

HSC
STUDENTS
DESERVE
BETTER
PAYMENT

PLACEMENTS ARE WORK,
AND WORK DESERVES PAY.



CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW.

NURSING STUDENTS KEEP THE NHS RUNNING, BUT THEY'RE DOING IT FOR FREE.

Every day, they deliver frontline care in hospitals, clinics and communities. They do the same vital work as paid staff, while racking up thousands of unpaid hours and paying for travel, parking and meals - all while still covering tuition fees. It's not fair. It's not sustainable. And it's pushing future nurses to the brink.

Placements are work, and work deserves pay.



CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW.

THE PROBLEM

Most nursing students aren't living the "typical" student life.

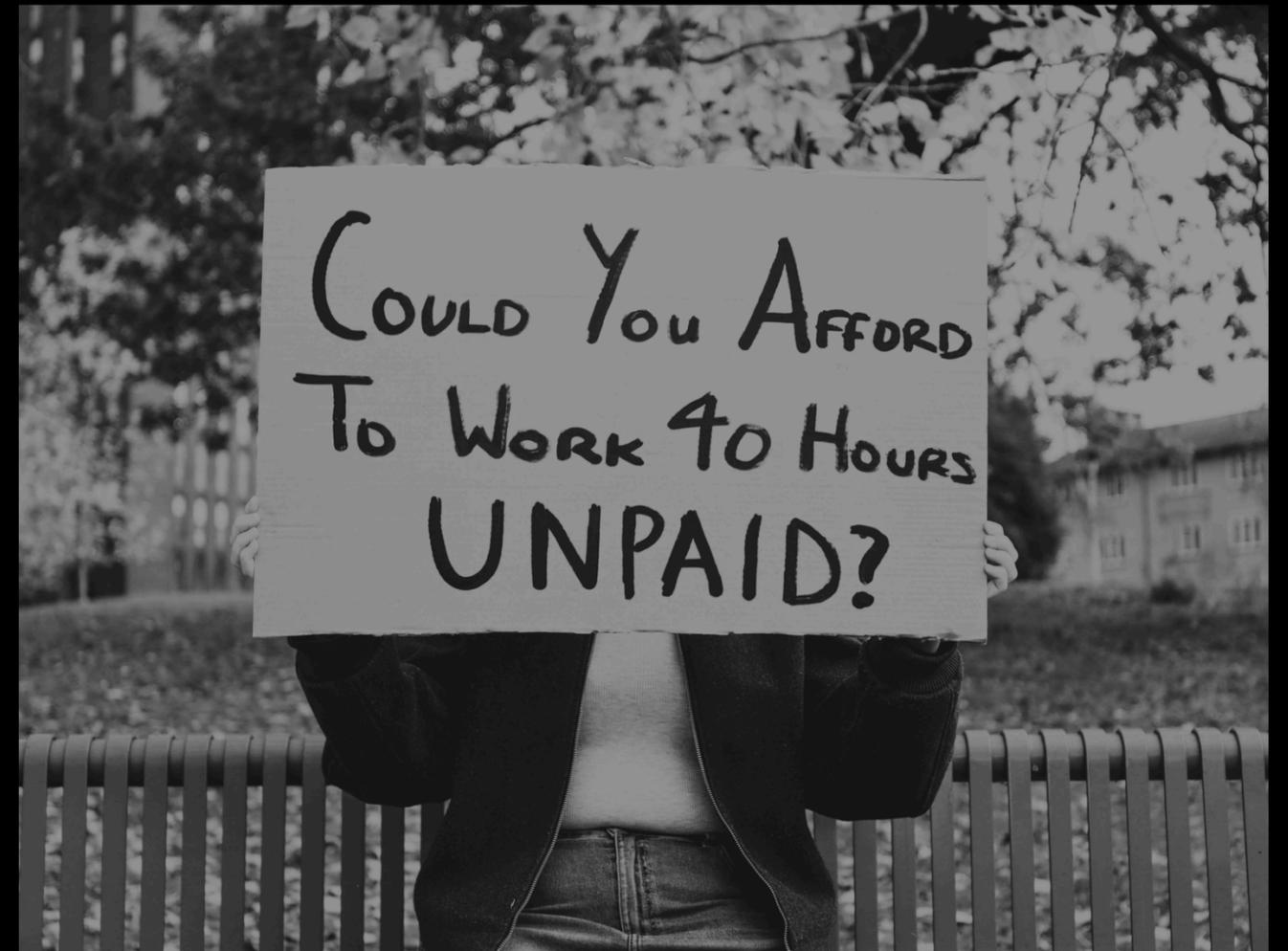
They are mature learners, parents and career changers, mostly women, juggling full-time placements, studies and family life.

