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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government
Consultation – summary of response

Student Support Arrangements

Health Related Education and Training Programmes in Wales

November 2018

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

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1. Introduction

As a government our aim is to improve health and well-being in Wales, for individuals, families and communities, helping us to act on our ambition of prosperity for all, taking significant steps to shift our approach from treatment to prevention.

We need to maintain, and where appropriate, increase the number of individuals pursuing education and training opportunities to enable them to contribute to the health system in Wales.

It is important to balance the level of support provided by Welsh tax payers with the contribution individuals make post qualification to service provision in Wales. It is also important to ensure the investment we make to support individuals is targeted in a way that assists by removing as many barriers to study as possible. To do this, the student support arrangements in place must address any issues students see as barriers to studying. The student support arrangements consultation was an opportunity to listen to what students and employers are telling us about the nature of the support required.

On 23 April the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services confirmed the NHS Wales Bursary Scheme would remain in place for individuals electing to study an eligible health care related programme in Wales commencing in the academic year 2019 / 20.

The consultation began on **10 May 2018** and closed on **1 August 2018**.

2 Context

It is important to ensure the investment made in healthcare education and training provides the right type of support to encourage individuals to consider healthcare as a career.

In England, the NHS Bursary grant scheme was replaced in favour of a loans-based approach. In Wales, Welsh ministers chose to retain the NHS Bursary scheme and from 2017/18 a new criteria was applied to the NHS Bursary Scheme which meant that only those individuals prepared to commit to work in Wales for a specified period post qualification (e.g. two years employment for a three year programme) were eligible to apply for an enhanced support package. Individuals who do not feel they can commit to this specified period of employment are not eligible to receive the benefits of the NHS Wales Bursary Scheme.

In subsequently years the NHS Bursary scheme arrangements have been rolled over, and most recently earlier this year, the Cabinet Secretary announced the NHS Bursary arrangements would be extended in Wales for students starting their studies in September 2019.

This consultation has provided an opportunity to consider a range of issues that need to be taken into consideration as part of the development of the future support arrangements for students studying health care related programmes.

3 Key findings

The consultation covered a range of topics and the key themes that emerged were:

- 96% of respondents agreed that support to those studying health care related programmes should continue.
- 87% of respondents agreed the format of healthcare courses should be recognised and addressed through any future arrangements.
- 85% of respondents agreed placement capacity should be led through a commissioning process led by HE&IW.
- 85% of respondents agreed that any package of enhanced support for individuals should continue to be based on a commitment to working in Wales for a post qualification employment period (PQEP).
- 52% of respondents agreed that an exception should be made to allow first degree holders wishing to study a second degree on a healthcare programme in England to have access to student support.
- 81% of respondents agreed that support provided for second and subsequent support packages for health related programmes should be conditional upon individuals committing to work in Wales post qualification.
- 57% of respondents agreed that the student support programmes for medical and dental programmes should be aligned with those for other health related programmes in the future.
- In terms of future options, Option 3 was the most popular choice, with 40% of respondents agreeing for Healthcare students to receive the standard maintenance support package offered by Student Finance Wales, and an NHS Bursary to cover the funding of full tuition fees up to a maximum and an additional funding element for additional costs for clinical placements – subject to agreeing a post-qualification employment period.

4 Consultation Undertaken

There has been a series of engagement activity undertaken to date, which includes:

- I. Formal consultation
 - II. Two stakeholder meetings with Welsh language groups
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- i) The formal consultation was open for 12 weeks and received 80 responses through a designated NHS Wales Bursary Scheme consultation mailbox and online consultation response form. A full list of the organisations who responded is listed in annex A, the table on the following page shows a breakdown of the responses.
 - ii) In addition to the formal responses, two workshops took place over the summer to identify and explore issues considered important to both Welsh speaking students and the provision of Welsh language service. The following organisations were represented at the workshops:

- i. Cardiff and Vale College,
- ii. Gower College,
- iii. Mentrau Iaith and
- iv. Coleg y Cenedlaethol

Individual	34
NHS Organisations	13
Professional Bodies /Professional Groups	12
Higher Education Institutions, Education Bodies and Royal Colleges	17
Regulatory Body	2
Third Sector	2
Total	80

A summary of the responses for each question is set out below and will inform the development of future support arrangements.

