



Higher Education Policy Institute



Who cares? How postgraduate parents fall through the gap for government childcare grants, and how to fix it

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Executive summary

- The provision of support to subsidise childcare has been a salient policy topic in recent years. In 2023, the Conservative Government announced an expansion of support for workers, offering 15 free hours a week for two-year-olds. From September 2024, this expands to babies from nine months old, rising to 30 free hours of support from September 2025 for 38 weeks a year.
- Postgraduate students (on taught courses and researchers) who are parents have been forgotten. They are currently ineligible for the childcare grants available to undergraduate students and for the same free hours entitlements available for workers. This creates a barrier for those with childcare responsibilities who wish to undertake postgraduate studies.
- This lack of equitable provision disproportionately affects women and those from lower-income communities, hampering efforts to increase the diversity of the higher education and high-skilled workforce.
- Postgraduate studies are critical for the high-skilled jobs of the future, providing upskilling / reskilling opportunities for many career paths and delivering ambitions to be a science superpower.
- GW4 (an alliance of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter universities) is urging the Government to extend the current undergraduate Childcare Grant to postgraduate students as a welcome first step to improving access for the most economically disadvantaged, while considering how to extend the free-hours entitlements only available to workers to a critical part of the research workforce: those in postgraduate education.

Policy context

The provision of childcare has become an increasingly salient political issue. First announced in 2023, the Conservative Government pledged that working parents of two-year-olds would be able to access 15 hours of free childcare, extending to working parents of all children older than nine months from September 2024 and that, from September 2025, working parents of children under five will be entitled to 30 hours of free childcare per week.¹

The Conservative Party argued that this provision was integral to its plans to get parents back into work. Analysis by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) suggests these measures will add 110,000 new workers to the economy, an increase of 0.3 per cent in the size of the labour force, which will lead to an increase of 0.2 per cent in GDP.²

The proposals were not without criticism, with much of the debate on childcare focused on the practicalities of the expansion of free childcare places and the inability of providers within the childcare sector to recruit and retain staff.³ Indeed, an inquiry by the Public Accounts Committee concluded that the Government would need to find 40,000 extra staff and 84,500 more places by 2025 to meet its stated childcare entitlement targets in England.⁴

Meanwhile, as part of their manifesto preparation, the Labour Party announced plans to carry out a major review of the early years sector, chaired by Sir David Bell, former chief inspector of schools at Ofsted and former Permanent

Secretary at the Department for Education. The review, which was concluded at the announcement of the general election, potentially included looking at ways to widen 'childcare eligibility'.⁵

With an increased focus on childcare both in political debates and the media, there was also an increase in the importance that voters placed on childcare as a policy issue going into the 2024 General Election. A survey by the Early Education and Childcare Coalition found that nearly half (42 per cent) of UK voters said they believed that childcare and early education reform would be key in deciding who to vote for at the next general election.⁶ This was reinforced by research conducted by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), which found that swing voters were 1.3 times more likely to prioritise lowering the cost of childcare and boosting its availability than the average voter, with swing voters who are parents being 2.3 times more likely to do so.⁷

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that childcare featured prominently in the 2024 Election manifestos of several of the major political parties. The Conservative Party manifesto reaffirmed their previously announced plans on expanding support for workers.⁸ The Labour Party manifesto included a pledge for near-universal provision, creating more than 100,000 new nursery places for children from nine months old and plans to set up more than 3,300 new nurseries in existing primary schools in England.⁹ In their manifesto, the Liberal Democrats pledged to expand 'access to flexible affordable childcare'.¹⁰

However, despite the intensifying interest in childcare from policymakers and the public, there is an unacknowledged gap in provision for postgraduate students. Currently, those studying for Master's and PhDs are ineligible for childcare grants, which are in place for full-time undergraduates to help with childcare costs for children under 15-years-old. Many are also ineligible for the childcare benefits available for workers due to the pressures of juggling their educational commitments with working more than 16 hours a week. Furthermore, their funders often explicitly prohibit working this number of hours and sometimes undertaking additional paid work at all.

GW4 (an alliance of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter universities) is concerned that this lack of childcare support disincentivises parents from pursuing postgraduate qualifications. In addition to creating a barrier to undertaking further education and reskilling, this lack of provision also limits the equality and diversity of the higher education and high-skilled workforce and curtails the porosity between academia and business.

