

**PE1819/A**

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport submission of 3 September 2020

The Scottish Government approach to supporting students is predicated upon our commitment to a system of free tuition for undergraduate students. Students undertaking the BSc in Paramedic Science are eligible to apply for the normal undergraduate funding package. The Scottish Government appreciates that there are additional costs involved for paramedic students. In recognition of this, paramedic students in Scotland receive additional financial support to cover placement expenses, health and disclosure checks and uniforms.

The Scottish Government package of support for paramedic students is worth more than the £5,000 bursary announced by the UK Government. Healthcare students in England who will be receiving a bursary from September 2020 will still be required to pay up to £9,250 per year in tuition fees.

When determining the level of support available to students, we must balance the need to ensure that all students are able to access a support package that is fair while also being sustainably balanced in terms of the overall affordability of the student support system. Workforce planning considerations may also influence the support available on healthcare degree programmes, in Scotland and in other parts of the UK. In Scotland, a decision was taken to maintain the bursary available to nursing and midwifery students at a time when our health and care services needed to attract and maintain a sustainable flow of newly qualified registrants in these professions. Such decisions continue to remain under review in light of workforce requirements and financial viability. At present, no students on Allied Health Profession degree programmes in Scotland receive financial support equivalent to the nursing and midwifery bursary.

The Paramedic Science degree programmes are a new model of education provision for paramedics. Five new courses will begin in Scotland in September 2020, marking the transition from diploma level training in house by the Scottish Ambulance Service. This transition is part of our wider work to increase capacity and reduce individual workload across the Scottish Ambulance Service – investing almost £900 million over the last four years and committing to training an additional 1,000 paramedics. This builds on the 17.6% rise in Ambulance Service staffing over the last decade. This investment has seen the Service achieve over 95% shift coverage over the past 3 years and the Service has robust contingencies in place to deal with staff absences to ensure patient care is not affected.

We continue to regularly review pre-registration education provision and the Scottish Government will shortly be commencing a review of the education provided to Allied Health Professionals, including paramedics. The financial support offered to students will be considered as part of this review.