

PE1819/D

Petitioner submission of 24 November 2020

Thank you for your response. The Pay Student Paramedics campaign recognises that the issue is going to be under review by the Scottish Government, which can be a time-consuming process. However, with four more Universities in Scotland now hosting this course, it is essential that Student Paramedics receive the funding as a matter of urgency. It is frequently stated that there will be a review for the allied health professions. This implies that it is a review of the 12 sectors of allied health professionals. We appreciate that Paramedics are part of the Allied Health Professionals list and the Government may look at this issue of Allied Health Professionals as whole, however within this category, Paramedics are on the Shortage Occupation List 2018/2019.

To respond to the section regarding the Scottish Ambulance Service and their workforce planning and with the greatest of respect, ambulance technicians do not appear on the Shortage Occupations List 2018 and Shortage Occupation List 2019. Increasing the number of Ambulance Technicians will not deal with the issue of a lack of paramedics. To reinforce the point, the main difference between an Ambulance Technician and a Paramedic is that technicians are not required to register with the HCPC, and in higher-risk categories of patients, a paramedic is required to provide advanced care & treatment.

Jeane Freeman's response that they are working with ORH and looking at shift reviews nationally to amend rosters, ensure the service is working efficiently as possible and determine resource requirements to ensure it can continue to meet the increasing demand, has five words at the end which are vital "to meet the increasing demand". Jeane Freeman also stated that work is being carried out in partnership with all three trade union partners involved with SAS and that the Scottish Government are committed to supporting this work. Ms Freeman must be aware at this stage the Pay Student Paramedics Campaign has the support of the same three trade unions. Whilst shift reviews will be vital in alleviating stress on current staff, the campaign is asking the Government to pay student paramedics the same NMB as their course structure have little to no discrepancies between them.

The response acknowledges that there is a demand for the Paramedic Science course with more than five applications for each available space. This would ensure that there is a continual supply of newly qualified paramedics. However, of the accepted individuals of the course, these will be limited to only those who can afford to study the course, either by savings or by trying to hold continuous employment and managing the vast amount of study and unpaid placements required of them. This could limit future applicants and create a stigma that only "well off" individuals can do the course, which should be accessible to everyone no matter the state of their finances to avoid austerity.

Jeane Freeman's comment on our economy is noted. However, it has been previously stated on the 24th September 2020 to the Public Petitions Committee that this would be about 0.04% of the current health budget. This would be needed to fund this in the 3rd year when there is the maximum amount of paramedics training in Scotland. The committee chair acknowledges that this is a small percentage of the

budget. The committee also acknowledged the provided benefits of this minimal cost. We would like to address the comment about qualified Paramedics starting on an NHS Band 5 Salary. This is acknowledged; however, this is assuming that one was employed by SAS. Therefore, referring to this seems odd. Student paramedics accept that the salary they could receive is in the higher end bracket, but this is irrelevant as even to become a paramedic, the financial support needs to be available beforehand. Suppose Ms Freeman is inferring that student paramedics will have no problem paying back student loans. In that case, this is a logical fallacy as everyone's situation is different and assumes that on qualification, every paramedic student is guaranteed a job within SAS and has no other financial dependencies.

To finalise this response. Student Paramedics are currently left treated as though they do not warrant the same support that Nurses and Midwives receive despite a similar desperate need for more Paramedics. The campaign strongly believes that this position is not only disregarding our concerns, but also borders on downplaying the importance of Paramedics as a whole. We would as such request a direct answer to the following question: Why is it that nurses and midwives receive an excellent supportive bursary, due to the pressures placed on them by placements and the needs for more qualified professionals, and when paramedics fall into the same situation, is there not equal support given to student paramedics? We would also note that at no point so far in communications has this question been directly and satisfactorily answered.