

# £25 million boost for nurse training

- Up to £15 million for English universities to rapidly expand simulated learning for nursing and other healthcare students this year, providing flexibility during the pandemic
- £10 million for a new nationally recognised critical care qualification to boost the qualified workforce

The government has announced a £25 million boost for nurse training which will see nurses and other healthcare students benefit from expanded virtual training, and the launch of a new national critical care qualification for qualified nurses.

Up to £15 million of the funding will go to universities to invest in new simulated training facilities and technology. This can involve the use of virtual reality (VR) technology, manikins, role play, and smart phones, tablets or computers, allowing nursing students to practise their clinical skills in a safe environment. They will be able to train themselves on clinical procedures and simulate a realistic clinical setting with the support from experienced colleagues.

It comes after the Nursing and Midwifery Council announced up to 300 of the 2,300 clinical practice hours nurses need to complete during their degree can now be completed in simulated environments, due to the pandemic.

Alongside this, the government will also invest £10 million to develop a new, nationally recognised, critical care qualification for qualified nurses, which can also be accessed by a number of Allied Health professions. This will be rolled out for immediate use during the pandemic to help boost the number of people able to work in critical care.

Minister for Care Helen Whately said:

We are committed to training more nurses for the NHS and supporting professional development, and this £25 million investment will provide more innovative training opportunities for nurses.

Whilst there is no substitute for face to face training on wards, simulated training is a vital part of the curriculum and provides a safe space for students to develop their skills. Thanks to our investment, more nursing and other healthcare students will be able to benefit from the latest innovations and new technologies to better support their learning at this time.

The funding will also recognise our critical care nurses, who have played a crucial role during this pandemic, with a new nationally recognised qualification.

Professor Mark Radford, Chief Nurse, Health Education England said:

We welcome this support on simulation hours from the NMC in support of students, which will build on universities' existing expertise in the education of healthcare workers for the NHS and social care. During the COVID pandemic, we recognise and very much value the massive contribution of our students and universities, along with all NHS staff. This further investment will directly support students to further their studies and qualify.

Working with critical care organisations, we have rapidly designed new innovative education options to provide additional support to the NHS. It's vital that we look for as many diverse and flexible routes into training as possible, and this announcement will help make the most of the technology available to support nurses on that journey.

Dr Katerina Kolyva, Executive Director of the Council, said:

The COVID crisis has put unprecedented pressure on practice placement capacity for students. Many universities have responded by increasing student exposure to simulated experiences. The most up to date technology offers some amazing opportunities for learning but is also expensive. We appreciate the flexibility shown by professional regulators over the past year, which has allowed universities to use simulation more creatively on some courses.

This new investment will go some way to helping universities provide the equipment and facilities necessary to take advantage of this flexibility. Over time sustained investment in infrastructure and staffing would allow the nation to educate more nurses, midwives and allied health professionals for the health and social care sector.

Matthew McClelland, Executive Director of Strategy and Insight at the Nursing and Midwifery Council, said:

We're committed to supporting our students and professionals during the challenges and workforce pressures posed by the pandemic.

That's why we introduced our recent, temporary [COVID-19 recovery standard](#), which provides greater flexibility for educators to use simulated learning where nursing students aren't able to go into or experience practice placements in the usual way.

I really welcome this announcement by the government, which will support education institutions in England to innovate and invest in simulation and will also help to expand the critical care workforce.

Increasing simulation hours and training facilities will help reduce the pressures on clinical placement capacity across the NHS and social care during the pandemic, and help students get the training they need to qualify and join the workforce.

The new critical care qualification will help staff to develop skills which can be transferred across organisations, providing them with more flexibility to work at hospitals across the country.

The £15 million funding will be provided via immediate grant allocations to universities to help to rapidly expand student nurse simulated learning from this year.

More detail will be published on the qualification in due course.

### **Case studies**

Birmingham City University is running online simulations for third year students on the Transition to Qualified Practice module, with actors playing patients in ward-based scenarios to develop their clinical decision-making skills.

The Royal College of Nursing has developed the Introducing Critical Care programme, where students can print flash cards and access bite-sized learning resources on their smartphones for more flexibility.

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## **Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak call with US Treasury Secretary, Janet Yellen**

News story

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak and US Treasury Secretary, Janet Yellen spoke on the phone earlier this evening (15 March 2021) to discuss a possible new allocation of Special Drawing Rights.



Both agreed that a new Special Drawing Rights (SDR) allocation could form an important part of a package of support for low income countries and could be vital for securing a truly global recovery.

The Chancellor has previously signalled that progress on a new allocation would be a priority for the UK's G7 presidency. Sunak and Yellen discussed how to use Friday's G7 meeting to work towards a possible agreement by the IMF Spring Meetings. Negotiations are ongoing.

Following his meeting with US Climate Envoy John Kerry last week (8 March 2021), the Chancellor reiterated the case for progress on climate and environmental issues in the G7, including on sustainability-related financial disclosures and impact reporting and climate finance to support the global transition to Net Zero.

Both looked forward to speaking again at Friday's meeting of G7 Finance Ministers.

