

STUDENT update



Autumn 2019

unison.org.uk/healthstudent

UNISON
the public service union

Together in UNISON

Welcome to UNISON, the UK's biggest trade union. We are proud to represent the whole NHS team – NHS staff who, whatever their job, make a vital contribution to patient care.

This update gives you a brief round-up of some of the issues we have been working on in recent months. We've given you web pages to go to if you want to find out more about the issues we cover.

Missing out on money that's yours?

UNISON is aware that many students don't claim the financial help they are entitled to while studying because they either don't know it's there or they don't know how to claim. That's not right, so UNISON has been working with our workplace reps to ensure that we are out there offering advice and support to our student members about what they are entitled to.

Financial support for students varies from country to country across the UK. English students don't get a bursary while Scottish students do. Students in Wales have their tuition fees paid and get a non-means tested grant of £1,000 along with a means tested bursary while students in Northern Ireland can apply for an income-assessed bursary to help with living costs.

Make sure you're not missing out. Everything you need to know is at www.gov.uk/studentfinance. There you will find information about Cymru/Wales, England, Northern

Ireland and Scotland, or you can speak to your UNISON rep while you are on your placement.

Placements matter

In early 2019 UNISON carried out a survey of health students to find out just what being on placement was like. The results are now in and we are looking in detail at what students have told us. But we have noticed some worrying headlines including:

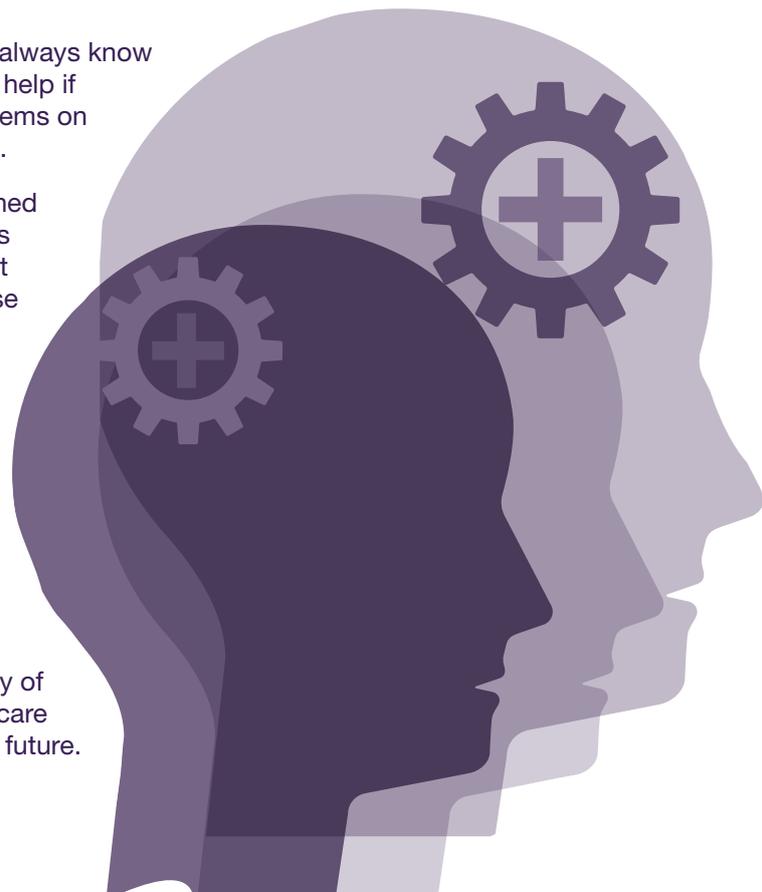
- 19% of respondents told us that they had been bullied by their mentor/supervisor
- Students are not given enough notice of their placements, which can be a problem for students with caring responsibilities who need to make the appropriate arrangements.
- Students don't always know where to go for help if they have problems on their placement.

Once we have finished analysing the results in full, we will be out there talking to those responsible for nurse training, and looking for ways to improve placements for students, making them a more effective and enjoyable part of the course. That, in turn will make them a more effective way of teaching our healthcare professionals in the future.

