

Julie Morgan AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Deputy Minister for Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1226  
Ein cyf/Our ref JMSS/10572/21

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

14 December 2021

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 5 November as Chair of the Petitions Committee to the Minister for Health and Social Services, Eluned Morgan MS, which outlined the petition from Cardiff University Social Work Masters Cohort. The petition called for the removal of barriers to entry to social work and encouraging parity of esteem between social care and health. I am responding as the Minister responsible for social services.

We are committed to working towards parity of esteem between the social care and health workforces and are taking steps to improve the working conditions of social care workers and to professionalise the sector through registration.

Social Care Wales is leading the development of a social work Workforce Plan, which will include looking at what changes could be made to support people to train as social workers in Wales, including in relation to the bursary. This is one of the early actions being taken forward under the joint HEIW and SCW "Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy." It is expected that the draft workforce plan will be available in the New Year.

With regard to the specific issue raised on postgraduate funding for social workers, a discrepancy in the regulations governing student funding has prevented postgraduate students who have chosen to accept the social work bursary from accessing some student loans. We have been working with the Student Loans Company to look at how we might make changes to the regulations to allow postgraduates access to additional funding support through Student Finance Wales. When finalised, these changes would mean that eligible students will be able to seek an additional reduced loan from Student Finance Wales (SFW) like undergraduate students. However, this will require some amendment to the eligibility criteria set out in regulations, a process which is still being worked through,

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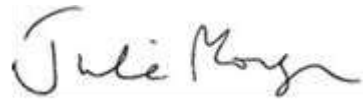
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

and due to the timescales for introducing such regulations, any changes would not come into force until the 2022/23 academic year.

I hope this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Morgan'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Julie Morgan AS/MS**

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Deputy Minister for Social Services