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NHS Management Executive  
St. Andrew's House  
Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
8th October 1997

Dear Colleague

**SUPPORT FOR PRACTICE NURSES TO ACHIEVE THE  
COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE NURSE (GENERAL  
PRACTICE) QUALIFICATION**

**Summary**

1. This MEL provides details of an initiative by the Management Executive to provide funding for Health Boards to support 10% of Practice Nurses in Scotland to work towards the specialist practitioner qualification of Community Healthcare Nurse (General Practice).
2. The initiative is designed to enhance the quality of service offered in Primary Care by providing increased opportunities for Practice Nurses to develop their skills and knowledge.
3. Funding is available over a 2 year period and will be to a maximum of £5000 per nurse. Further details of the initiative and a list of each Health Board's allocation are contained in the Annexes to this MEL.

**Action**

4. Health Boards will be the initial point of contact for expressions of interest and should liaise with practices over the handling of selection for places on the course. Boards should put in place local arrangements for managing the initiative and should inform Practice Nurses and their employers of these arrangements.
5. Health Boards will be asked to provide the Management Executive with information of the number of Practice Nurses who undertake this programme of education and for an assessment of the value of the initiative in terms of improving the quality and range of services offered by Practice Nurses who have successfully completed the course.

**Addressees**

For action:  
General Managers  
Health Boards

For information:  
Chief Executives, NHS Trusts

General Manager, State Hospitals  
Board for Scotland

General Manager, CSA

General Manager, Health Education  
for Scotland

Executive Director, SCPMDE

GPs

**Enquiries to:**

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COMMON SERVICES AGENCY	
RECEIVED	
9 OCT 1997	
FILE No	
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<i>PW</i>	<i>10/10</i>

SCOTTISH HEALTH SERVICE COMMON SERVICES AGENCY TRINITY ROAD, EDINBURGH	
CLASS	<i>Ref.</i>
ACC. NO.	<i>11-1A: 101286</i>
DATE	<i>10/10/97</i>

PWI05909

6. Health Board General Managers are requested to circulate this MEL to their Primary Care Directors, and Directors of Nursing, and to GPs in their area.

Yours sincerely

pp.  Wilma A. Dickson.

AGNES ROBSON  
**Director of Primary Care**

**ALLOCATION OF FUNDING TO HEALTH BOARDS TO SUPPORT PRACTICE NURSES WISHING TO UNDERTAKE THE SPECIALIST PRACTITIONER QUALIFICATION, COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE NURSE (GENERAL PRACTICE)**

1. As part of the commitment to developing Primary Care in the National Health Service in Scotland, The Scottish Office is providing funding to Health Boards to support 10% of Practice Nurses in Scotland to work towards the achievement of the specialist practitioner qualification of Community Healthcare Nurse (General Practice).
2. The aim of the initiative is to enhance the quality of service offered by primary health care professionals by providing increased opportunities for Practice Nurses to acquire the skills and knowledge needed in the changing environment of primary care.
3. Funding will be available to Health Boards over a 2 year period and will be to a maximum of £5000 per capita. Boards' allocations are shown at Appendix 1. The first allocation will be made before the end of the financial year 1996/97.
4. It should be noted that this allocation is intended to contribute to the total costs incurred by nurses undertaking the course, ie course fees, cost of access courses, travel and subsistence costs and replacement costs. Any shortfall between actual costs and the maximum allocation will be the subject of negotiation between the Board, General Practitioner(s) and Practice Nurse(s).
5. Funding that is allocated to a Board but which is not used, either in total or in part, may be reallocated to another Health Board.
6. Details of the initiative will be circulated to the academic institutions providing this programme of education within the next 4 weeks.

**Criteria to be met by Practice Nurses seeking a training award/practices wishing to nominate nurses for training**

- Programmes accessed must lead to the specialist practitioner qualification of Community Healthcare Nurse (General Practice) or meet the UKCC requirements for their transitional arrangements for specialist nurse status.
- Entrants must satisfy the requirements of both the UKCC and of the educational institution to which they apply (Annex B).
- The practice nurse **must** have the support of her/his employer(s).
- The practice's plan for development must clearly demonstrate how the achievement of the qualification and the development of the nurse's role will enhance the service offered to the practice population.

Annex C suggests issues that interested parties will wish to consider in discussion on selection for the programme.

**SPECIALIST PRACTITIONER QUALIFICATION:  
COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE NURSE (GENERAL PRACTICE)**

**Entry Qualifications**

Minimal entry requirements to programmes of education leading to the Specialist Practitioner Qualification, Community Healthcare Nurse (General Practice), recordable of the professional register maintained by the United Kingdom Central Council for Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors (UKCC).

1. Registration of Parts 1, 2\*, 7\*, 8, 12 or 15 of the Register maintained by the UKCC.

Note: Second level nurses (parts 2 and 7) must undertake programmes which lead to a first level qualification as well as a specialist qualification. The NBS will give more detail on this if required.

2. Completion of a period of professional practice of sufficient length to have consolidated first level training, usually 2 years in their chosen area of practice.
3. In Scotland, such programmes normally lead to the academic award of a degree as well as a professional qualification. Candidates must therefore have sufficient SCOCAT points on entry to the programme to enable them to exit with a degree.

Nurses whose names appear on parts 12 and 15 of the register will meet this requirement. Those on other parts may not. Academic establishments providing courses leading to the Specialist Practitioner Qualification, Community Nurse (General Practice), provide alternative routes which enable such candidates to access the specialist practitioner programme and to exit with a degree.

Individual institutions can provide further details of this.

4. The UKCC has made interim arrangements whereby nurses currently employed as practice nurses, with appropriate qualifications, may gain specialist practitioner status during a transitional period (until October 31, 1998). It is expected that the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and the Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, will be collaborating to assist suitably qualified practice nurses in Scotland to take advantage of these transitional arrangements.

Further details may be obtained from Katie Rae at the RCN Scottish Board.

**ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION BY INTERESTED PARTIES**

- That the academic institution will give credit for prior learning.
- That the academic institution will provide flexible training which meets the requirements of both the employer and the UKCC, eg part time, distance learning routes.
- The manpower planning strategy for the primary care team and the implications of an increase in the number of specialist practitioners for skill mix in teams.
- Implications for the grading and salary of the nurse if her responsibilities increase significantly as a result of the programme of education and achievement of the specialist practitioner qualification.
- Arrangements for funding any shortfall between the allocated award and the actual cost of the nurse undertaking the programme.

## APPENDIX 1

### Specialist Practitioner Qualification Community Healthcare Nurse (General Practice)

#### Awards allocated to each Health Board

Health Board	Number of Nurses (WTE)	Award 1997/98 £(000)	Award 1998/99 £(000)
Argyll & Clyde	7	17.5	17.5
Ayrshire & Arran	7	17.5	17.5
Borders	3	7.5	7.5
Dumfries & Galloway	3	7.5	7.5
Fife	6	15	15
Forth Valley	5	12.5	12.5
Grampian	12	30	30
Greater Glasgow	16	40	40
Highland	5	12.5	12.5
Lanarkshire	8	20	20
Lothian	11	27.5	27.5
Orkney	1	2.5	2.5
Shetland	2	5	5
Tayside	9	22.5	22.5
Western Isles	2	5	5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>242.5</b>	<b>242.5</b>