We are not alone in our concerns. Postgraduates originally raised the issue with us, and we welcomed the fact that other university alliances, such as Midlands Innovation and N8, as well as individual universities, have raised the issue with policymakers.¹¹ Industry stakeholders, including Universities UK, the Russell Group, the Academy of Medical Sciences and the British Academy, have also raised the issue.¹²

In their election campaign manifesto, the National Union of Students (NUS) highlighted the impact of the lack of affordable childcare on the ability to access higher and further education.¹³ Moreover, in the 2019 to 2024 Parliament an inquiry by the Education Select Committee found that lack of childcare provision 'appears directly counter to the Government's drive to support lifelong learning through reforms to post-18 education and training in the Lifelong Learning Bill' and made recommendations that the Government 'make parents in training or education eligible to claim the 30-hours entitlement'.¹⁴

The debate about childcare provision occurs within wider policy debates around diversity within higher and further education, and how best to encourage greater diversity among those pursuing a postgraduate degree.

In 2021, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy's (BEIS) *R&D People and Culture Strategy* set an ambitious target to increase the UK's research and development (R&D) sector by an additional 150,000 researchers by 2030. The strategy also set out to improve the quality of the UK's R&D workforce, and one of its core aims is to diversify the research ecosystem to ensure that people from all backgrounds are inspired into research careers.¹⁵

There is growing evidence that more diverse workplaces are more innovative, particularly in R&D careers.¹⁶ BEIS's *Strategy* highlights that the need for R&D workers is growing faster than the UK workforce as a whole. The Industrial Strategy Council warn there is a growing skills mismatch in the UK workforce. Factors such as increased automation and AI are displacing lower skilled jobs, yet increasing the demand for R&D and innovation-related skills needed to power the UK economy by 2030. This skills mismatch can act as a drag on economic growth and UK competitiveness, limiting the employment and earnings opportunities of individuals, and impacting a firm's performance, productivity and ability to innovate. With 80 per cent of the 2030 workforce already in employment, this need to reskill is becoming ever more urgent.¹⁷

On top of the economic benefits these high-skilled research careers would provide, there is also an economic benefit from a health perspective. As we will elaborate later, many of our interviewees reported the positive mental health

benefits that postgraduate studies brought them, as well as the negative mental health impacts the added pressures of a lack of childcare support brings. Good mental health among the workforce has demonstrable economic benefits, with a Centre for Mental Health / NHS Confederation Mental Health Network study calculating that improved mental health could bring savings of up to £300 billion to the UK economy.¹⁸

Yet across the research sector higher education institutions, funders and policy institutions are wrestling with the challenge of widening participation in postgraduate studies.¹⁹ Students from diverse backgrounds are under-represented at the postgraduate level. This includes under-representation of racial and class background, disability, sexual orientation and gender.²⁰ Childcare provision disproportionately affects female postgraduates, both in terms of accessing support during their studies but also later on in their career, with recent analysis suggesting that on average women take almost 15 years longer than men to progress to full professorships at Russell Group institutions.²¹

The challenges of childcare and the lack of government subsidies to offset costs are further hampering attempts to diversify the uptake of postgraduate studies and the highly skilled careers they enable. The remainder of this Policy Note will set out the barriers that a lack of childcare support is having on postgraduates, and GW4's policy recommendations to address the issue.

Postgraduate parents: The scale of the problems they face

Postgraduate researchers completing PhDs are often provided with a stipend from non-departmental public bodies, such as UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) or charitable funding bodies like Wellcome. A typical stipend for a postgraduate researcher in the UK is currently between £15,000 and £19,000 per annum. The charity Coram surveyed local authorities across England, Scotland and Wales and found that the average cost of a full-time childcare place for a child under the age of two is £14,030 per annum.²²

One solution that already exists for full-time undergraduate and Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students in England with children under 15 (or under 17, if the child has special educational needs), is the Childcare Grant towards childcare costs, if a household income is below £19,795. The Parents' Learning Allowance provides eligible full-time students with additional funding that can be used for everyday costs of study, such as books, study materials and travel.²³

