

## Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

**Petition Number:** [PE01819](#)

**Main Petitioner:** Rachel Taylor

**Subject:** NHS bursary for Scottish paramedic students

Calls on the Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to introduce a bursary for students studying Paramedic Science.

### Background

The petition calls for the Scottish Government to introduce bursary support for student paramedics, who are required to undergo a BSc Paramedic Science (or equivalent qualification) at university to meet the requirements to join the Health and Social Care Professions Council (HCPC) register.

The BSc Paramedic Science or Paramedic Practice course is currently offered at five universities in Scotland: [Robert Gordon University](#); [University of Stirling](#); [Queen Margaret University](#); [Glasgow Caledonian University](#); and [University of the West of Scotland](#). Graduates of these courses are eligible to apply to register with the HCPC as a paramedic.

Paramedic students are required to spend up to 50% of the course on placement and the course incurs additional costs, for example a charge of £395.34 for uniforms<sup>1</sup>. However, students are not currently eligible for bursary support.

By comparison, student nurses and midwives do currently receive bursary support – which will [rise to £10,000 from 2020/21](#). The bursary is intended to cover living costs, recognising that students on these courses also spend up to 50% of their course on placement<sup>2</sup> and therefore have limited time to take up part-time paid work outside of university.

From September 2020, paramedic students in England are eligible to receive an [annual £5000 bursary from the NHS Learning Support Fund](#). While this bursary support is non-repayable, paramedic students in England are required to pay tuition fees of up to £9,250 per year.

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Additional Costs'

[https://www.gcu.ac.uk/study/courses/details/index.php/P03109/Paramedic\\_Science?utm\\_medium=web&utm\\_campaign=courselisting](https://www.gcu.ac.uk/study/courses/details/index.php/P03109/Paramedic_Science?utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=courselisting)

<sup>2</sup> See 'Work placement' <https://www.napier.ac.uk/courses/bn-nursing-adult-undergraduate-fulltime>

[Students studying at undergraduate level](#) are currently eligible to have their tuition fees of £1,820 per year of study paid for by the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS). A bursary of between £500 and £2,000 per year is available to students with household income of up to £33,999 and loan support is available in addition to this. Students who do not qualify for bursary support can apply for loan support.

## **Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government Actions**

SPICe contacted the Scottish Government in July 2020 to enquire as to whether the introduction of a bursary similar to that available in England is being considered and they confirmed that bursary support is not currently available and it is not being looked at by the Scottish Government.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport also answered a Parliamentary Question on this topic in July 2020:

*Question S5W-30403: Miles Briggs, Lothian, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, Date Lodged: 02/07/2020*

*To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on introducing a bursary for paramedic students similar to the £5,000 for students in England that the UK Government announced in January 2020.*

*Answered by Jeane Freeman (28/07/2020):*

*The Scottish Government provides a package of support for paramedic students that is worth more than the £5,000 announced by UK Government. We provide free tuition for eligible undergraduate students where paramedic students in England are expected to pay up to £9,250 per year in tuition fees. In addition we provide funding for placement expenses, uniforms, disclosure and health checks.*

A further related PQ is due to be answered by 27 August:

*Question S5W-31020: Miles Briggs, Lothian, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, Date Lodged: 30/07/2020*

*To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-30403 by Jeane Freeman on 28 July 2020, what its response is to student paramedics' reported concerns that the support that they receive is less than provided to a number of others, including nursing students, and whether it will reconsider offering a bursary to paramedic students.*

*Current Status: Expected Answer date 27/08/2020*

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August 2020**

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