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9th April 2020

To: HCPC regulated AHP and PTP Healthcare Science Students

Dear Student,

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.

Last week, the Chief Allied Health Professional Officers of the four countries, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and the Council of Deans of Health issued a joint statement outlining radical measures on how they will support you to help during the covid-19 crisis and to help prepare the NHS for the challenges it now faces. Emergency parliamentary legislation has been passed to enable this to happen.

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

We have issued an “**HCPC regulated Allied Health Professions and PTP Healthcare Science Student Support Guidance during COVID-19 Outbreak**” document. 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 HCPC.

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

- Final year undergraduate or postgraduate programme students who have met all their practice placement learning outcomes.
- Second year of an undergraduate programme (or HCPC regulated PTP programmes for healthcare scientists) and first year pre-registration postgraduate programme students, or pre-registration students in the final year who have not met all their practice placement learning outcomes
- Students in their first year of the HCPC regulated undergraduate programme

Further details are included in the guidance document but in summary the options available to you are highlighted below:

Final year undergraduate or postgraduate programme students who have met all their practice placement learning outcomes.

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 structure for students.

Your university will work with the HCPC to identify final year students who are eligible to join the temporary Register. All eligible students will automatically be included on the temporary register unless the student explicitly asks for their name to be removed.

If you are entered on to the temporary register your university will get in contact to confirm your agreement to opt-in to working in practice and to discuss what happens next.

To support you in joining the temporary register, universities and employers will facilitate offering you a bespoke package of support enabling you to practise. This will include:

- An induction including all key mandatory training requirements to ensure you are supported to practise safely
- Support to develop skills ordinarily reserved for preceptorship
- More specific guidance, for example, on the management of coronavirus and how to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

It is recognised that you will need to be supported and supervised during such deployment to develop your confidence and skills and education providers will advise students on how this will be managed.

Second year of an undergraduate programme (or PTP programmes for healthcare scientists) and first year pre-registration postgraduate programme students, or pre-registration students in the final year who have not met all their practice placement learning outcomes

Students will be invited to opt-in to an arrangement where you spend a proportion of your time in NHS or social care employment, which will be remunerated, and a proportion of your time in academic study – most likely either, 60% employment, 40% academic study or 80% employment, 20% academic study. The time set aside for academic study would build in continued academic progression and a period of structured contact with your university to ensure ongoing academic and pastoral support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The part time paid employment that you undertake will be dependent on the needs of the health and social care service during this time of emergency. Therefore, you will likely be asked to undertake work that falls outside of what would be expected of a professional registrant in your discipline. As a result of this work it may be possible to acquire skills and knowledge, to show that you are working towards or have met specific placement learning outcomes relevant to your level of study.

If you are unable to opt-in to this arrangement you will be supported by your university to consider the options, including a period of authorised absence or a suspension of studies, or if available, an alternative academic pathway.

Students in their first year of the undergraduate programme

Students in year one will continue with their studies as planned and remain on their programme. However, the nature of the programme may be adapted so that the academic component continues, but any clinical placement time will be paused.

You may however, volunteer or undertake paid work within a healthcare setting whilst maintaining your academic study. In line with current guidelines, volunteering or paid work will not necessarily be counted towards placement learning outcomes and experience, but you will be providing much needed support to health and social care services. Additionally, you will most likely develop valuable skills and knowledge of working in a health or social care setting as a result of this work experience. This will provide a solid foundation on which to continue your studies and 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 your university will work with you to identify your preferences and share this information with the NHS to enable your recruitment into a post. 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 employment arrangements.

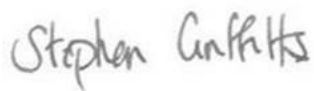
We are asking you to consider this request and reply to your university with your answer.

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.

Your sincerely



Stephen Griffiths
Director of Nursing

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