

STUDENT update

Autumn 2020

unison.org.uk/healthstudent



UNISON
the public service union

Welcome

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. We represent thousands of student nurses and other health students in every part of the UK.

This update gives you a flavour of some of the issues we have been involved in and working on over the last year.

Maintenance grants

In December 2019, the Government announced the introduction of maintenance grants for healthcare students in England. The grants will be available to all healthcare students on nursing, midwifery and some AHP courses from September 2020 when they commence their academic year.

This policy u-turn comes after years of UNISON campaigning against the axing of the former bursary and amid growing evidence of the part this controversial decision had played in the current staffing crisis.

This major change in policy is a victory for members and the union, reversing a decision that was condemned by UNISON from the off.

UNISON is continuing to campaign for the abolition of student paid tuition fees and calling for the

government to write off student debt and establish proper living grants for all healthcare students going forward.

Learning Support Fund

We want to make sure as many students as possible are aware of this support and can access it as needed. You can find out more [here](#).

The Placement Pledge

We know that going on placement can be a stressful and challenging time. It is important that you are properly supported on placement given the opportunity to learn. You need to have a placement that is well planned, well supervised and that equips you with the necessary skills.

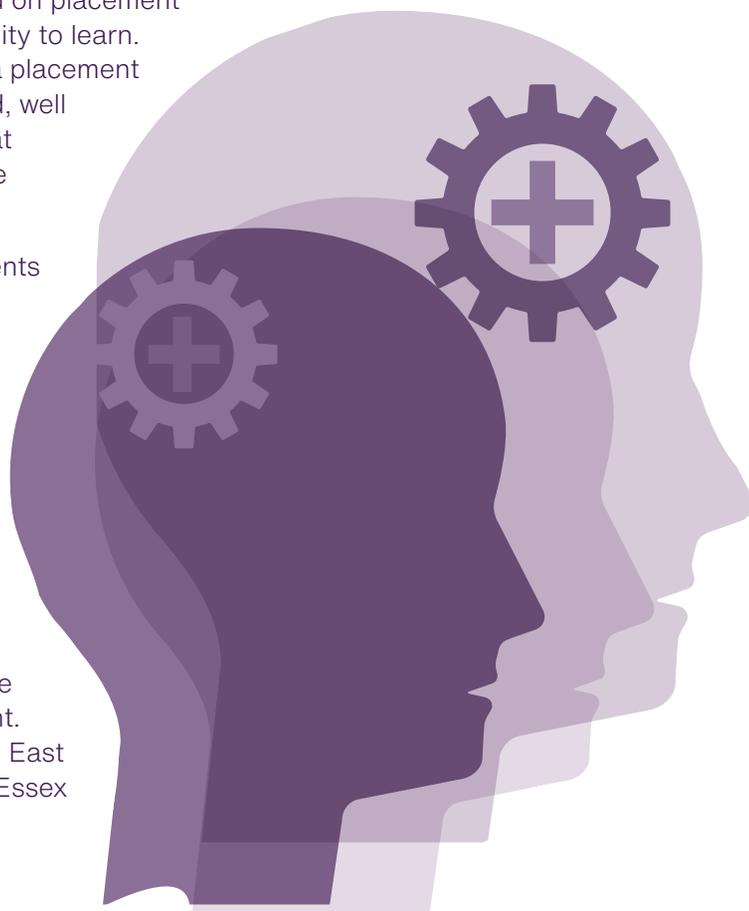
We surveyed students in 2019 and based on what you told us, developed a 'best practice pledge'. This encourages universities and employers to work together to ensure that you have the best experience possible whilst on placement. In December 2019, East Suffolk and North Essex

NHS Foundation Trust became the first Trust to sign up to the pledge.

You can read more about our pledge [here](#).

Emergency standards and pay in relation to COVID-19

The COVID-19 emergency placed unprecedented pressure on the NHS and placement providers. The NMC created new emergency standards to enable student nurses to continue on placement if they wished and contribute to the NHS response.



UNISON pushed hard to protect the safety of student nurses and to safeguard educational opportunities as much as possible. Thanks to our negotiating policy makers agreed;

- Students would have choice and be under no pressure to volunteer
- No student would be financially disadvantaged by their choice
- Students would not be rushed onto the full NMC register and could have extra time for learning in placement if needed

UNISON also insisted on good pay for students taking part in this response and in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland students were able to maintain their bursaries in addition to their wages.

We understand this emergency has placed student nurses under huge pressure and given many of you difficult choices. We'd like to say thanks for your patience and work throughout. We will be surveying our student nurse members through the summer to understand your views and help us fight for your priorities. We will remain in dialogue with policy-makers and continue sharing information as soon as we possibly can.

UNISON Student Nurse and Midwife Network

The UNISON Student Nurse and Midwife Network meets regularly to discuss the big issues for student nurses and help with our campaigns.

UNISON student nurses Natalie Elliott and Joy O'Gorman have written for this newsletter;

"Throughout the COVID-19 emergency, Unison took a student-

centred approach. Not only were students consulted but they were listened to and heard. We may not have been physically in the negotiating room, but we were confident that our voice was there.

We have a lot to thank Trade Unions for during this time; they have been essential facilitators in guaranteeing that students learning is protected. UNISON, for example, helped lead the way in giving the student voice a platform, through conversations with student nurses, Unison leaders valued what mattered to us and ensured this was reflected in the final emergency planning. This was an incredible achievement under tight deadlines and the pressure that comes from a pandemic.

As we emerge from Covid-19 emergency status, we are already seeing continued consultations with students to ensure our student status, education and individual rights are protected. We would encourage peers to engage with UNISON so we can emerge from Covid-19 with a stronger voice and to advocate for our education and future. UNISON's student network is growing. Watch out for future webinars and events, where you can help shape the way our education is delivered and how student nurses grow and flourish into the nurses of the future."



Joy O'Gorman



Natalie Elliott

If you are interested in joining our Student Nurse and Midwife Network, please email us: health@unison.co.uk

More students joining UNISON than ever before

A record amount of healthcare students joined UNISON last year. We're the largest union in the NHS and have a growing student nurse and midwife network, join with us now for only 10 pounds a year.

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

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



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