Another exception is postgraduate students on certain healthcare courses, such as Midwifery or Nursing, who may be eligible for support from the NHS Learning Support Fund. In addition, postgraduates in receipt of a Social Work Bursary may be eligible for the Childcare Allowance and Parents' Learning Allowance elements of the NHS bursary, but there are no comparable grants for most other postgraduate students.²⁴ Postgraduate students are also ineligible for childcare benefits – such as tax credits, Universal Credit childcare, 30 free hours of childcare or the recently expanded offer for children aged two and under – that are available for workers, unless they are in substantial paid employment in addition to their studies.²⁵

Raising this issue with policymakers is complicated by the fact that responsibility for postgraduates falls between two departmental portfolios. The Department for Education (DfE) is responsible for childcare and higher education policy and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) is responsible for PGR students' roles as researchers, but neither has overall responsibility for the overall postgraduate researcher experience.

In GW4's correspondence with Ministers, they noted that in England, home, Irish or postgraduate students with settled status have access to interest-bearing Postgraduate Doctoral Loans from Student Finance England. These loans can broadly be used as required, including to help pay for childcare costs. Ministers also note that postgraduate students will be eligible for the universal 15 hours of support for three- and four-year-olds.²⁶ This is still a considerably reduced offer to that available to undergraduates and workers and, as we shall note later, is often insufficient to cover childcare costs fully.

Furthermore, Ministers also noted the 'key objective' of the childcare provision is 'to support parental participation in the labour market' and that 'this offer is conditional on work', with parents expected to earn at least £152 a week on average, or the equivalent of 16 hours of work a week at the National Living Wage.²⁷ The expectation of combining postgraduate study, substantial outside work (more than 16 hours a week) and childcare responsibilities is unfeasible for most. In fact, some in receipt of tax-free stipends from UKRI are expected to work for under six hours per week, and some stipends prohibit undertaking any regular outside work.²⁸

Despite this, the Conservative Government stated, in a response to a Parliamentary Written Question, that it had ‘no plans to extend the Childcare Grant to postgraduate research students.’²⁹

Data from universities

The latest Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data estimate there are approximately 66,960 UK (‘home’) Postgraduate Research Students (PGRs) and 380,795 UK (‘home’) Postgraduate Taught Students (PGTs) nationally.³⁰ However, HESA does not currently collect data on the number of postgraduate students with childcare responsibilities.

GW4 has attempted to understand better the size of the cohort of postgraduates who may have childcare responsibilities by questioning GW4 institutions, Midlands Innovation institutions and partners across the South West. The majority reported that they did not hold data on childcare responsibilities for postgraduate students.

The University of Bristol, the University of Bath and the University of Birmingham are three exceptions. For the University of Bristol, 15 per cent of the 1,460 postgraduate researchers (PGRs) and 13 per cent of the 2,530 postgraduate taught (PGTs) students are parents and would benefit from improved support. A similar landscape emerges at the University of Bath, with 14 per cent of the 875 PGRs and 8 per cent of the 2,305 PGTs potentially benefitting. However, the figures increase substantially at the University of Birmingham, as 18 per cent of their 1,815 PGRs and 34 per cent of their 6,180 PGTs would benefit.

If we assume these figures are comparable to national percentages, then extending childcare support could directly impact up to 9,400 PGRs and 30,000 PGTs at the lowest or up to 12,000 PGRs and 129,000 PGTs at the highest estimate.

Lack of access to robust and consistent datasets hinder the sector’s ability to provide precise and transparent information on the scale of the issue, and the lack of granularity is impeding institutions, researchers and policymakers from making informed policy decisions to better support this cohort. As such, the estimates on the total numbers of postgraduates that could be impacted are a somewhat crude calculation.

HESA stipulating a requirement for universities to adopt a more uniform approach to recording caregiving responsibilities would be a welcome step in addressing the challenges facing postgraduate students who are parents.

Funding in other UK nations

With GW4’s geography including Cardiff University, some postgraduates within our network study under the regulatory regime of the Welsh Government, creating an opportunity to demonstrate the difference in childcare provision between Westminster and the devolved nations.

The table below sets out the differences across the nations.

