

Cardiff University- Nursing

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 22 September 2025

Petitions Committee | 22 Medi 2025

Reference: RS25/11930/3

Introduction

Petition Number: P-06-1516

Petition title: Enable Cardiff University to keep the Nursing degree course

Text of petition:

Cardiff University's intention to cut the nursing degree programme is a huge loss to the future of nursing and the NHS. The loss in staff will have a significant impact on current students' studies. In 2023 Cardiff University's nursing programme ranked 1st in Wales and 5th in the UK. Cutting the course is not the solution nor is it in the best interest of healthcare in Wales. Nursing needs to be supported to be a viable degree option through improved student bursary funding.

The text provided above is submitted by the petitioner. The petitions team make every effort to ensure it preserves their authentic voice. This text has not been verified for accuracy, or errors, and may contain unverified opinions or assertions.

Mae'r testun uchod yn cael ei gyflwyno gan y deisebydd. Mae'r tîm deisebau yn gwneud pob ymdrech i sicrhau ei fod yn cadw ei lais dilys. Nid yw'r testun hwn wedi'i wirio am gywirdeb, neu wallau, a gall gynnwys barn neu honiadau heb eu gwirio.



1. Background

1.1. Update

Since this petition (P-06-1516) was opened, Cardiff University has announced the intention to retain nursing albeit with smaller cohorts and a new delivery model.

This briefing will cover why nursing was proposed to be cut by Cardiff University and how the current decision to retain nursing has developed.

Further information on the funding element of the nursing degree is provided to inform consideration of the petitions call for improved student bursary funding.

1.2. The consultation

On 28 January 2025, Cardiff University launched an official consultation on “proposed changes designed to realise its ambitions and secure the University’s long-term future”, entitled ‘[Our Academic Future](#)’.

Within this consultation, nursing was proposed for discontinuation, stated to be because of factors beyond finances including National Student Survey scores, ability to meet recruitment targets that are externally set, and the challenges of recruiting students in competition with other local providers.

As part of the Children, Young People and Education Committee’s (CYPE) short piece of work exploring the challenges facing the HE sector, the Chair wrote to all Welsh Universities, [the letters can be found here](#). Cardiff University’s [written response](#) to this letter confirmed these factors as contributing to its decision to propose discontinuing nursing provision. Additionally, in an oral evidence session held on 12 June, these factors were [reiterated to the Committee](#).

1.3. Response to announcement and decision to retain nursing

There was a strong response to Cardiff University’s ‘Our Academic Future’ consultation from a range of stakeholders. This included [Health Education and Improvement Wales](#) (HEIW) and the [Royal College of Nursing](#) (RCN) (Wales) calling for Cardiff University to retain its nursing provision.

In April 2025, media outlets, such as [the BBC](#), reported that Cardiff University was putting its plans on hold to close the nursing department, as an alternative plan was being considered. The BBC reported this alternative proposal included teaching smaller undergraduate nursing cohorts. Although this alternative

proposal was contingent on further discussions with the Welsh Government and NHS bodies.

Organisations such as [UNISON](#) and [RCN \(Wales\)](#) stated the decision for Cardiff University to keep its School of Nursing was the right decision. Though RCN (Wales) criticised the handling of the situation by Cardiff University.

This alternative proposal was included within a presentation of the Our Academic Future business case presented to the University's Council on 17 June 2025. On 18 June 2025, [a letter to students](#) confirmed the University Council approved the business case.

1.4. Call for improved bursary funding

The petitioner is not alone in calling for improved bursary funding. On 12 May 2025, following Cardiff University's stating it intends to retain nursing, [RCN \(Wales\)](#) called for better financial support for student nurses. This call cited 'stagnant' financial support for nursing students during a 'spiralling cost of living crisis'.

There are two statutory funding streams:

1. NHS Wales Bursary
2. Standard student package

The NHS Wales Bursary Scheme provides financial support for home UK students studying an eligible healthcare course in Wales, who are willing to commit to working in Wales after qualifying.