They give over 2,300 hours of real patient care during their degree, doing the same work as paid NHS staff, but for £0 an hour.

No pay. No recognition. No time.

Placements take over their lives. Many can't take on paid work or get involved in the things that make university more than just study, like clubs, sports, societies, volunteering, or even time to rest.

This isn't just unfair. It's isolating. And it's unsustainable.



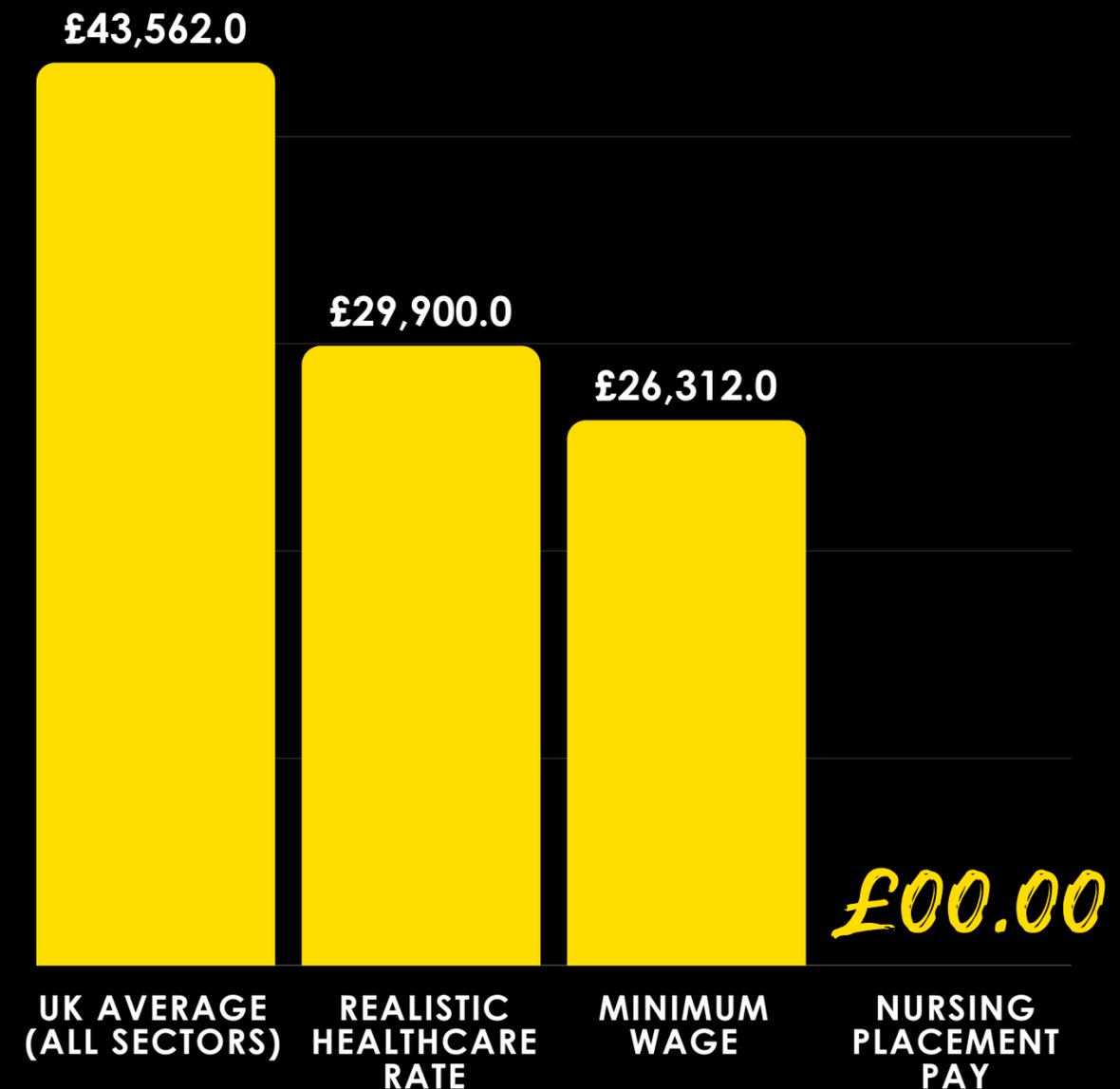
CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW.

