wing campaigners that students in England have a far too financial-orientated view of education. New Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn recently announced a £10bn scheme to scrap all fees.



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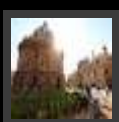
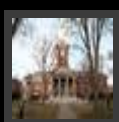
Students in England have had to pay some level of tuition fees since 1998 when they were introduced by Tony Blair's Labour Government, however students in Scotland currently pay no fees, prompting many to talk of a "tuition fee divide". The report found that many young people from working-class backgrounds in England are "resigned to student debt" and viewed it as a "normal part" of being a student.

The report, which is due to be presented at the British Education Research Association today, questioned 148 young people aged 14 to 19: 121 from across Scotland and 27 from the north of England.



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It found three quarters of Scottish teenagers considered higher education to be a basic right that should be paid for through general taxation, while in England, where students currently pay fees of £9,000 per year, the majority of respondents told

researchers that students “should contribute at least a proportion of teaching costs.”

Last week the SNP claimed that Westminster’s decision to cut £3bn from the teaching grant for universities could result in a £298m ‘knock-on’ cost for the Scottish budget.

The Scottish Government has protected tuition-fee free higher education, but the report shows that even among Scottish teenagers there were some concerns about the “sustainability of this policy” and how affordable it might be for Scotland in the long-term.