Nation	Postgraduate childcare provision for home students
England	Postgraduate students are ineligible for the means-tested childcare support grant that is available to undergraduates (up to £193.62 a week for one child or, up to £331.95 a week for two or more children). Postgraduate students instead have access to interest-bearing loans which can be used to help pay for childcare costs. There is a universal offer with all families for 15 hours of support for three- and four-year-olds for 38 weeks a year.
Northern Ireland	Postgraduates are ineligible for the means-tested childcare support grant (up to £148.75 per week for one child or up to £255 per week for two or more children) that is available to undergraduates. Postgraduates instead need to apply for loans to cover associated costs of studies, including childcare.
Scotland	Postgraduate taught students are eligible for repayable living cost loans, with discretionary University Childcare Funds of up to £1,215 per year available to provide assistance with the cost of registered childcare expenses.
Wales	<p>The Welsh Government says it has taken ‘progressive steps in Wales to support student parents and have expanded the Childcare Offer to include postgraduate students’. This allows eligible parents to claim up to 30 hours of early education and childcare a week, for three- and four-year-olds, for up to 48 weeks of the year. To be eligible, each parent must live in Wales, earn less than £100,000 per year and students must be enrolled on an undergraduate, postgraduate or further education course that is at least 10 weeks in length.³¹</p> <p>Undergraduate students are also eligible to claim the Childcare Grant (CCG) if they have at least one child under 15 who depends on them financially (under 17 for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)), are using a childcare provider registered by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and are attending a full-time or part-time course (including a distance learning course) and getting undergraduate student finance that depends on household income. In the 2024/25 academic year, eligible students may claim up to 85 per cent of their childcare costs, to a maximum of £189 per week for one dependent child or £324 for two or more dependent children.</p>

Barnett formula differentials mean that the various nations in the United Kingdom have different financial envelopes in which to operate. The devolved nations historically have higher rates of public spending per person compared to England.³² Notably, the devolved nations have chosen to use their devolved powers to prioritise allocating some of this additional funding to expand childcare provision for postgraduate students.

GW4 urges the Westminster Government to look to the devolved nations, with Wales as the exemplar of how to make postgraduate studies more accessible to those with childcare responsibilities, and investigate the possibility of expanding similar schemes for postgraduate students in England, thus making postgraduate studies more accessible.

Models from other organisations

GW4 are also aware of examples from individual institutions such as the University of Dundee, which offers enhanced stipends to their postgraduate students to cover the costs of childcare.³³ While this additional provision is welcome, the concern is that such a piecemeal provision of childcare support could create a 'postcode lottery', with the level of provision reliant on the financial bandwidth of individual institutions. A uniform provision of childcare support, funded and provided at the devolved national level is preferable.

The human cost: case studies from students

At the heart of this policy failure are real people – the postgraduate students as well as their families and loved ones – all of whom are affected by the lack of childcare support. In preparation for this Policy Note GW4 interviewed eight students from our partner universities, who kindly agreed to share their experiences with a wider audience.³⁴ Not all wish to be identified, so these students have been given a pseudonym (*):

- **Kate:** a part-time Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)-funded student at the University of Bristol with one child aged 20 months in nursery three days a week.
- **Melissa:** a part-time Medical Research Council (MRC)-funded student at the University of Exeter with two children aged one and three, both in nursery two to three days a week.
- **Erin*:** a part-time ESRC-funded student at the University of Exeter with three children, twins aged 10 and a five-year-old who were all cared for by a childminder when younger.
- **Lara:** a full-time MRC-funded student at the University of Bristol with two children aged four months and two, with the two-year-old in nursery three days a week.
- **Veronica:** a full-time Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)-funded student at the University of Bristol with a six-year-old.
- **Charlotte*:** a full-time ESRC-funded student at the University of Bristol with two children aged two and five, with the two-year-old in nursery four days a week.
- **Meera*:** a full-time student funded by an international government and attends the University of Bristol with one child aged six who attended a nursery when younger.
- **Aamir*:** A full-time EPSRC-funded student at the University of Bath, with two children aged one and three, with the three-year-old in nursery 2.5 hours a day, five days a week.

Each has their own story about how the lack of childcare funding has impacted their professional and personal lives.