THE NUMBERS THAT SAY IT ALL

The numbers say it all:

- 70% of nursing students have considered quitting their course because of financial pressure, compared to 26–41% of undergraduates overall.
- £30–£70 a week is the average cost of travelling to placement.
- 60,000+ student nurses keep the NHS running for free.
- At Essex, healthcare students are 17% of the student body, but just 6% of event attendees and 3% of sports members, shut out by time and money.

Thousands of hours. Essential work. Zero pay.
This is not just a funding issue – it is a fairness issue.



WHAT WE'RE FIGHTING FOR.

1. PAID PLACEMENTS

We're pushing for all nursing and healthcare students to be paid for their placements. Because real work deserves real pay, simple as that.

2. NATIONAL CHANGE

We're backing the Royal College of Nursing's call for a full review of healthcare student funding. The system's broken and it's time the Government fixed it.

3. LOCAL ACTION

We're acting now by being clear about the real costs of healthcare courses, including uniforms, DBS checks, transport and parking. We're launching a second-hand uniform sale, creating a pre-placement guide for HSC students, and pushing for better local support, including lower travel costs, more discounts and increased Hardship Loans.

WHAT NURSING STUDENTS SAY.

“Payment during placement. This is especially important over summer placements, as the last SFE payment is in April. This does not stretch through to end of academic year.”

“More support for students. I had a very horrible experience during my last placement. The learning support fund is not enough, because £2.50 does not cover much of our transportation.”

“Not to be treated like a paid member of staff. We should be learning, not filling in staffing gaps. Give us opportunities, not obligations.”

“Our placement hours need to be paid as we do the work of Healthcare Assistants and Nurses while also having to focus on our university. We spend so much time and work hard to help people and families, and it is physically and mentally draining – so please pay us!”

GET INVOLVED.

1. SIGN THE STUDENT-LED PETITION

We're backing Grace's petition to secure fair pay for nursing placements.

2. JOIN THE CAMPAIGN

Whether you're a students' union, university or organisation, add your voice and help us push for real change.

3. TELL YOUR MP

We've put together an Open Letter template that you can share with your MP.

Let's make sure every nursing student gets the ~~recognition~~ pay they deserve.

THE CAMPAIGN.

PAY THE PLACEMENT

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX
STUDENTS*
UNION

THE CAMPAIGN TIMELINE.

16 FEB – 24 APRIL

PHASE 1: BUILD & ONBOARD

What we need from partners:

- Complete the partner sign-up form
- Confirm your organisation will take part during **Campaign Week**
- Share your involvement on LinkedIn
- Gather nursing student testimonials & feedback
- Share internally & build awareness of Action Week

11 - 17 MAY

PHASE 3: NATIONAL CAMPAIGN WEEK

This is the main moment for visibility and collective action!

Key dates:

- Tuesday 12 May: International Nurses Day

What partners can do:

- Push petition sign-ups and shares
- Run a local activation
- Shout about the campaign on all of your channels
- Post student stories and supportive messages

8 MARCH
**International
Women's Day**

7 APRIL
**World
Health Day**

27 APRIL – 9 MAY
PHASE 2: MOBILISATION

What partners can do:

- Start teasing campaign messages
- Share student stories
- Add the campaign to your website
- Promote **Campaign Week**
- Begin petition promotion

20 - 31 MAY
PHASE 4: CELEBRATE IMPACT

Key dates:

- Wednesday 20 May: Petition closes

What partners can do:

- Share final push messaging
- Celebrate impact
- Keep supporters informed about next steps

LOGO.

Full logo - Essex SU & main campaign



Full logo - to be updated with your SU's logo, placement as above and will need approval via sumarketing@essex.ac.uk



