



CSP position statement on Wales NHS bursary scheme arrangements for students entering pre-registration education programmes in 2017/18

The CSP welcomes the Welsh government's confirmation of NHS bursary scheme arrangements for physiotherapy and other healthcare students entering pre-registration programmes in Wales in 2017/18.

We wish to highlight some points regarding the scheme, as set out below. These relate to clarity about the scheme's terms and conditions, recruitment and retention issues, implementation, and ensuring a strategic, sustainable approach to workforce planning, development and investment in Wales.

Transparency about the scheme's terms and conditions

Clarity and promotion of the tie-in conditions must be assured, so that all prospective students are fully aware of how the scheme sits in parallel with the alternative financial support options available to them. This is essential given the punitive nature of the repayment terms should a graduate not meet them having originally signed up to the scheme when they commenced their pre-registration education.

Recruitment and retention initiatives

We understand that the rationale for the scheme's tie-in terms and conditions is to ensure students who receive the fullest financial support available then contribute to delivering patient care in Wales as a registered healthcare professional.

However, we seek assurance that positive, proactive efforts are also being made to recruit and retain staff to services across all of Wales and across all the professions. Initiatives need to recognise and address the varying factors and issues that may impact on services' recruitment and retention of staff (e.g. relating to their rurality and remoteness) and support professions equitably.

We also ask that offering students high-quality practice-based learning opportunities is promoted as a key way in which services, as employers, can attract and recruit those same students once they graduate.

Implementation

We seek clarity on the following issues relating to the scheme's implementation:

- The rationale for including bank/agency working as fulfilling the scheme terms and conditions
- Why specific types of further study are not listed as fulfilling the terms and conditions; we would expect the scheme to recognise the value of new graduates (if a very small minority) who opt to progress directly to specified postgraduate study in Wales as a way of contributing to clinical research capacity and capability within the professions

- The nature of arrangements to 'track' graduates who do not remain in Wales or who otherwise do not fulfil the terms and conditions of the scheme
- How it will be ensured that employment opportunities within Wales will enable all Wales graduates to meet the terms and conditions (or whether preference for jobs will be given to graduates who have engaged with the scheme).

Sustainable approach to workforce supply and development

We are committed to working with the Welsh government, its agencies and other key stakeholders to ensure that robust approaches to workforce planning, development and investment are in place. We seek assurance on the following:

- A strategic, long-term approach will be taken to ensure future workforce supply meets workforce demand in sustainable ways and in response to changing population/patient needs and changing models of care
- Education providers will be able to plan for how they develop the future and existing workforce by having certainty about the long-term financial models that will underpin their provision
- Future members of the workforce will have clarity about the financial support available to them from the earliest point, so that no members of society are put off from joining one of the healthcare professions either for financial reasons, or because of uncertainty about student finance arrangements.

19th May 2017