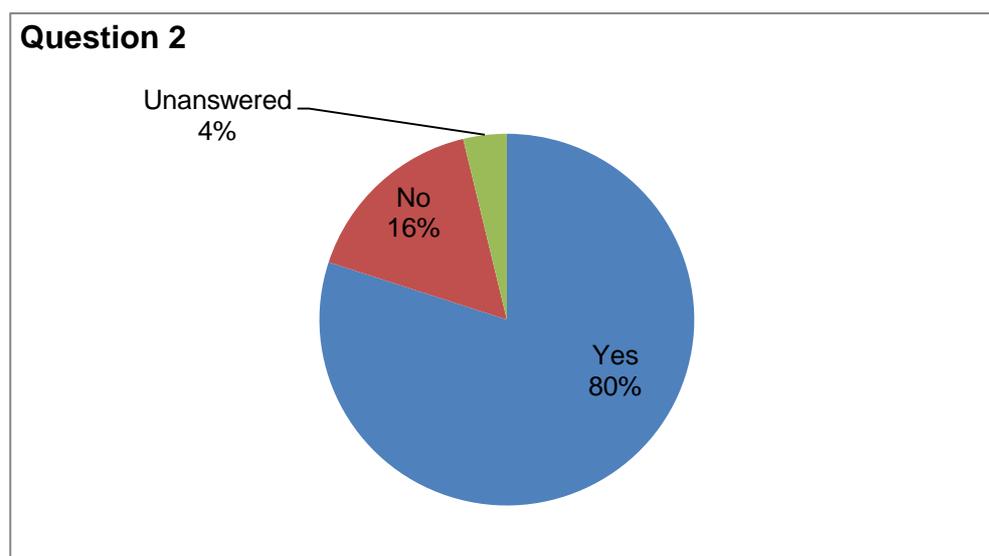
Question 1: *Should the Welsh Government continue to provide support to those studying health care related programmes?*

96% of respondents agreed that support should continue.

Place of Study

Question 2: *Do you agree any Bursary arrangements established for the future should continue to be based on supporting individuals who choose to study in Wales regardless of their domicile?*

80% of respondents agreed that any future arrangements should continue to support all individuals who choose to study in Wales, rather than focussing on an individual students domicile status.



Clinical placements

Question 3: *Do you agree the format of healthcare courses should be recognised and addressed through any future arrangements?*

Question 4: *Do you have any views about ways in which this can be addressed?*

87% of respondents agreed the format of healthcare courses should be recognised and addressed through any future student support arrangements. The responses included, but are not limited to:

- Concerns about opportunities for students to supplement their income as the current student support system prevents students taking on paid work, especially over the summer.
- Suggested that future student support should be available to all students and not just domicile welsh students.

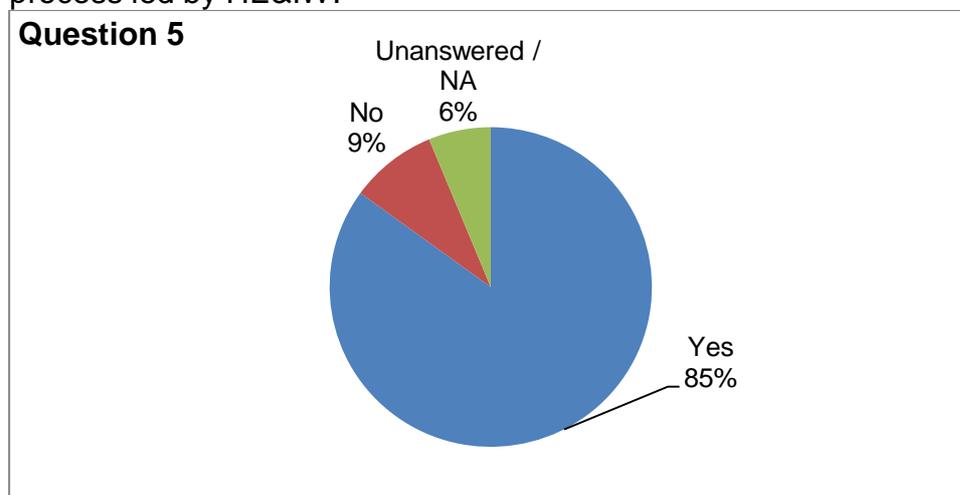
Of the 87% of respondents were agreed with question 3, 46% of respondents did not suggest any specific views about how the format of healthcare courses should be recognised and addressed through any future arrangements. The views expressed, included (but not limited to) the following themes listed below:

- Future student support arrangements should include a wider range of placements and a mechanism to evaluate placements against student experience.
- Future funding should include living costs and not just the non-income assessed NHS Bursary of up to £9,000 per year for students in Wales (i.e. tuition fees).
- Future student support arrangements must be sustainable and the bursary should only support programmes that lead to a registration.
- To provide better support for mature students.