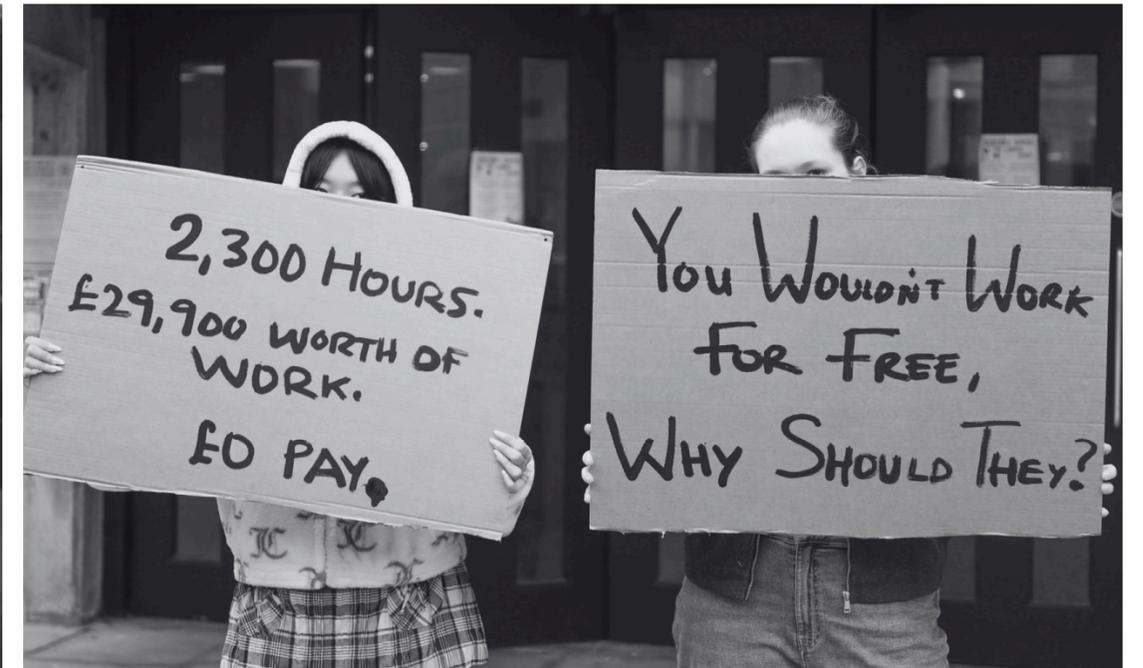
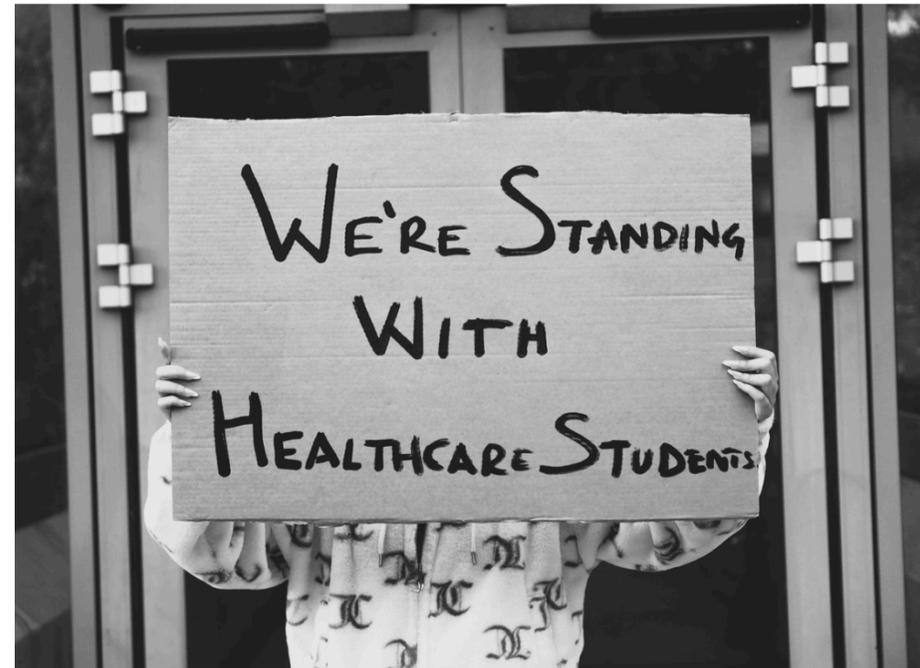
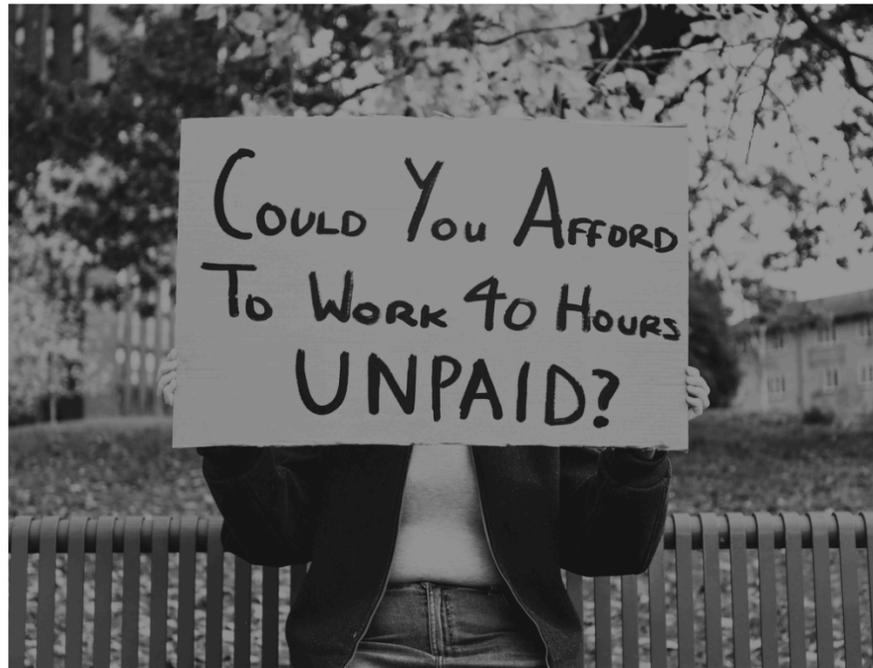
Secondary logo - for when space is tight only. As per above guidance and sign off.



