Bursaries to rise in Scotland

BURSARIES FOR Scotland's nursing students are to rise by up to 10.4 per cent from September 1, according to deputy minister for health and community care Malcolm Chisholm.

But the RCN says it is still unclear whether the increase will apply to students funded by higher education institutions.

Mr Chisholm said last week that the rise will benefit diploma students and those degree students who are government funded.

RCN Scottish board secretary James Kennedy said: 'We welcome this announcement, which puts Scottish student nurse poverty is a very real issue for many nurses in training.'

But he added: 'We will be asking the Scottish Executive to clarify the financial position for Scottish higher education funded nursing degree students.'

New cosmetic surgery standards

DRAFT PROFESSIONAL standards on cosmetic surgery are to be discussed this week at a London seminar.

The standards, drawn up by the Independent Healthcare Association (IHA) and the charitable quality assurance body the Health Quality Service, attempt to address a perceived lack of regulation in the field.

The standards are likely to inform a government consultation exercise on proposed standards for social care and health care in the private and voluntary sectors, expected to be launched by the end of the month.

The IHA and Health Quality Service also emphasise the need for sufficient professional indemnity, a concern raised this week by RCN working group member Susan Scott.

The standards state that if treatment, such as the use of lasers to remove tattoos and permanent make-up, is carried out by nurses, surgeons must ensure their competence.

They also state that nurses working in cosmetic care should be able to prove their training credentials.

The government standards for all aspects of health care form part of last year's Care Standards Act and are due to come into force next April.

They will be used by the newly-formed National Care Standards Commission to regulate services.

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Policy holders urged to seek advice on RNPFN takeover by Liverpool Victoria

Pension fund members to share £200m windfall

MORE THAN 150,000 pension policy holders are set to profit from the takeover of the Royal National Pension Fund for Nurses (RNPFN) by the Liverpool Victoria.

The move will see 155,000 with-profit policy holders receive a share of a £200 million windfall spread over the lifetime of their policies.

Another £48 million freed up by the sale will be used to establish a trust to promote education and training in nursing.

By Nick Liley and Paul Dinsdale

An RCN spokesperson said: 'We welcome the establishment of the Burdett Trust for Nursing. A trust of this size that specifically benefits nurses has the capacity to be a considerable force for change. We eagerly await the very significant benefits it will bring.'

But a spokesperson for the Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association said: 'We would advise any of our members who have concerns about the new status of their investments, savings and pensions to seek expert advice from an independent financial adviser.'

Unison pensions officer Glynn Jenkins said: 'All nurses should be members of the NHS pensions scheme and if they have other pensions - such as with this scheme - it would be sensible to take independent financial advice.'

According to Jeremy Drake, RNPFN marketing manager, the takeover, which is due to be finalised by the end of the year, will probably lead to closure of the pension fund's London offices and a move to Bournemouth.

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They also state that nurses working in cosmetic care should be able to prove their training credentials.

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They will be used by the newly-formed National Care Standards Commission to regulate services.