Ensuring quality placements

Question 5: *Do you agree placement capacity should continue to be managed through a commissioning process, which in the future would be led by Health Education and Improvement Wales?*

85% of respondents agreed placement capacity should be led through a commissioning process led by HE&IW.

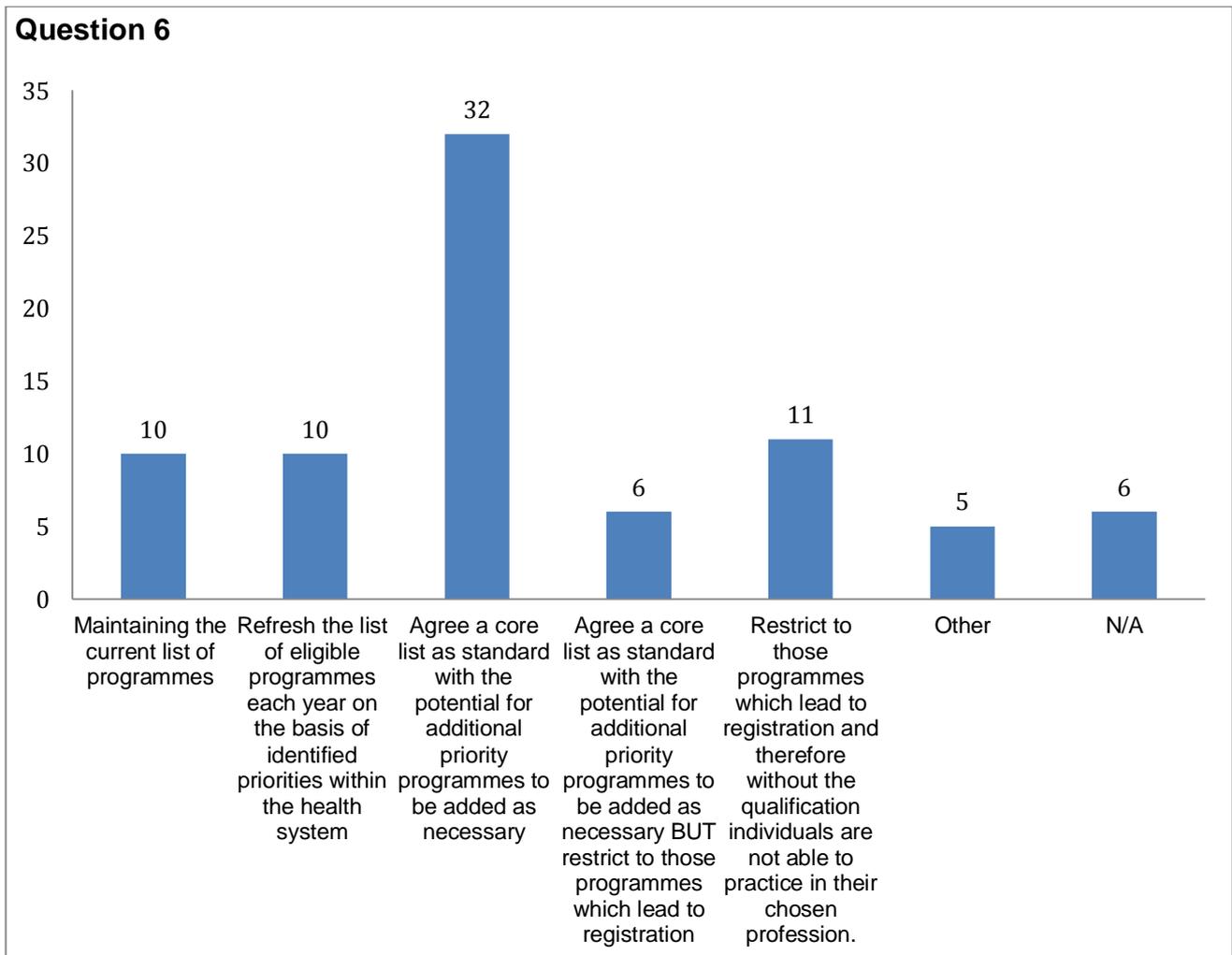


Programmes supported through the current NHS Wales Bursary arrangements

Question 6: *Should the NHS Bursary continue in the future what methodology should be used to determine which education and training programmes should be supported through a revised health student support arrangements?*

- *Maintaining the current list of programmes*
- *Refresh the list of eligible programmes each year on the basis of identified priorities within the health system*
- *Agree a core list as standard with the potential for additional priority programmes to be added as necessary*
- *Restrict to those programmes which lead to registration and therefore without the qualification individuals are not able to practice in their chosen profession.*
- *Other*

Over a third of respondents (38 out of 80) agreed that a core list of education and training programmes should be standard with the potential for additional priority programmes to be added as necessary. Of the 38 respondents, a small number (6) felt the core list should be restricted to programmes leading to a registration.



