£70,000

Estimated cost of training a nursing student
See below

Fast fact

‘NHS doctors, nurses, psychologists, health visitors – all could be owed thousands in overpaid tax’

Victoria Derbyshire
@VictoriaLIVE

TWEET

In brief

US nurses have been called on to help to unite the country, and ensure healthcare for all, after Donald Trump’s presidential election victory

Go to: rcn.com/US-election

Plans in place to reduce nursing student attrition

By Erin Dean

The Department of Health (DH) has instructed Health Education England (HEE) to reduce drop-out rates on healthcare courses by 50% by 2017.

The DH’s annual mandate, which sets out the programme of work for HEE for 2016/17, says the organisation should work with partners to reduce ‘avoidable attrition from training programmes’.

HEE told Nursing Standard it has set up a project to look into the reasons why students leave, and to find data on levels of attrition in nursing, midwifery and therapeutic radiotherapy courses.

The steering committee, Reducing Pre-registration Attrition and Improving Retention (RePAIR), is led by former chief nursing officer for England Dame Christine Beasley.

Attrition from undergraduate nursing courses in the UK was described as ‘the Achilles’ heel of the nursing world’ in the 2015 Shape of Caring review, led by Lord Willis.

The review cited a 20% average drop-out rate for nursing students at universities in England. It warned that on some courses the attrition rate was as high as 50%.

With the cost of training a nursing student estimated to be about £70,000, there have long been concerns about wasted funds as a result of high drop-out rates.

The RePAIR group, which is due to report next year, will look for examples of best practice and explore how to spread successful approaches across the country.

It will also ‘agree a sustainable national approach to improving pre-registration retention’, HEE said.

James Buchan (pictured), professor at the school of health sciences at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, said there is no detail to clarify what the DH considered to be avoidable attrition.

‘It is commendable to be providing the support necessary to reduce attrition, which is clearly a long-term concern. However, the absence of any clear metrics in the report makes it difficult to gauge whether the ambitious target is achievable.’

RCN Wales speaks out against fines

The RCN in Wales has called for nurses and other healthcare professionals to be exempt from paying the ‘extra burden’ of car parking fines at work.

A number of employees at University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff have been sent letters ordering them to pay parking fines or risk being prosecuted.

One nurse told walesonline.co.uk she received a claim form earlier this month from private firm Indigo, which is responsible for car parking at the organisation, stating she owed nearly £900 in parking fines.

From 1 April employees of the health board were required to pay parking charge notices or face prosecution.

RCN Wales director Tina Donnelly said: ‘Nurses and other healthcare staff should be supported and should not be forced to pay parking fines when they work unsocial hours.’

Read more about how thousands of nurses and other NHS staff could be in line for tax rebates at rcn.com/overpaid-tax

Share your news with us: email news@rcni.com

call 020 8872 3425 or @NurseStandard

£70,000

Estimated cost of training a nursing student
See below