

Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science
The Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear Minister,

We are writing to you today regarding our concerns about the decision to exclude college students from the NHS life insurance scheme.

This decision will result in over 1,200 students across Scotland being unable to complete their vital NHS work placements. The reality is that, without this mandatory on-the-job training, students who are studying HNC Care and Administrative Practice or HNC Social Services will be unable to qualify and graduate. This is particularly concerning for three reasons: many students will use these college courses either as an articulation route to first year of university or as an accelerated route to enter the second year of nursing at university; a large proportion of students on the HNC courses come from SIMD40 areas and have already faced significant barriers to education; the NHS pipeline of frontline workers will be negatively impacted.

A key point to note is that HN-level students who have been excluded from the scheme are studying at SCQF level 7; this is the same level as those in the first year of university who the Scottish Government have offered insurance cover to.

While we understand that there may be complexities in this matter, placements are due to start the week commencing 16th November – we urge prompt resolution to address this. We are concerned that students will lose out on crucial training opportunities that, ultimately, will prevent them from gaining professional and vocational qualifications. Additionally, our NHS will miss out on a new generation of brilliant Healthcare professionals and nurses in its time of greatest need.

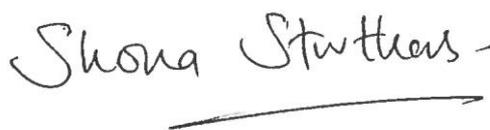
We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Matt and Shona



Matt Crilly
President, NUS Scotland



Shona Struthers
Chief Executive, Colleges Scotland