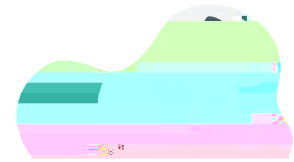
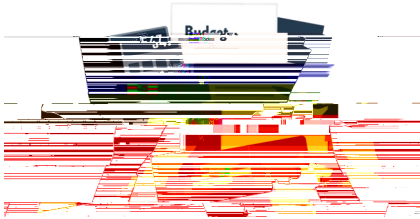


RCN Briefing:

Stage 1 Debate—Scottish Budget 2024-25

This Scottish Budget comes at a time when our health and care services are under as much pressure as they have ever been. Our members are continuing to highlight significant pressures and concerns about patient safety across hospital, community and social care services.





Nursing is a safety critical profession and with around 5,300 unfilled nursing posts in the NHS alone, Scotland cannot afford to lose any more nursing staff.

- 1) Deliver the funding required to implement the recommendations from the Agenda for Change (AFC) Review quickly and in full.

In May our members narrowly voted to accept the NHS Scotland pay offer. At that time, we made it clear to Scottish government that it would need to stay committed to the Agenda for Change review, which was part of the deal. We said it was essential that the review delivered positive change for our members on the reduced working week, protected time for learning and the review of Band 5 nursing roles.

3) Boost the financial package for nursing students to enable them to prioritise their education, cope with the rising cost of living, and finish their studies without falling into financial hardship.

We [surveyed](#) our student members last year and found that nursing students across Scotland are facing serious financial pressures that are having a significant impact on their education and physical and mental wellbeing. 66% have considered dropping out of their course due to financial concerns.

We're calling on the Scottish government to implement a cost-of-living increase to the bursary and establish a regular review to make sure it rises in line with the cost of living.

Nursing is a fantastic career choice, full of variety and opportunity. It's a hugely diverse profession attracting people of all ages and from all walks of life, often as a second career. However, being a nurse should not be at the expense of personal wellbeing and financial security.

For the second year in a row, the number of places on nursing degrees have not been filled. The number of acceptances onto Scottish nursing courses for 2023 is 3,520; a significant shortfall of over 800 students compared to the number of places funded by Scottish government. This means the gap between the number of registered nurses that are needed, and the number entering the workforce, is set to widen even further.

4) Deliver fair pay for nursing staff across health and social care.

The Scottish Government must work with STAC to secure a mechanism for the future AfC pay negotiations.

We are working with other trade unions on submitting a joint pay claim calling for at least an above inflation pay increase to recognise the continuing cost of living challenges and to take some steps towards restoring the pay lost during the years of austerity.

Reform of the social care sector must deliver fair pay, terms and conditions for nursing staff employed within the independent sector. We support the establishment of a sectoral bargaining system and for nursing staff to have pay, terms and conditions at least equal to equivalent roles in the NHS.