

Changing how healthcare education is funded in England

CSP response in summary

There is a serious shortage of physiotherapists in England, caused by insufficient numbers of physiotherapy student places at a time of growing demand. This is creating difficulties in recruitment and physiotherapists' significant contribution to meeting changing population and patient needs in high-quality, sustainable, affordable ways is not being optimised.

A minimum of 500 additional physiotherapists need to be trained each year until 2020 to meet the current shortfall. Physiotherapy therefore needs to feature strongly in the ten thousand additional healthcare student places announced in the 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR).

The changed funding arrangements have the potential to enable this increase to happen and the CSP supports the shift in arrangements, providing that:

- There is an explicit, active commitment to expand physiotherapy student numbers
- All elements of the new arrangements enable this expansion, while also upholding education quality and entry to the profession from all parts of society.

The CSP's full response to the Department of Health on the planned changes is at <http://www.csp.org.uk/documents/department-health-consultation-changing-how-healthcare-education-funded-csp-response>.

The CSP has eight recommendations for implementing the changes, as outlined below.

1. Release practice education capacity across all sectors and settings

- Retain the practice education tariff and use it to release placement capacity across the whole health and care system
- Review the tariff - as a *per capita*, annual amount – to ensure that it fairly represents the costs that services incur through providing placements
- Increase the total annual tariff budget to sustain the 10k workforce expansion by 2020
- Actively promote the benefits of services providing placements, and embed expectations of placement provision within service commissioning processes and contracts
- Change how the tariff is administered to: respond to changing delivery models and workforce needs; minimise bureaucracy and overhead costs; support placement delivery across all sectors /settings; align with student cohorts; follow students onto placements
- Use the community practice education networks (CEPNs) to support and promote the delivery of physiotherapy student placements within primary care
- Recognise the strong quality assurance and enhancement role that the CSP plays in relation to practice education.

2. Revise plans for student finance for Master's level programmes

- Give students on Master's level pre-registration physiotherapy programmes the same access to student finance arrangements and repayment terms as their undergraduate peers
- Uphold established Master's level progression routes into the physiotherapy profession, recognising the value they bring to workforce capacity and capability
- Uphold Master's level physiotherapy workforce supply, recognising that a tenth of newly-qualified practitioners currently enter the workforce through Master's level routes.

3. Ensure HEIs receive funding to sustain programme viability

- Establish the full cost of delivering physiotherapy pre-registration education and reflect this in new arrangements, ensuring education providers receive a publicly-funded teaching grant for physiotherapy as a high-cost discipline

- Use the budget allocated by BIS to HEFCE to ensure a smooth transition to new arrangements; reflect the full costs of programme delivery; enable the strategic development of physiotherapy education; and foster widening access, student success and progression into the physiotherapy profession.

4. Ensure students receive realistic levels of financial support

- Recognise the intensity of physiotherapy programmes (in terms of hours per week, study year and placement learning) in the financial support made available to students
- Ensure students receive support to meet all essential costs relating to their placement learning, including the additional accommodation costs incurred from needing to be away from their university base – with arrangements extending beyond the existing travel grant
- Ensure student support arrangements avoid any individuals being deterred from a career in physiotherapy for reasons of financial background or circumstance.

5. Enable entry to the profession from all parts of society

- Take pre-emptive action to ensure that individuals from all parts of society are enabled to enter the physiotherapy profession, regardless of socio-economic background or circumstance, and to ensure the profession is representative of the communities it serves
- Ensure HEIs' access agreements make specific provision for physiotherapy and other healthcare students, while recognising that additional, whole-system provision must be made to reflect the particular needs of healthcare students
- Put in place arrangements to ensure no one is deterred from entering and progressing through a physiotherapy programme for reasons of financial circumstance or background
- Meet all costs attached to placement learning and give postgraduate students access to the same student finance arrangements as their undergraduate peers
- Mitigate the potentially negative impact of proposed arrangements on mature students, including those with dependants.

6. Minimise disruption during transition

- Actively mitigate disruption to student entry, education delivery and workforce supply through careful planning for implementation within the tight timeframe presented
- Progress clarification and notification of the changed arrangements as soon as possible so that applicants/prospective students for 2017/18 have access to full information and that HEIs can ensure compliance with Competition & Marketing Authority regulations
- Provide HEIs with clarification of HEFCE funding arrangements (including 2017/18 transition arrangements) as soon as possible to ensure the sustainability of education provision and to uphold education quality.

7. Enable the CSP's active engagement

- Enable the CSP to be actively involved in shaping the new arrangements, to ensure fulfilment of the shared goal of increasing physiotherapy student numbers
- Recognise the CSP's role in assuring and enhancing the quality of pre-registration education programmes and draw on this to support implementation of the new arrangements, including during the transition phase.

8. Monitor and evaluate the impact of the changes

- Judge the success of the changes in terms of their success in delivering the 10k additional healthcare student places and the profile of the additional student numbers
- Put in place arrangements to monitor and evaluate the impact of the changes from the perspectives of entry to the professions, education quality and workforce supply, with due accountability for reporting on progress, trends and issues

- Specifically monitor and evaluate the effect and impact of all arrangements on widening access and student success and progression
- Provide all stakeholders with the opportunity to input to the monitoring and evaluation processes, and ensure they have full access to the processes' outputs
- Put in place mechanisms to mitigate risks and unintended consequences arising from the arrangements' implementation.