

Information paper

CSP Council position on student funding

Questions and answers on education, loans and tuition

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Q&A on education, loans and tuition

In 2015 CSP Council adopted a new policy on student funding in England.

The following questions and answers aim to clarify Council's position on the changing arrangements.

Does the CSP support loans and tuition fees?

The biggest challenge facing physiotherapy is the shortage of physiotherapists. Provided that the changes lead to a real expansion of the qualified physiotherapy workforce, and there are measures to address access and other concerns, the CSP is supporting a change in England.

What did CSP Council agree on 10 December 2015?

The policy adopted says the following:

CSP Council recognises the opportunity to grow the physiotherapy profession afforded by the planned shift to the tuition/student loan model in England.

Through working with others, we are strongly committed to safeguarding the following across the UK:

- Entry to the profession from all parts of society
- Supply to the profession to deliver high-quality patient care
- The quality of education, including practice-based learning as a key part of students' learning experience.'

Why isn't the CSP opposing loans and tuition fees on principle?

Our elected council has decided that, in England, the changes offer the prospect of addressing the critical shortage of newly qualified physios.

Nursing unions are opposing these changes. Why isn't the CSP?

We are aware that some nursing unions are opposed to the proposed change. However the two professions are very different.

For example, there are already many more self-funded physiotherapy courses than there are self-funded nursing courses.

What concerns does the CSP have?

Council acknowledges there are risks in the new system including:

- Enabling access to the profession from all parts of society
- Achieving an increase in the workforce to deliver high-quality patient care
- Maintaining the quality of education, including practice-based learning as a key part of students' learning experience.

We are lobbying the government to ensure these issues are addressed.

Is the CSP proposing changes in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

The statement relates specifically to proposals in England. Although the issue of workforce supply applies across the UK as a whole the contexts are different.

Outside England the devolved governments may develop different ways of addressing this problem. We will judge their proposals if and when they make them.

How is the CSP addressing issues in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

We are working with members in each country, and our Country Boards, to review issues in each country.

Who made the decision?

The policy was set by the CSP Council. Council is composed of elected member representatives.

How were members consulted?

The Education, Practice and Development and Student Executive committees, and the Equality and Diversity and Quality Assurance groups all discussed the proposals prior to Council's decision.

In addition an open meeting was held at Physiotherapy UK and an iCSP discussion has been running on this issue.

What actions is the CSP promoting to ensure changes don't make the profession even less representative of society?

A priority for the CSP is ensuring that the new arrangements enable people from diverse backgrounds, those studying for a second degree and mature students.

We are lobbying the government for clear action to ensure fair access. There are a range of options for doing this, ranging from quotas, to more favourable loan arrangements, to retaining some element of grants.

What action would the CSP like to see in relation to funding for universities?

The current situation where some universities are not being fully funded for the cost of training physios is not sustainable.

We are lobbying the government to ensure that the changes do not perpetuate current problems.

How can there be an expansion of training if Health Education England (HEE) caps placements?

The government has been clear that it is aiming to increase overall nursing and allied health profession (AHP) training places by 10,000.

The CSP is lobbying to prevent an artificial cap being imposed by restricting funding for placements.

How can there be an expansion of places given there are limited placement opportunities?

Finding placements, particularly in acute settings, can be challenging in some parts of the country.

Higher education institutions and services are already working together to open up placements across sectors and settings including more in community services and non-NHS providers.