All the interviewees advocate for the importance of undertaking postgraduate studies for their future career prospects or their sense of self. Kate previously worked in the civil service and saw postgraduate research as a way of reskilling to 'shift careers into academia'. Melissa wanted to pursue a career in cancer research from a young age, following a family member's cancer diagnosis, and knew medical research careers required a PhD. Aamir left a career as a teacher to become a researcher and lecturer, so 'needed a PhD to access this higher-paid specialist role'. As well as progressing their careers many interviewees, such as Erin, stressed that despite childcare challenges, the 'sense of identity and independence that studying gives me is very important'.

All those interviewed, however, highlighted that the stipends they receive are insufficient to cover their childcare costs, which are often their single biggest outgoing. Lara receives £1,500 a month in stipend but spends around half of this on childcare, with nursery fees costing between £650 to £750 per month. In contrast, Kate's stipend is £775.92 per month, but her current nursery fees for three days a week are £801.70 per month, meaning it is costing her money to complete her PhD.

This lack of funding places significant financial stress on our interviewees. Kate explained how she had to go part-time to juggle childcare and academic commitments. While she says she was 'lucky' to find flexible work as a Research Assistant at the University of Bristol, her part-time hours do not qualify her for the 30-free hours entitlement for workers, which made her question 'if it was worth it'. Melissa says she and her partner face substantial financial burdens while paying two lots of nursery fees, acquiring nearly £15,000 credit card debt that will need to be paid off.

These financial burdens are often coupled with strains on familial relationships or a sense of stalled career progress. Lara said she felt her relationship with her husband had 'suffered' because of her working to complete her postgraduate studies, which meant working 'from 4.30am in the morning before my daughter woke up ... and going to bed when my daughter went to bed ... so didn't get any time together in the evening with my husband'. Veronica told us she experiences 'mum guilt' when considering attending conferences, often having to either sacrifice spending time with her child or developing her profile as an expert in her field. Aamir also expressed similar feelings of guilt that he has less time to spend with his children. Furthermore, Aamir's wife has left work to take on full-time caring responsibilities while he is studying, and he is concerned this is having 'a negative impact on her mental health'.

Melissa explained how her financial situation means that, due to childcare commitments, she has moved from full-time to part-time studies. She notes that it is negatively impacting her career prospects, saying she feels 'stagnated' watching friends outside academia progress in their careers while she completes her PhD. She also expressed concerns that she would be 'at least four years behind' her peers within academia, due to prolonging her studies by going part-time.

As highlighted, provision of postgraduate childcare support varies across the different nations of the UK. During his interview with GW4, Aamir discovered he lived in a part of the country that had more generous provision for childcare support than the location in which he chose to study, making him ineligible for those support schemes. He told us that, had he known this sooner, he 'probably would have chosen to go to a different university', despite the fact that his chosen university has a Centre of Excellence in the subject he is studying, as it would alleviate a lot of the domestic challenges he and his family have experienced since he returned to full-time education.

With the majority of our respondents having had children once their studies commenced, and with a lack of clarity around entitlement of provision, several respondents said that having a fuller picture of the financial implications of childcare would have resulted in them making different life choices. Charlotte says she would have 'waited until my children were at school' before undertaking her studies, while Meera says that not only would she have delayed having a child until after her PhD, her experiences of accessing childcare has left her feeling 'scared and quite traumatised' about having another child. Kate strongly asserts that she '110%' would not have done her PhD while having a child. She also admits she has advised friends against undertaking postgraduate studies if they are considering starting a family, due to the difficulties she has faced. Anecdotally, she knows of others who have decided not to apply for postgraduate studies due to the additional costs.

Each of these stories demonstrates the human cost of this policy failure. GW4 agrees with the HEPI and British Academy report, *The lives of early career researchers*, which argued that the voices of those directly affected by the lack of childcare support should be at the heart of the debate.³⁵

Policymakers should take note of the depth of feeling demonstrated by our interviewees on the incompatibility of postgraduate studies with family life. Given that the average postgraduate researcher is almost 30-years-old many are likely to be considering a family. The real cost of continuing their education causes them to weigh this up with the chance to contribute to the UK's position as a global science and innovation superpower.³⁶

Conclusion and policy recommendations

The *R&D People and Culture Strategy* was right to recognise the benefits of a more diverse research workforce to improve the quality of the UK's R&D outputs. There has been some progress on this. Research by Elsevier found that, globally, 41 per cent of researchers in 2022 were women, compared with 28 per cent in 2001, and that the most experienced female researchers have their scholarly work cited in publications more often than male researchers.³⁷ However, in the UK, structural barriers still remain for female postgraduates, with a lack of childcare support preventing many from studying full-time or foregoing postgraduate studies altogether.