In the meantime, if you have a problem on your placement, UNISON is there for you. We are the only union that has a rep in every workplace, so you are never far from UNISON help, advice and support.

Mental health is important

Being a student is exciting, it's a new chapter, giving you the opportunity to learn new skills and prepare for a career helping others. But it can also be a time of worry and stress – and sometimes being on placement can trigger those feelings of anxiety. Because placements are different. They can be overwhelming, unpredictable and unstructured – a bit like real life in a way.



People cope differently with stress, and some students find placements one of the hardest things they do. So, if you aren't coping, where do you go for support?

A good place to start is the NHS page on student mental health. Just go to www.nhs.uk and search for student mental health.

UNISON has long recognised the importance of both mental health services in the NHS and ensuring that we support NHS staff who are struggling with these issues. That's why we have our Mental Health Matters campaign which aims to improve things for patients and staff. You can find out more at unison.org.uk/mentalhealth

Never OK

Earlier this year UNISON asked all healthcare staff about their experience of sexual harassment in the NHS. What they told us was shocking! Nearly 10% said they'd been sexually harassed in the last year.

If you experience sexual harassment or any form of unacceptable behaviour, including bullying, either at university or on placement please ensure that you report it to your UNISON branch/student union/university as appropriate.

A charge too far!

One of the things about placements is that, depending on where you are, or what shift you are on, you will probably need to drive to work at some point. If you are in England, you will probably have to pay to park your car at the hospital. And, as you've guessed, that might be expensive, especially if you are strapped for cash.

That's why our hospital parking campaign is so important. The aim of the campaign is to get trusts to sign

up to our parking charter and pledge to scrap parking charges for staff within two years. Find out more, and get involved at unison.org.uk/hospitalparking



Making the NHS the best place to work

In June this year NHS England published the Interim People Plan. One of the aims of the plan is to 'make the NHS the best place to work.' As a healthcare student you will be working in the NHS of the future, so this is your opportunity to have your say on what would make the NHS the best place for you to work.

Find out more at unison.org.uk/NHSpeople

Do you like hospital food?

One way to make the NHS the best place to work is to make sure staff have access to healthy and affordable food on shift, or on placement. And that includes staff on night shifts.

UNISON is about to launch a major campaign on hospital food aimed at achieving just

that. We've spoken to our members to find out what sort of access they have to healthy affordable food in their trust.

What we have seen from the results so far indicates that access to healthy food for staff is very limited and we don't think that's right.

We believe that healthy and nutritious food should be available 24-hours a day for staff and that there should be clear standards on hospital food which are enforceable so hospitals that breach them can be held to account.

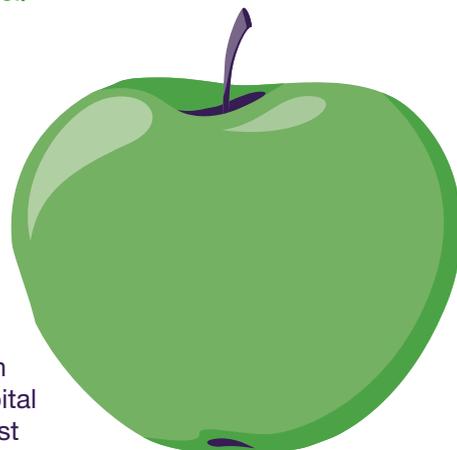
So, look out for our campaign which will launch later this year, and get involved so we can make sure trusts get this right.

Keep in touch

If you want to keep up to date with what we are doing or you want to get involved and help us make a difference, follow us on facebook and Twitter

-  facebook.com/unisonhealth
-  facebook.com/UNISONNurses
-  [@unisonourNHS](https://twitter.com/unisonourNHS)
-  [@unisontweets](https://twitter.com/unisontweets)

Also, bookmark unison.org.uk/healthstudent or call us on **0800 0 857 857** if you have specific queries.



Claim 40% off a Nursing Times subscription as a UNISON student member



Visit: subscribe.nursingtimes.net/unison