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Addysg a Gwella Iechyd
Cymru (AaGIC)
Health Education and
Improvement Wales (HEIW)

Our Ref: SG/cw

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Health Education and Improvement Wales
Ty Dysgu
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Sent via email to:

All Undergraduate Nursing Students
All Postgraduate Nursing Students
All Undergraduate Midwifery Students
All Postgraduate Midwifery Students

03300 585 005
HEIWenquiries@wales.nhs.uk

c.c. All Healthcare Deans

Dear Student Nurse/Midwife

Your education programme and supporting patients through COVID-19

You will be all too aware of the challenges that the COVID-19 outbreak is having on the NHS and the potential impact on patients, their health and their life. This has been called the worst public health crisis in a generation.

We know many of you have already been in contact with your university and current placement to see how your skills and experience can help. We are grateful for the drive and dedication which characterises you and the profession you have chosen.

We are writing to ask those of you who can, to support our NHS at this critical time.

The pandemic is causing disruption to progression through your programme, which we know is very unsettling for you. Our colleagues at the NMC and the Council of Deans of Health are continuing to find solutions for the issues we are encountering.

Last week, the Chief Nursing Officers of the four countries, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), the Council of Deans of Health, the Royal Colleges and trade unions and the Department of Health and Social Care announced radical measures for the nursing and midwifery professions to help prepare the NHS for the challenges it now faces. Emergency parliamentary legislation is being passed to enable this to happen.

In Wales we have further consulted with the Welsh Government, Professional Bodies, Universities and Health Organisations.

• Chairman/Cadeirydd: **Dr Chris Jones**

• Chief Executive/Prif Weithredwr: **Alex Howells**

HEIW Headquarters/ Pencadlys HEIW, Ty Dysgu, Cefn Coed, Nantgarw, CF15 7QQ.

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We have issued a “**Nursing and Midwifery Student Support guidance during COVID-19 Outbreak**”. This is attached to this letter. It will provide you with the information you require on how you can support the health and care system during this time of emergency. You will appreciate that this is a fast-changing and emerging situation and therefore advice may be subject to further development. However, these principles should be used in conjunction with advice and guidance from your higher education institution and the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).

The option for you depends upon the stage of your programme and whether you are in,

- the last 6 months of your third-year undergraduate programme
- the second year or early stages of the third year of your undergraduate programme and postgraduate students;
- the first year of your undergraduate programme;

Further details are included in the guidance document (attached) but in summary the options available to you are highlighted below;

Students in their final six months of the third year of their undergraduate programme

Given the significant pressures on the system and the need to ensure that front line services are fully supported it is not possible to continue to provide the current programme for students in these years of study. You do not need to be concerned about this.

The NMC has put actions into place to expand the nursing and midwifery workforce and has changed the nature of the programme for undergraduate nursing and midwifery students so that you can opt to undertake your final six months of your programme as a clinical placement.

During this emergency period, it will not be possible for students to be supernumerary. However, students will receive appropriate support and supervision within an agreed delegation framework. The hours you work will contribute to your overall programme to reflect the experience you will gain during these challenging times.

It is expected that students in the final 6 months of their third year will be remunerated on Agenda for Change Band 4.

For nursing students there may be an option at a future point for you to opt into a temporary register.

This is voluntary and if you do not feel able to opt into this you will be supported by your university to consider the options available to you.

Students in the second year or the first six months of their final year of their undergraduate programme and postgraduate pre-registration students not in the last 6 months of their programme

Given the significant pressures on the system and the need to ensure that front line services are fully supported it is not possible to continue to provide the current programme for students in these years of study. Therefore, **you are invited to opt-in to an arrangement where you spend 80 percent of time in clinical practice, which would be remunerated (and will count towards practice hours as it will be part of your programme)**, and 20 percent in academic study during this emergency period. It is expected that you will be remunerated on Agenda for Change Band 3.

If you do not feel able to opt into this, you will be supported by your university to consider the options available to you, which would be part of your university's existing process around suspension of studies.

Students in their first year of undergraduate programme

Students in year one will continue with their studies and remain on their programme. However, the nature of the programme will be adapted so that students will see their academic studies continue but their clinical placement time will be paused.

As now, **you may volunteer or undertake paid work within a healthcare setting while maintaining your academic study**. In line with current guidelines, volunteering or paid work will not necessarily be counted towards practice hours and experience. You will be providing much needed support to health and social care services. In addition, you will most likely enhance your skills and competencies as a result of the work experience to enhance your performance in your subsequent placements.

Therefore, we are writing to ask you whether you would consider this offer and step up to join the health and care workforce.

Your university will be in touch with you to discuss the revised programme delivery model and what it means for you;

- If you decide to opt in to the NMC revised programme in clinical practice, your university will work with you to identify your preferences. This information will then be provided to the NHS who will identify an appropriate organisation for you to undertake your clinical placement/work in. This organisation will then be in touch with you to discuss your deployment in more detail and answer your questions.
- NHS Wales Shared Services will also contact you regarding your clinical placement employment arrangements.
- Please note opting into clinical practice does not affect your student bursary in any way. Paid employment is additional to the bursary.

We are asking you to consider this request and reply to your university with your answer.

We require key details and key consents to allow us to link you, your university course and the NHS provider that needs you.

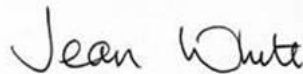
If you have a school age child, you will be provided with a letter that you can provide to your child's school, certifying you are a 'key worker'.

We know this is a complex, uncertain and difficult time for you and your family. We also know that the NHS' greatest asset is its workforce, and that many of you want the opportunity to help. As a future member of that workforce, we hope you will consider this calling to join the NHS early and to use your considerable skills to help save lives.

Yours faithfully



Stephen Griffiths
Director of Nursing
HEIW



Professor Jean White CBE
Chief Nursing Officer
Nurse Director NHS Wales
Welsh Government