All of the logos are [available here](#).

IMAGES.

All images to be black and white and follow this style.



All of the images are [available here.](#)

CREATIVE ASSETS.

16 FEB – 24 APRIL
PHASE 1: BUILD & ONBOARD

Linkedin Posts:

NURSING STUDENTS PLACEMENTS - WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?
Nursing students keep the NHS running, but they're doing it for free.

UK AVERAGE (ALL SECTORS)	REALISTIC HEALTHCARE RATE	MINIMUM WAGE	NURSING PLACEMENT PAY
£43,542.0	£29,900.0	£26,312.0	£00.00

Placements are work. And work deserves pay.

PAY THE PLACEMENT
UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX STUDENTS UNION

Join the growing movement of SU's backing their HSC students. paytheplacement.com

PAY THE PLACEMENT
UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX STUDENTS UNION

Pay the Placement is a national campaign demanding fair pay for nursing and healthcare students.

WHAT WE'RE FIGHTING FOR.

- 1. PAID PLACEMENTS**
We're pushing for all nursing and healthcare students to be paid for their placements.
- 2. NATIONAL CHANGE**
We're backing the Royal College of Nursing's call for a full review of healthcare student funding.
- 3. LOCAL ACTION**
We're acting now by supporting HSC students at Essex with support around hidden costs.

THE NUMBERS SAY IT ALL.

- 70% of nursing students have considered quitting their course because of financial pressure.
- £30-£70 a week is the average cost of travelling to placement.
- 40,000+ student nurses keep the NHS running for free.
- At Essex, healthcare students are 17% of the student body, but just 6% of event attendees and 3% of sports members.

GET INVOLVED.

- 1. SIGN THE PETITION**
We're backing student, Grace's campaign to secure fair pay for nursing placements.
- 2. JOIN/SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN**
Add your voice and help us push for real change.
- 3. TELL YOUR MP**
Use our template Open Letter and share with your MP.

Placements are work. And work deserves pay.

Join the growing movement of SU's backing their HSC students at paytheplacement.com

Online banner (2000 x 500):

PAY THE PLACEMENT
UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX STUDENTS UNION

NURSING STUDENTS DESERVE BETTER PAYMENT

X-Frame:

YOU DESERVE BETTER PAYMENT

PLACEMENTS ARE WORK, AND WORK DESERVES PAY.

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX STUDENTS UNION

PAYTHEPLACEMENT.COM

Postcards for student feedback:

YOU DESERVE BETTER PAYMENT

Name one thing that'd make your placements better...

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX STUDENTS UNION

Posters (also available as screens, stories and digital assets. And without Essex SU logo)

WE DID THE MATH. IT DOESN'T ADD UP.

EVERYONE DESERVES FAIR PAY FOR REAL WORK.

YOU WOULDN'T WORK FOR FREE. WHY SHOULD THEY?

COULD YOU AFFORD TO WORK 40 HOURS UNPAID?

