

Prime Minister backs NHS staff with £5,000 annual payment for nursing students

- All nursing students on courses from September 2020 to receive a £5,000 a year grant
- Additional payments of up to £3,000 available for students in regions or specialisms struggling to recruit or to help students cover childcare costs
- Urgent review into doctors' pensions taper problem to start as the Government places the NHS workforce at the heart of its agenda
- Nursing students are set to benefit from guaranteed, additional support of at least £5,000 per year to help with living costs, the Prime Minister has confirmed.

The new universal offer will be available to all new and continuing degree-level nursing, midwifery and many allied health students, starting from September 2020.

The grant, which will not need to be repaid, comes as part of the Government's manifesto commitment to increase nurse numbers by 50,000 by 2025. It is expected to benefit more than 35,000 students every year.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

I have heard loud and clear that the priority of the British people is to focus on the NHS – and to make sure this treasured institution has everything it needs to deliver world-class care.

The dedicated doctors and nurses epitomise everything that makes the NHS so revered across the world – skill, compassion, energy and dedication.

At the heart of our manifesto was the guarantee that we will deliver 50,000 more nurses, and this new financial support package is a crucial part of delivering this.

There can be no doubting our commitment to the NHS, and over the coming months we will bring forward further proposals to transform this great country.

Today, the Prime Minister will also host a reception for NHS staff at Downing Street to thank them for the brilliant work they do every day – and especially around the busy festive period.

There are over 17,700 more nurses on NHS wards since 2010 – but with the NHS

treating more patients than ever before, the Government is acting to ensure it has the staff it needs to meet growing demand.

The Government is confirming these grants will start in the next academic year ahead of the UCAS deadline for university application on 15 January 2020.

This is contributing to the biggest nursing recruitment drive in decades, backed up by the NHS' 'We Are the NHS, We Are Nurses' campaign. This encourages teenagers choosing their degree, as well as career switchers, to consider a career in nursing.

This comes on the same day the government delivers on its commitment for an urgent review of the pensions annual allowance taper affecting senior clinicians.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

The NHS is there for all of us in our time of need, thanks to the skill, dedication and compassion of its staff. I know from my Grandma, who worked nights as a nurse, just how compassionate and hard-working our nurses are.

As we enter the Year of the Nurse and Midwife, we are embarking on the biggest nursing recruitment drive in decades, backed by a new universal support package.

We want every person considering this incredible career to apply for their university place before the UCAS deadline of 15 January, safe in the knowledge they will benefit from this financial support from the start of the next academic year.

This package builds on the government's ongoing work to increase the number of places for students and is central to its commitment to deliver 50,000 more nurses.

At the same time we are also urgently reviewing the pensions issue senior clinicians have told us is having a direct impact on them, so we have the staff we need to deliver the care patients deserve.

Simon Stevens, NHS chief executive, said:

Nurses and midwives are the heartbeat of our NHS, and having a full team of staff is now the single most important route to a better NHS. Not only is this important for patients, for taxpayers it means reduced costs on expensive temp and agency staff. As we go into 2020 and the Year of the Nurse and Midwife, there's never been a better time for committed, skilled and caring people to choose nursing as a career.

Ruth May, chief nurse for England, said:

Nursing and midwifery are among the most rewarding roles it's possible to deliver, which is why it's great news to see a strong commitment to our professions from government through additional financial support, which will help encourage the best and brightest to kick-start a career helping patients, learn new skills and experience all of life's highs and lows in our NHS as a midwife or nurse.

As we deliver on our NHS Long Term Plan, we need anyone thinking about their next career move – young or old, man or woman, newcomer or returner – to come and join our drive to recruit and build a first-class team delivering world-class care to our patients.

All nursing, midwife and many allied health professional degree students will receive at least £5,000 a year with up to £3,000 further funding available for:

- specialist disciplines that struggle to recruit including mental health,
- an additional childcare allowance to help them balance their studies with family life, on top of the £1,000 already on offer.
- areas of the country which have seen a decrease in people accepted onto some nursing, midwifery and allied health courses over the past year.

This means that some students could be eligible for up to £8,000 in total support per year with everyone getting at least £5,000.

This funding will be available from next year, with further details on who can access the support in early 2020.

The new package will supplement existing support available to pre-registration undergraduate and postgraduate nursing students from the Department of Health and Social Care, including travel and accommodation costs for clinical placements, funding for students facing financial hardship and childcare support.

Students will also be able to continue to access the funding for tuition and maintenance loans from the Student Loan Company.

The measures will be part of the upcoming NHS People Plan which will set out work to reduce vacancies across the NHS and secure the staff needed for the future.

As part of a wider drive to ensure the NHS continues to have the staff it needs to meet demand and transform care, the Government has confirmed today that it is taking forward its commitment to carry out an urgent review of the pensions annual allowance taper problem that has caused some doctors to turn down extra shifts for fear of high tax bills.

Treasury and Health ministers will meet the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges

and the British Medical Association as part of this review and the Government will continue to hear evidence from other relevant professional bodies. The review will report at Budget.

The move bolsters NHS England's recent announcement of special arrangements for 2019/20, meaning no doctor in England will be worse off as a result of taking on extra shifts this winter.

The Government is also increasing day-to-day NHS funding so that by 2023/24 it will receive an extra £33.9 billion a year to deliver the NHS Long-Term Plan, ensuring that our health service is always there for those who need it.

Mark Radford, Chief Nurse, Health Education England, and Deputy CNO said:

Health Education England welcomes the news of this additional funding for nursing students. This is a clear commitment to increasing this NHS workforce in these vital areas and means we should be seeing an increase in people who wish to consider applying for these fulfilling and rewarding careers. This is one of the key interventions we will be taking alongside retention, course attrition, return to practice for the People Plan. We also need to do more to highlight the attractiveness and flexibility of nursing and midwifery careers that will in turn deliver safe and effective care to patients.

We continue to work with NHS England teamCNO and the HEI sector on the joint #WeAreTheNHS campaign working together focused on the UCAS application deadline in January to encourage more applications to a fantastic career.