[Health Education Improvement Wales \(HEIW\)](#) produced an infographic to outline what students may receive from the NHS Wales Bursary Scheme for the 2024/25 academic year. This includes a non-repayable grant of up to £1,000 per academic year, tuition fees of £9,000 per academic year (which do not need to be repaid if recipients complete the requirement to work in Wales) and a means tested grant (based on household income) of up to £2,643 if living away from the parental home or £2,207 if living in parental home.

The websites of [Bangor University](#) and [Cardiff University](#) state the same figures are available for the 2025/26 academic year.

Changes made for the 2024/25 academic year included allowing eligible full-time, Welsh-domiciled students to access the full amount of maintenance support from Student Finance Wales, in addition to the NHS Bursary. A [written statement](#) from the then Health Minister in November 2023, Eluned Morgan, stated this change was implemented to help students during the cost of living crisis.

[HEIW's website](#) states this change replaces the previous system of students only having access to a reduced rate of maintenance loan available.

[HEIW's infographic](#) outlines that for the 2024/25 academic year, the maximum amount of maintenance loan available for Welsh domiciled students was £9,315 for students living in parental home or £11,150 for students living elsewhere. In comparison, the reduced rate maintenance loan which would have been available would have been £4,475 for students living in parental home or £5,360 for students living elsewhere.

Figures for the academic year 2025/26 are included in Student Finance Wales' [NHS Guidance](#). The maximum amount of maintenance loan available for students living in parental home is £9,480 while the maximum available for students living elsewhere is £11,345.

HEIW published a separate set of [FAQs for May 2025](#). This publication indicated that all eligible full-time, Welsh domiciled students receiving the NHS Wales Bursary have access to the full maintenance loan from Student Finance Wales. However the FAQs say that all other UK applicants may be eligible for the reduced rate of student maintenance loan from their respective Student Finance funding body and would need to speak with them directly.

Additional allowances may also be available to some students dependent on personal circumstances. [HEIW's FAQs for September 2024](#) lists such allowances which include; a Dependants Allowance, a Parent Learning Allowance, a Childcare Allowance, a Disabled Students Allowance and an allowance to cover clinical/practice placement costs. In addition, there is also a means tested 'Extra Weeks Allowance' available for those whose chosen courses run for more than 30 weeks. Each of the above have individual eligibility criteria.

Students also have the option to opt out of the NHS Wales Bursary scheme and instead opt for the full package of support from Student Finance Wales if they desire to do so as stipulated in Student Finance Wales' [NHS guidance](#).

2. Welsh Government action

In Welsh Government's response to this petition, the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Vicky Howells MS, has reiterated the position that it would not be appropriate for Welsh Ministers to intervene in such matters given Welsh universities are autonomous institutions responsible for their own academic affairs, including course delivery and provision.

While not intervening directly with universities decisions regarding course delivery and provision, the Minister stated she has been engaged in dialogue within the higher education sector and has met with the Vice Chancellor of every Welsh university as well as representatives of unions.

The Minister also outlined that Cardiff University and Health Education Improvement Wales (HEIW) have been working on the future of nursing provision at Cardiff with planning underway to retain the Nursing Department and to continue delivering its nursing provision. Welsh Government says it expects to receive a full working plan from them over the coming weeks (letter dated 17 July 2025).

Regarding the funding available to students, Welsh Government allowed access for eligible students to gain the full amount of maintenance loan from Student Finance Wales in addition to the Bursary from academic year 2024/25 to help students deal with the cost of living crisis.

Further to this change in the financial support available, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care stated in March 2025 that Welsh Government is launching a consultation later this year to help understand the incentives and conditions needed to continue to attract students to study and work in Wales beyond graduation.

With the change of enabling Welsh domiciled learners access to the full Student Finance Wales maintenance loan in addition to the NHS Wales Bursary scheme, FAQs published by HEIW state “The Welsh Government are unable to make decisions or influence student support policy provided by other home nations”.

3. Welsh Parliament action

The Children Young People and Education Committee is conducting a short piece of work looking at the challenges facing Welsh Universities including the proposed changes at Cardiff University.

On 12 June 2025 Vice-Chancellor Wendy Lerner attended Committee to give evidence alongside Cardiff University’s Chair of Council, Patrick Younge. During this evidence session Committee heard Cardiff University “plan to retain nursing”.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings

are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.