#### **Further information**

- The SDR is an international reserve asset issued by the IMF to member countries through periodic allocations. SDR allocations are a low-cost way of boosting international reserves and providing liquidity to vulnerable countries
- There have been four previous allocations of SDRs: in 1970-72; 1979-81; and two in 2009, to make a total of \$293 billion allocated to date

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**[Government's Community Housing Fund](#)**

# helps meet local housing need

News story

With support from the fund, Haddenham Community Land Trust is building 19 affordable homes to meet the needs of people in Cambridgeshire



Mark Hugo and Rachel Watts of the Haddenham Community Land Trust and Paul Elliot, Site Manager for Palace Green Homes handed over the keys to Max and Chloe, the first residents at Ovins Rise.

Situated to the north east of Cambridge, Ely and its surrounding villages are areas of high housing demand. This has made it difficult for some local people to find good sized affordable housing.

To address this issue and wider community needs Haddenham Community Land Trust was set up by local volunteers in 2016. Through the CLT, they hoped to develop homes close to the village that would be reserved for local people and available as affordable housing for generations to come.

The trust identified suitable land for development on a site near the centre of the village and with £42,975 of revenue funding from the Government's Community Housing Fund was able to fund the legal costs associated with the scheme, and help ensure the community-owned homes stay reserved for local people in perpetuity.

With the support of Haddenham Parish Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and in partnership with property developers Palace Green Homes, the trust secured planning permission and is developing seven bungalows and 12 houses, 17 of which will be available for rent and two for shared ownership.

In January, the trust welcomed tenants to its first properties on the site.

Nick Abbey, a trustee of Haddenham Community Land Trust said: "Our aim is to give people who live and work in Haddenham more say in how they want the village to develop in ways that benefit the whole community.

“It’s fantastic to be able to hand over the keys to our first residents. Homes England’s funding has helped us help local people to remain in the place they love.”

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## [Consultation on autumn series 2021](#)

News story

A 2-week consultation has started on how an autumn exam series for GCSEs, AS and A levels should run this year.



Ofqual is seeking views on how an autumn exam series for GCSEs, AS and A levels should run this year, in a [consultation published today](#) (17 March).

We are keen to hear from students, teachers, exam boards and the wider education sector on our proposals, which include:

- the autumn series being open to any student who entered or who had intended to enter to take exams this summer
- holding AS and A level exams in October and GCSE exams in November/early December
- grades being determined by a student’s exam performance only
- students being able to use the better of the summer or autumn grade
- the use of the normal reviews of marking and appeal arrangements

The consultation follows the cancellation of GCSEs, AS and A level exams this summer because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. When the government set out its [policy on how grades would be awarded](#) it also confirmed it wanted students to have the opportunity to take exams in the autumn.

The consultation will be open until 9 April 2021.

Separately, we are also publishing an [analysis of responses to our consultation on support materials and advance information for GCSE, AS and A level exams](#).

That consultation was launched in December last year, prior to exams being cancelled, and sought views on ways in which summer 2021 exams could have been made less daunting for students.

The cancellation of exams meant it was no longer relevant and no decisions have been taken as a result. We have today published the analysis in the interests of transparency.

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## [Islands Growth Deal worth £335 million signed](#)

Today [17 March 2021], UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart joined the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Michael Matheson, and leaders of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands Council, and Shetland Islands Council to sign the [Heads of Terms for the Islands Growth Deal](#).

The agreement outlines plans for the UK and Scottish governments to each invest £50 million in the future economic prosperity of Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides. This is anticipated to unlock a further £235 million of investment from project partners, delivering a combined £335 million boost for the islands.

The 10-year programme of investment has the ambitious target of creating up to 1,300 jobs and tackling the depopulation concerns facing many parts of the three island archipelagos.

The proposals, which are all subject to full business case approval, aim to put the islands at the forefront of the transition to net zero and support thriving, sustainable communities.

UK Government Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart said:

Today we have signed a transformational deal which will bring jobs, investment and innovation to communities across all three island areas.

These exciting plans show the path to a fairer, more sustainable, more prosperous future as we build back better from the pandemic.

The UK Government's £50 million investment will boost green jobs and innovation in: sustainable energy, health, tourism, food and drink, and decarbonisation.

Across Scotland we have committed more than £1.5 billion to Growth Deals.

The deal outlines eighteen project proposals spread across the islands. Some of the plans which could receive UK Government investment include:

- The Shell-volution – a new and innovative means of enabling expansion in the low carbon and sustainable mussel farming sector in Shetland, and more widely in Scotland.
- The Orkney Community Vertical Farm – focused on agricultural innovation and creating an islands' vertical farm.
- Islands Centre for Net Zero – supporting the energy transition for all three island groups and creating sustainable "green" jobs within the islands for 300 people.
- The Outer Hebrides Energy Hub – establishing the initial infrastructure necessary to support the production of Green Hydrogen from renewable energy (Onshore and Offshore Wind).
- The Outer Hebrides Destination Development – focusing on key aspects of island heritage such as St Kilda, the world renowned Callanish standing stones and experiences based on the history of the islanders.

The full [Heads of Terms agreement](#) sets out further details on the proposed projects and aims of the deal.

Partners will now be working towards the development of full business cases for approval by both governments, with the anticipation of funding being approved and released from 2022/23 onwards.