Question 7: *Are there other approaches which you consider could be applied, if so, please specify?*

Of the respondents, 63% did not express a view. Of the 37% who did suggest an approach, views included but are not limited to the following suggestions:

- The future methodology should consider the workforce demographics to be able to predict shortages for future funding;
- There should be an agreed core list of subjects but with flexibility to add priority programmes;
- In the future, NHS workforce planning teams should be better aligned with health education providers;
- Future support should only include programmes which lead to registration.

Post qualification employment period

Question 8: *Do you agree that any package of enhanced support for individuals should continue to require individuals to commit to a proportionate period of post-qualification employment in Wales?*

85% of respondents agreed for the post qualification employment period (PQEP) should remain with individuals committing to working in Wales for a PQEP in return for an enhanced support package. 10% of respondents disagreed and 5% did not answer the question.

The majority of respondents were in support of retaining the PQEP, with one respondents highlighting the process as resource intensive and suggested it could become unmanageable in the future. It was suggested that the future system could be based upon asking students to commit in a less formal way and offering some sort of reward for working in Wales on graduation.

Question 9

Do you agree that the post qualification criteria should be extended to include other employment settings?

Question 10

If so, please specify these settings? (It would also help if you could provide reasons for each new setting suggested)

Nearly two thirds (65%) of respondents agreed there should be an extension to include other employment settings, 22% disagreed, 5% were unsure and 8% said it was not applicable.

Of the 65% who agreed, nearly half of these respondents (44%) did not suggest any additional specific settings. Those that did express a view included but are not limited to the following:

- Independent care homes – including care in community
- Settings outside of clinical settings to provide public sector intergration
- Any setting that offers health and social care services
- Any setting working towards mental health agenda
- Voluntary independent sectors.

Funding arrangements for additional education and training programmes

Question 11

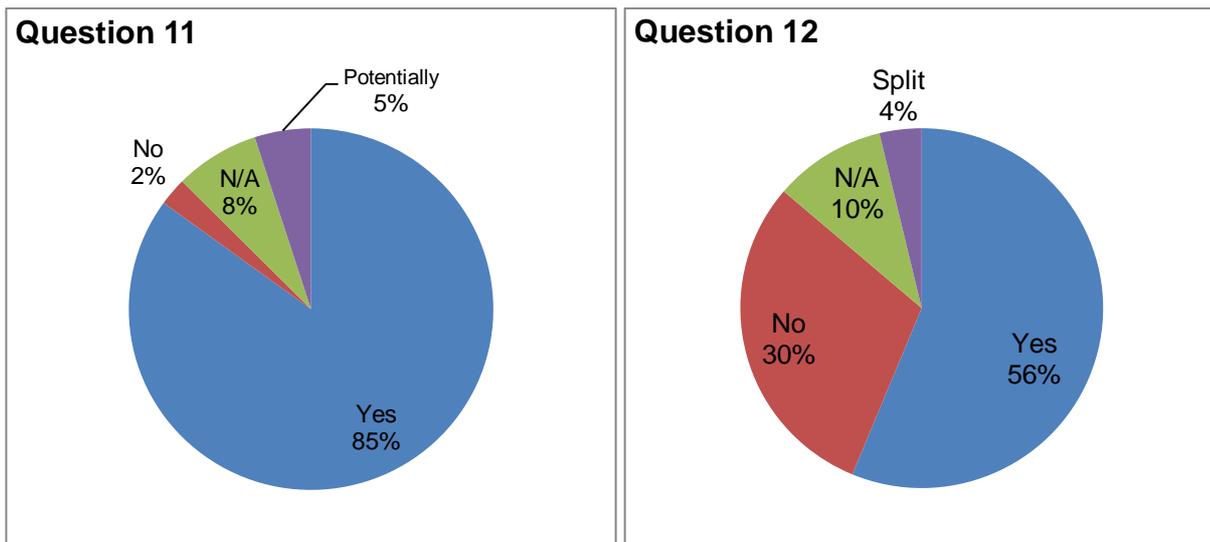
Do you think individuals who have received support for an initial programme should be able to receive support through a Bursary arrangement to undertake additional education and training programmes?