**2300 HOURS
£29900 WORTH OF WORK
£0 PAY**

YOU DESERVE BETTER PAYMENT

OUR NURSING STUDENTS DESERVE BETTER PAYMENT

All of these templates are [available here.](#)

PRESS RELEASE.

ESSEX STUDENTS' UNION LAUNCHES 'PAY THE PLACEMENT' CAMPAIGN TO END UNPAID NURSING PLACEMENTS

"Nursing students keep the NHS running. But they're doing it for free."

Essex Students' Union launches national 'Pay the Placement' campaign to end unpaid placements in healthcare education

Colchester, UK – Nursing students are delivering frontline care across the NHS but they're not being paid a penny for it.

Every day, they work long, hands-on shifts in hospitals, clinics and communities. They often do the same vital work as paid staff, while racking up thousands of unpaid hours and covering travel, parking and meal costs. All while still paying tuition fees.

It's time that changed.

The University of Essex Students' Union has launched Pay the Placement, a bold national campaign demanding fair pay for nursing and healthcare students and an end to unpaid placements once and for all.

"Everyone will require the care of a nurse at some point in their life. Our students are stepping into one of the most challenging and valuable industries, and the very least they deserve is to be paid for their dedication and hard work in supporting real patients," says Chloe, VP Education at Essex SU.

The Problem

All nursing students in the UK must complete over 2,300 hours of real patient care as part of their degree, around 700 hours every year. These placements aren't optional and they don't fit neatly around student life. They dominate schedules, energy, and finances.

For many students, placements make paid work impossible. That means less money for rent, food, travel, and the basics, let alone sports, societies, volunteering, or rest. Students are being forced to choose between showing up for placement or keeping a roof over their heads. That isn't education. It's exploitation.

The Numbers That Say It All

- 70% of nursing students have considered quitting their course because of financial pressure, compared to 26–41% of undergraduates overall.
- £30–£70 a week is the average cost of travelling to placement.
- 60,000+ student nurses keep the NHS running for free.
- At Essex, healthcare students are 17% of the student body, but just 6% of event attendees and 3% of sports members, shut out by time and money.

What We're Fighting For

1. **Paid Placements** Real work deserves real pay. We're pushing for all nursing and healthcare students to be paid for their placements -because calling it a "learning opportunity" doesn't make it free labour.
2. **National Change** We're backing the Royal College of Nursing's call for a full review of healthcare student funding. The system is broken, and it's time for the government to fix it.
3. **Local Action** We're acting now by being clear about the real costs of healthcare courses, including uniforms, DBS checks, transport and parking. We're launching a second-hand uniform sale, creating a pre-placement guide for HSC students, and pushing for better local support, including lower travel costs, more discounts and increased Hardship Loans.

"As Education Manager, I've worked with students for 12 years. Our healthcare students are dedicated, hardworking and passionate, but they're also exhausted and often struggling.

We rarely see them at events or sports because they simply don't have the time or money. But we do see them, in large numbers, at our Advice Centre. While we're glad they reach out for support, we want them to have the full university experience, to be rested, financially secure, and able to enjoy their time here.

Please support this campaign so we can make a real difference to their lives and ensure the NHS has future health professionals who are valued, supported and able to thrive," adds Michelle, Education Manager at Essex SU.

The Pay the Placement campaign is calling on universities, students' unions, and the wider higher education sector to back the movement and demand change nationally. Because if the NHS can't run without student nurses, then student nurses shouldn't have to run on empty.

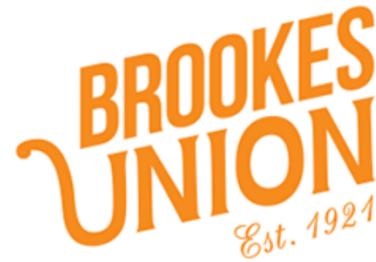
Join the campaign. Share your story. Sign the petition.
www.essexstudent.com/paytheplacement

Media contact: Lorna Elliott-Skinner, Marketing Director
Email: sumarketing@essex.ac.uk

A Word document press release is also [available here.](#)

WHO'S ALREADY INVOLVED

Together, we're louder, stronger and impossible to ignore.
Thank you to those Unions who're already involved:



Join the growing movement of SU's backing their HSC students at paytheplacement.com

PAY THE PLACEMENT

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX
STUDENTS*
UNION

BOUGHT TO YOU BY ESSEX SU