

# Sharing best practice and changes in funding nurse students

The summer is nearly over and we are now looking forward to the autumn/winter wound care meetings and conferences. This will be a busy time in the wound care calendar with the Leg Club's annual meeting in Worcester and the World Union of Wound Healing Societies 4-yearly meeting in Florence both taking place in September, and the Wounds UK conference in Harrogate in November. It can be difficult for some practitioners to secure time away from busy clinical areas, however, these meetings provide an excellent platform for nurses, podiatrists and other healthcare professionals involved in wound care/tissue viability/leg ulcer management to update skills and knowledge, learn about new innovations, and to network with national and international colleagues. Attendance at these meetings can be used as evidence for quality improvement activities for revalidation and, more importantly, help to ensure that knowledge of care interventions is up to date and based on research and evidence, all of which will ultimately benefit the end users — patients and their families.

These meetings are an ideal opportunity for practitioners to submit abstracts for papers and posters, helping to promote excellent practice across the UK. As health care continues to change rapidly, it is essential to share best practice that has made a real difference to quality of care and these meetings provide such an opportunity. Similarly, it is important that we discuss and explore areas that did not work as well as we would have expected, learning from and supporting each other.

At *Wounds UK*, the team is happy to help with mentoring you in writing papers and if you have an area of practice you would like to present at the Wounds UK conference, Jacqui Fletcher and I would be pleased to offer you support.

## CHANGES IN NURSE STUDENTS' LOANS AND FUNDING

You may be aware that the Department of Health (DH, 2016) has published the document

'Reforming Healthcare Education Funding: Creating a Sustainable Future Workforce'. The paper clearly stated that from 2017, new undergraduate healthcare students would have access to the standard student support system provided by the Student Loans Company (SLC) to cover the cost of their tuition fees and means-tested support for living costs, rather than having their course fees paid by Health Education England (HEE) and receiving a bursary from the NHS Business Services Authority (DH, 2016). HEE will continue to be responsible for commissioning of clinical placements for 2017/18 with universities being able to create additional places on top of these in partnership with their local Trusts and will have their HEE funded placements maintained at existing levels.

There will also be a reduction in the amount of funding available for staff to attend post-registration courses. You may be thinking 'how will this affect me?' As a registered practitioner, you will not be affected by the changes to the bursary system, but your students will and, as such, it is useful to be aware of how this will work. Nursing and allied health professional students from 2017 will be undertaking their studies funded via a loan rather than a bursary. This means that they will be expected to pay back their loan following completion of studies. Students will commence repaying the loan from the April following graduation and it will be income-contingent. The income threshold for making repayments is £21,000 until April 2021 with repayments being 9% of total earnings above £21,000 for a period of 30 years, at which point any outstanding loan will be written off by the government.

For post-registration courses/modules, there will be minimal funding available from HEE over the coming years. Although these changes to funding for pre- and post-registration education only currently affects England, there may well be similar changes in the remainder of the UK in the future. More information will be available later this year, and I will keep you informed of the changes afoot. 



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## REFERENCES

Department of Health (2016) *Reforming Healthcare Education Funding: Creating a Sustainable Future Workforce*. Available from: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/539774/health-education-funding-response.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/539774/health-education-funding-response.pdf) (accessed 24.08.16)