Question 12

If yes, Do you think second and subsequent programmes should only be supported where the health system in Wales is experiencing difficulties with workforce capacity in specific areas?

85% of respondents agreed that individuals who have received support for an initial programme should be able to receive support through a Bursary arrangement to undertake additional education and training programmes. 8% said it was not applicable and 2% answered no. 5% of respondents 'potentially agreed' and presented the following reasons:

- Only in those circumstances where there is a requirement to meet service needs as identified by HEIW
- Welsh Language requirements
- Any setting where professional registration is required



Just over half of respondents (56%) agreed that second and subsequent programmes should only be supported where the health system in Wales is experiencing difficulties with workforce capacity in specific areas.

However it was suggested if the policy was amended to support this, students may need a special exemption to access the standard undergraduate student support package if Wales chooses to incorporate mainstream student funding into the support system for health students (As in England). Nearly a third of respondents (30%) disagreed that funding second and subsequent programmes should only be supported in shortage professions, and a further 4% were divided. Reasons stated with this funding suggestion included:

- A second degree would be shorter and cheaper in comparison;
- Career development – system should support professionals to retrain;
- Change in personal circumstances.

Second degree issue for those in receipt of student finance support

Question 13

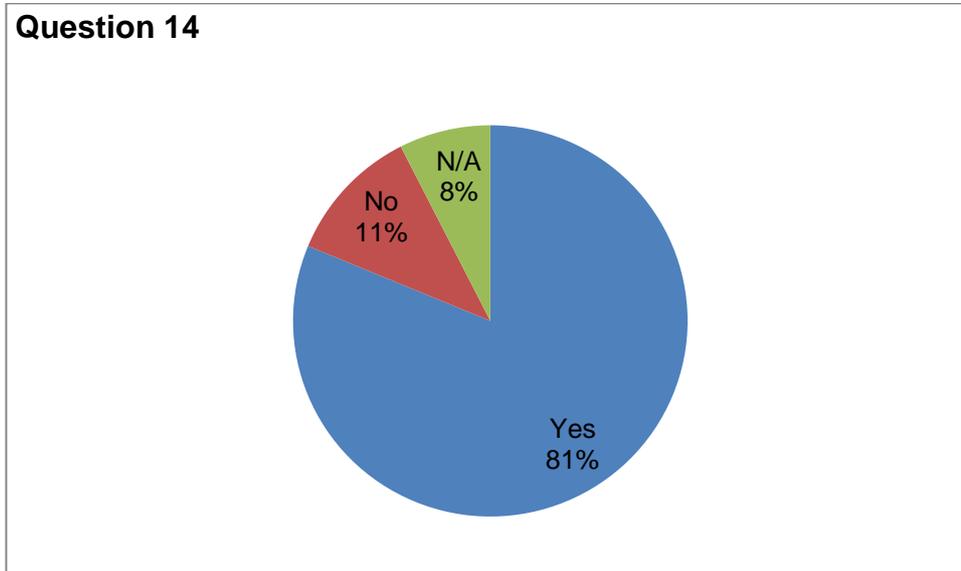
Should an exception be made to allow first degree holders wishing to study a second degree on a healthcare programme in England access to student support, whilst non healthcare students are not eligible for additional support?

About half of respondents (52%) agreed that an exception should be made to allow first degree holders wishing to study a second degree on a healthcare programme in England to have access to student support (whilst non healthcare students are not eligible for additional support). About a third (35%) of respondents disagreed and stated there should be no exception and 13% did not answer express an opinion.

Question 14

Should the support provided for second and subsequent support packages for health related programmes be conditional upon individuals committing to work in Wales post qualification?

Four out of five respondents agreed that support provided for second and subsequent support packages for health related programmes should be conditional upon individuals committing to work in Wales post qualification (81%). 8% did not express an opinion and 11% disagreed with the post qualification employment period commitment for support for second and subsequent programmes of study.



