

P-04-659 – Pay Student Nurses their full Travel Costs

This petition was submitted by Steffan Thomas, having collected 102 signatures.

Text of Petition

In 2014 the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) changed its policy on travel to placements, the work component of a nursing course. Before this change, students were paid travel expenses from their home to their place of work. Now students are paid the cost of travel from their home, or the university at which they study. The smallest distance is then used to calculate the payment they receive.

Student nurses without dependents in Wales receive a bursary of approx. £100 to £500 a month. The higher figure, spread across their work hours, reaches the minimum wage at best. On placements, student nurses are expected to take on an increasing number of the responsibilities of a nurse. They provide care – washing, dressing, feeding patients; talking to patients and families; working with healthcare professionals to improve patients' well-being. They are also called on to show learning from these placements, and hone their skills in patient care.

The cut in travel allowances for these work placements means a total cut in the amount received for being student nurse.

This change has several ill effects It creates an incentive for Universities to place students near as possible to campus – limiting the clinical experience of student nurses before qualification It makes nursing less attractive to people from rural or isolated communities It privileges nurses who live nearer to their university, and could discourage those who are unable to move because of commitments to children and others. It makes nursing less attractive to people in full-time work, or from deprived backgrounds.

We believe that student nurses should be paid their travel costs where they live, to the places they work. We believe this change makes it less likely that people will choose a nursing career, and we believe that it will limit the range of experience that they have prior to qualification. We call on the WAG to reverse this change, for the benefit of student nurses and their patients.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Neath
- South Wales West