Clearly, the current approach does not provide the right incentives to support social mobility through education. Extending the current undergraduate Childcare Grant to postgraduate students would seem a logical first step to support the most economically disadvantaged. In line with the current Childcare Grants for undergraduate

students, this would provide support towards childcare costs if a household income is below £19,795. This would ensure that those with children, and from the most socio-economically deprived backgrounds, are not disincentivised from studying for higher qualifications. Opening up access to childcare grants would also demonstrate sector leadership in removing a barrier to postgraduate study, which is an essential precursor for many careers.

While GW4 acknowledges that this would not be a panacea for all postgraduates, extending the support to those with the greatest need would be a welcome first step to ensure parity of policy. A future step such as expanding the 30 free hours, so that childcare does not continue to be a barrier to the reskilling and career progression opportunities that postgraduate studies can provide, is worthy of consideration if the ambitions of the *R&D People and Culture Strategy* are to be delivered.

GW4 is committed to working with government to ensure that parents with young children are not disincentivised from upskilling, reskilling and pursuing postgraduate qualifications to access highly skilled jobs. To that end, we make the following policy recommendations to address this issue:

- 1. Expand the eligibility of undergraduate Childcare Grants to include home taught and research postgraduates:** Expanding the eligibility of current Childcare Grants for those from the most socio-economically deprived areas will remove barriers for those with children wishing to undertake postgraduate studies.
- 2. Bring responsibility for postgraduate students' childcare provision fully under the remit of the Department for Education:** Bringing the responsibility of postgraduate students' childcare provision under one single Whitehall department prevents the needs of this cohort from falling between the cracks of different departments and overlapping Ministerial portfolios. Under the existing Whitehall structure GW4 would advocate for this role to be undertaken by the Department for Education (DfE), given the DfE's current responsibilities for the childcare sector and higher education policy, and the administration of undergraduate childcare support schemes. The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) would retain its responsibility for research.³⁸ Any future Whitehall restructures should take a more holistic view of postgraduates, both as students and researchers, to ensure that such policy oversights are less likely to happen.
- 3. The Higher Education Statistics Agency should work with universities to improve data collection on postgraduate students with childcare responsibilities:** By creating uniform metrics to record the childcare responsibilities of postgraduate students, HESA and higher education institutions will be better able to understand the size and needs of this cohort of students. Collecting more data on why individuals decide not to continue their applications would also help to improve understanding of the impact of issues – such as childcare costs – when it comes to deciding whether to undertake postgraduate studies.

About GW4

The GW4 Alliance brings together four of the most research-intensive and innovative universities in the UK (Bath, Bristol, Cardiff, and Exeter), who train over 7,000 doctoral researchers. Collaboration is at the heart of everything we do, and it makes us greater together than the sum of our parts. We work with other universities, businesses, and civic bodies, acting as anchor institutions that support a knowledge-intensive economy.

Our universities employ over 13,000 academic staff and educate over 33,000 postgraduate and 82,000 undergraduate students. Our institutions host over 40 externally funded Doctoral Training Centres and Partnerships and are home to over 7,000 doctoral researchers. Of these training programmes, 14 are GW4 entities, and we work with other universities, research institutes, businesses and charities to create a highly skilled workforce for the UK and worldwide. GW4 is committed to creating optimal research and educational environments that enable our postgraduate researchers to push forward the boundaries of knowledge and innovation.

GW4 was first approached in 2023 by postgraduate students who shared the impact of the lack of childcare subsidies on their physical, mental and economic well-being and sought support in raising the issue nationally. This led to the creation of GW4's ongoing childcare campaign.

Endnotes

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N8 is comprised of Durham University, Lancaster University, the University of Leeds, the University of Liverpool, the University of Manchester, Newcastle University, the University of Sheffield and the University of York.
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