Equality Impact

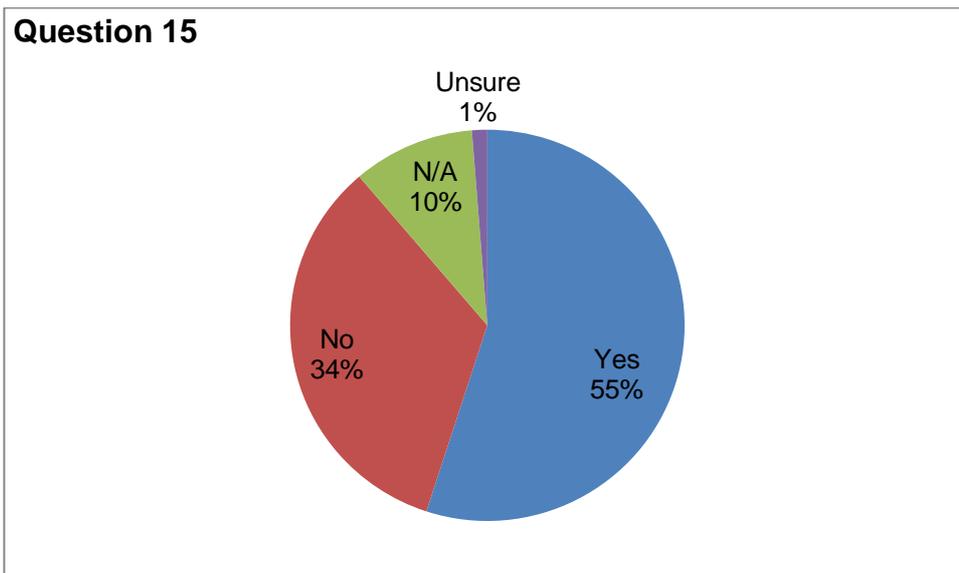
Question 15

Do you consider there are issues which relate to equality and diversity which should be taken into account in developing future policy in this area?

Question 16

If you answered yes, please highlight the issues you feel should be taken into account.

Over half of the respondents (55%) consider there are issues which relate to equality and diversity which should be taken into account in developing future policy in this area?



Of the respondents who identified specific issues for consideration, the following were highlighted:

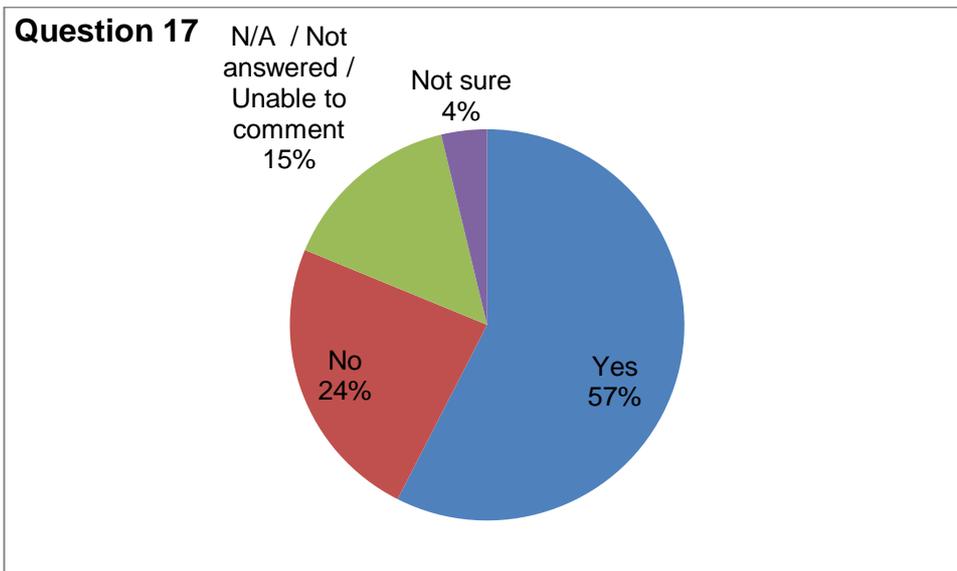
- Protecting all characteristics including maternity and paternity issues
- Prioritising welsh domicile students
- Removing all financial barriers, current system favours higher income families.
- Workforce must reflect the community they serve, of which mature students are paramount.

Medical and Dental student support package

Question 17

Should support programmes be aligned with those for other health related programmes in the future? (medical and dental)

Just over half of the respondents (57%) agreed the student support programmes should be aligned with those for other health related programmes in the future. Nearly a quarter of respondents (24%) did not agree to aligning the support and 15% did not answer or were unable to comment. Of the 4% of respondents who were 'not sure' felt these professions would attract higher salaries than other healthcare professionals and so the bigger loan debt would be less of a problem due to their earning potential. These respondents also suggested if these programmes were aligned, there should be an increased requirement to work in public practice in Wales post qualification.



Options

Question 18

Which of the proposed options do you think is the most appropriate for the long-term sustainability of the NHS workforce in Wales?

Option 1: Healthcare students receive the standard student support package, through Student Finance Wales, in the same way as other students. This would not be subject to an agreement regarding post-qualification employment

Option 2: Healthcare students receive the standard maintenance support package through Student Finance Wales. An NHS Bursary would cover the funding of full tuition fees up to a maximum and an additional funding element for additional costs for clinical placements. This would not be subject to an agreement regarding post-qualification employment.

