

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport

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Lewis MacDonald MSP
Convener
Health and Sport Committee

By Email.

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Dear Lewis,

I would like to provide the Committee with an update on plans to enable nursing students to have the opportunity to help the NHS at this time of national emergency.

It is clearly a stressful and uncertain time for both staff and students in the health and social care professions and I want to stress that there is no compulsion on nursing students to assist. In particular, any student who does not wish to join the workforce in these circumstances but does wish to continue with their programme of study should be supported to do so and continue to receive their SAAS bursary and appropriate allowances. Other options are also available to students, include taking an authorised break in their studies; these options will be discussed on an individual basis with the Higher Education Institutions.

Nursing students who choose to help support our workforce will be paid a full appropriate NHS salary, in line with national terms and conditions. Students will also continue to receive their SAAS bursary, together with any additional allowances they now receive depending on individual circumstances.

Therefore, nursing students being deployed in the final 6 months of their programme, or third year honours students in an equivalent position, will be paid at the first step of NHS band 4 (£22,700 per annum gross annual equivalent). Students in their second year, or third year honours students, but not in the 6 months before potential registration, will be paid at the first step of NHS band 3 (£20,700 per annum gross annual equivalent).

In terms of the bursary; eligible students will also continue to receive the full amount of £8100 per annum. These arrangements for students joining the NHS Scotland workforce have been decided through the Scottish Terms and Conditions (STAC) committee.

Concerns have been expressed about the availability of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and the Scottish Government is wholly committed to ensuring that Health and Social Care staff have the personal protective equipment recommended in national guidance.

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Substantial steps have been taken to increase supply, and a national email enquiry service is now operating for anyone with concerns. It can be contacted on: covid-19-health-ppe@gov.scot

I hope that these details are helpful and I am sure that you share my sincere gratitude for the hard work and dedication of NHS staff and for the efforts of any students who feel able to come forward and support the Health and Social care workforce at this time.

JEANE FREEMAN

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