



Department
of Health

From Ben Gummer MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Care Quality

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The Rt Hon George Howarth MP
By email to: george.howarth.mp@parliament.uk

23 DEC 2015

Dear Mr Howarth,

Thank you for your email of 27 November to Greg Hands on behalf of a number of your constituents about financial support for student nurses. As this matter is health-related, your letter has been passed to the Department of Health.

I note your constituents' concerns. The Government is committed to increasing the number of nurses, midwives and allied health professionals in the NHS, to a better funding system for health students, and to a sustainable university system. To achieve this new nursing, midwifery and allied health students need to move from grants and bursaries to the standard student loans system. This will start for new students from 2017, and will bring them into line with the arrangements for students undertaking other university degrees. Existing students will continue on the current system of bursaries.

As a result, ministers expect there to be 10,000 additional nursing, midwifery and allied health training places over this Parliament. They believe this will boost participation and secure the future supply of these professions to the NHS, and that more applicants will get the chance to become a health professional.

Under the student loans system, in the future these health students will receive around 25 per cent more financial support while they study than they do at present. Student nurses, midwives and allied health students currently get less support with living costs through the NHS bursary.

Ministers are committed to ensuring that specialist healthcare courses remain accessible and that mature students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds can continue to access specialist healthcare courses. The Department will allow students undertaking these courses as second degrees to access student loan funding.

The Government will run a consultation in early 2016, which will consider how to put the reforms in place.

I hope this reply is helpful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Gummer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

BEN GUMMER

Approved by the Minister and signed by his Private Secretary to avoid delay