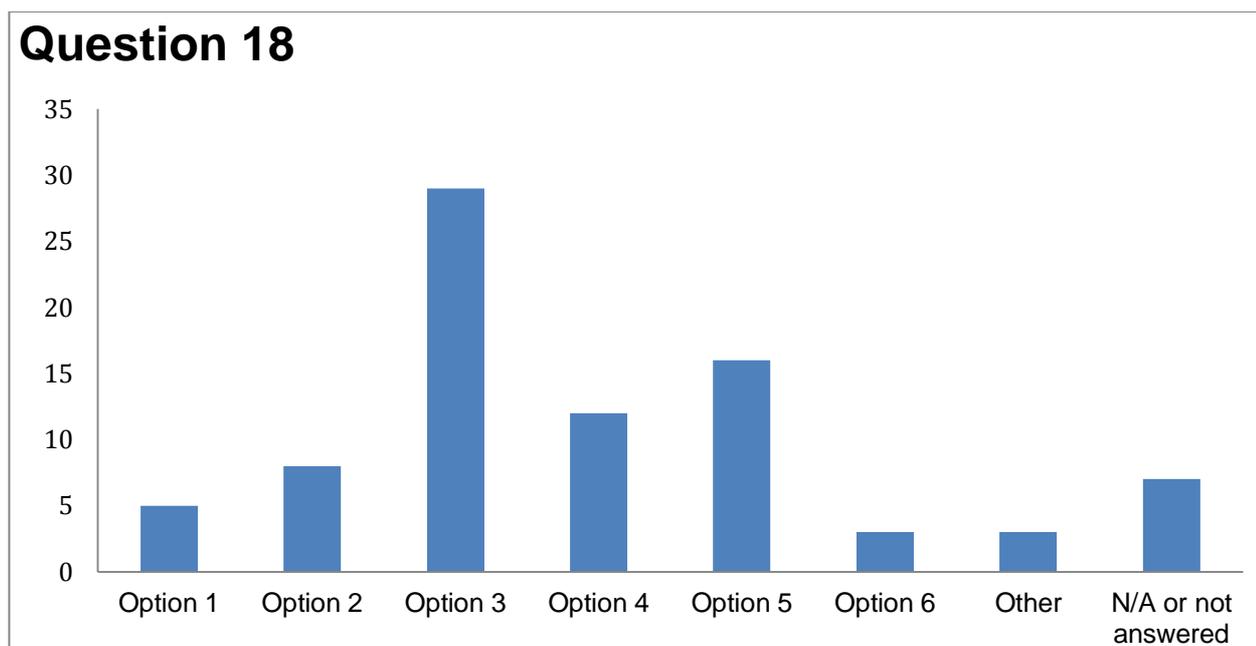
Option 3: Healthcare students receive the standard maintenance support package through Student Finance Wales. An NHS Bursary would cover the funding of full tuition fees up to a maximum and an additional funding element for additional costs for clinical placements – subject to agreeing a post-qualification employment period.

Option 4: Healthcare students receive the standard maintenance support package and partial funding of tuition fees (e.g. 50%) through Student Finance Wales. An NHS Bursary would cover the remainder of the tuition fee and an additional funding element for additional costs for clinical placements – subject to agreeing a post-qualification employment period.

Option 5: Healthcare students receive the standard fee support package through Student Finance Wales. An NHS Bursary would cover living costs and an additional funding element for additional costs for clinical placements – subject to agreeing a post-qualification employment period.

Option 6: Healthcare students continue to receive the current NHS Bursary arrangements – subject to agreeing a post-qualification employment period.

There was clear support for option 3 amongst the respondents:



Question 19

Are there unidentified options that would be more appropriate?

Option 1: To support healthcare students during their studies?

Option 2: To encourage students to pursue healthcare courses in Wales?

Option 3: For the long-term sustainability of the NHS workforce in Wales?

For option 1, 22 respondents (27%) made a suggestion about how to support healthcare students during their studies. These suggestions included, but are not limited to:

- Bursary to cover living wage
- Bursary costs to be pro-rata to duration of clinical placements
- Independent student assessment to be reduced from 36 months to 24 months.
- Rural placements need more consideration, some students paying out double accommodation as placements are too far to commute.

