



Department
of Health &
Social Care

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The Rt Hon George Howarth MP
House of Commons
Westminster
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21 JAN 2019

Dear George,

Thank you for your correspondence of 21 December to Matt Hancock on behalf of a number of your constituents about the Royal College of Nursing's (RCN's) 'Fund Our Future' campaign.

I appreciate your constituents' concerns about the important issue of future funding for nursing higher education and I would like to thank them for bringing this issue to your attention.

I attended a drop-in session hosted by the RCN in November. This was during my first week as the Minister of State for Health and I was grateful for the early opportunity to hear first-hand the experiences of student nurses.

I would like to convey my appreciation for the vital work that the nursing workforce has always done and continues to do. The Government recognises that nurses work with courage and compassion across many challenging areas, and that ensuring a sustainable nursing workforce supply is essential to the function of a robust health and social care system.

As announced in the Autumn Budget, we are investing in our NHS and increasing the NHS budget by an extra £20.5 billion a year, or £394 million a week, by 2023/24. A sustainable and coherent approach to ensuring the supply of the future healthcare workforce is an absolute priority for this Government.

In acknowledgement of the unique situation of nursing, midwifery and allied health profession students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, the Government has made provisions for these students to apply for financial support from the Learning Support

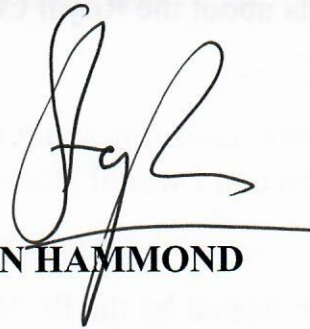
Fund. This offers specific and targeted support, such as £1,000 per student per year Child Dependents Allowance, reimbursement of travel costs to clinical placements over usual daily travel costs, and up to £3,000 per student per year exceptional hardship fund.

In addition to this, the move to student loan funding provides most students with 25 per cent more upfront funding than the NHS Bursary system.

Our priority is getting more nurses on our wards, which is why we have funding available for nursing degree places, allowing more people to study nursing than ever before. We are actively working with Health Education England and the university sector to ensure that students continue to apply for these additional places.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours ever

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sgk', with a horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

STEPHEN HAMMOND