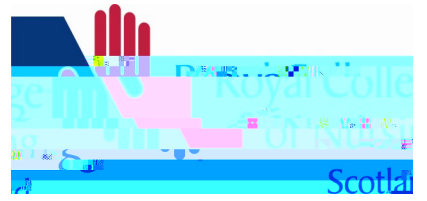


RCN Scotland's response to the
Scottish Parliament's Health, Social Care and Sport
Committee call for evidence on

Pre-Budget Scrutiny 2024-25

This response was originally submitted
using a Scottish Parliament online form

August 2023





To fill the gaps in the nursing workforce, the use of staff from agencies has increased dramatically, rising to the equivalent of 1,741 WTE nursing and midwifery staff in 2022/23, up from 1,018 WTE in 2021/22. The cost in 2022/23 was a staggering £169.7m, up 91% from £88.8m the previous year. To put this in perspective, the agency spend two years ago was £39.3m. Total spend on bank and agency staff combined was £447m in 2022/23, up 39% on the previous year.

Despite increasing clinical need, there are over 1,400 fewer registered nurses in care homes for adults since 2012, a 27% decrease.

Data from UCAS show the number of acceptances onto nursing courses last year fell by 340 (8%), with the total number of applications also falling by 8%, adding to the workforce crisis of the future.

The number of nurses leaving the NMC register in Scotland increased again over the past year and it is worrying that after retirement, concerns for their physical or mental health was the most common reason for leaving the register.

The failure to establish the current supply of registered nurses in Scotland to meet the growing demands and complexity of health care that is required, is not only a result of an insufficient pipeline and an inability to retain experienced nurses; it is a symptom of poor planning and a lack of recognition of the highly skilled, safety critical nature of nursing. This must be properly addressed in workforce planning and the fundamental issue of an under resourced and undervalued nursing workforce must be tackled head on. Scotland has to have a clear fully funded plan to ensure a sustainable nursing workforce for the future.

RCN Scotland priorities for the 2024-25 budget:

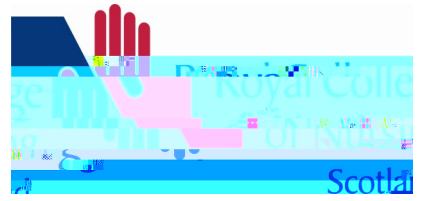
We are calling on the Scottish Government to implement a cost-of-living increase to the nursing student bursary, and associated allowances, and establish a regular review to ensure the bursary increases in line with the cost of living. The Scottish government and SAAS must also uplift the value of travel and accommodation expenses to reflect the rising cost of living.

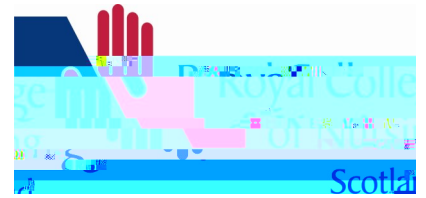
Nursing students across Scotland are facing serious financial pressures that are having a significant impact on their education, financial security and physical and mental wellbeing. This is the main conclusion from an RCN Scotland survey of nursing students in Scotland which found that:

- 99% of respondents said their finances cause them some level of concern
- 74% said this was having a high or very high impact on their mental health, and 48% on their physical health

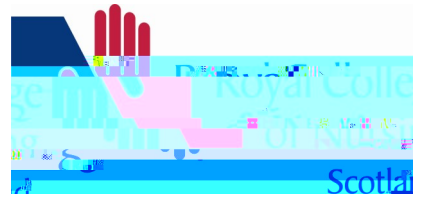
- 58% said this was having a high or very high impact on their academic performance

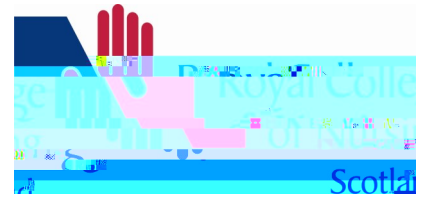
- 66% have considered dropping out of their course due to financial concerns





We have serious concerns about the current National Care Service Bill and the potential huge costs involved in this structural overhaul. We share the desire to improve the quality and consistency of social care and health services across Scotland. However, it is entirely





Question: Health and social care outcomes

RCN Scotland has called for a move away from looking at resources and budgets in an isolated way and over short