For option 2, 23 respondents (29%) made a suggestion about how to encourage students to pursue a healthcare course in Wales. These suggestions included, but are not limited to:

- Funding for mentoring schemes so all HEIs offer mentoring
- More financial support for living costs and benefits – such as food vouchers
- More training places across Wales, especially North Wales
- More marketing to eliminate myth of needing to speak Welsh to work in Wales

For option 3, 23 respondents (29%) also made a suggestion about how to ensure long term sustainability of the NHS workforce in Wales. These suggestions included, but are not limited to:

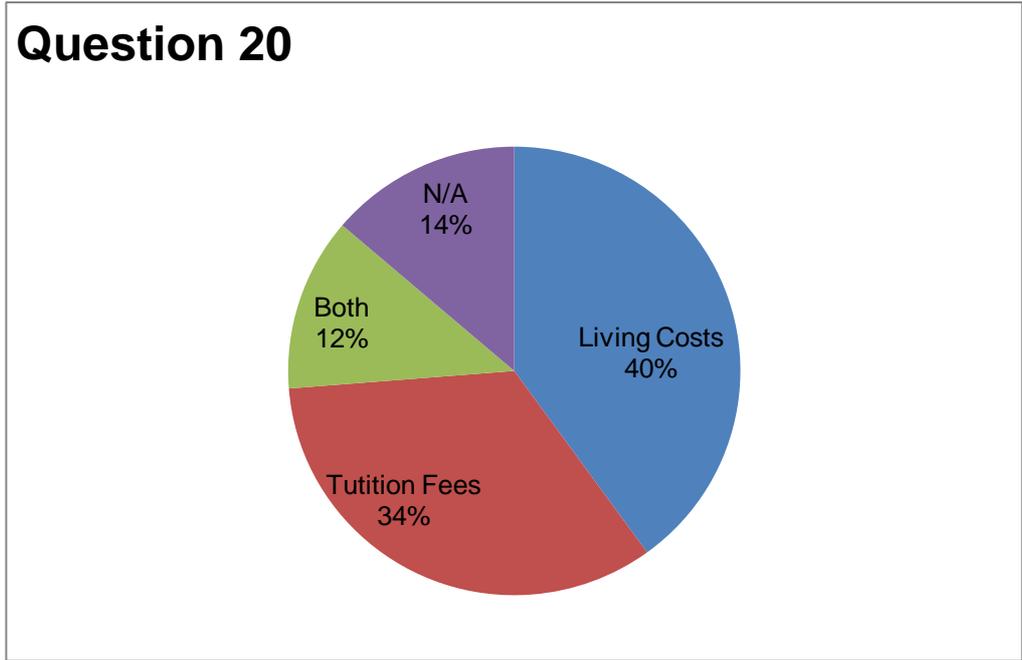
- Longer post qualification employment period (PQEP)
- Better support for return to practice
- Extra support for living costs
- More support for Welsh domicile students
- Scholarship scheme for high achievers.

Question 20

What are your thoughts on the support for healthcare students? Should there be a focus on support for tuition fees or living costs?

There was a split response for support towards tuition fees and living costs, with 34% and 40% respectively, and 12% of respondents suggested that future support should cover both.

Due to the duration and frequency of the placements while studying, many respondents felt that future support should cover living costs as the placements currently prohibit students having a part time job.



Annex A

Organisation	No. of responses
Audiology Standing Specialist Advisory Group (ASSAG)	1
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board – Pharmacy and Medicines Management	1
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board –Nursing response	1
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	2
BMA	1
British Dental Association	1
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board	2
Cardiff University	1
College of Human and Health Science Swansea University	1
Council of Deans of Health	1
Cwm Taf University Health Board	1
Diverse Cymru	1
Glyndwr University	1
Higher Education Funding Council for Wales	1
Hywel Dda University Health Board	1
Hywel Dda University Health Board - Nursing	1
Hywel Dda University Health Board - Therapies and Health Science	1
Hywel Dda University Health Board -Medical Education	1
Marie Curie	1
National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA)	1
National Orthotic and Podiatry Standing Advisory Group	1
North Wales Community Health Council	1
NWSSP / WEDS	1
Optometry Wales	1
Royal College of General Practitioners Wales	1
Royal College of Midwives	1
Royal College of Nursing	1
Royal College of Occupational Therapists	1
Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists	1
Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh	1
Swansea University	1
Swansea University Medical School	2
The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy	1
The College of Podiatry	1
The General Medical Council	1
University of South Wales	2
Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust	1
Welsh Dental Committee	1
Welsh Dietetic Leadership Action Group (WDLAG)	1
Welsh Language Commissioner	1
Welsh Pharmaceutical Committee -Cardiff University	1

