

The price of progress

A new district nurse training scheme will be introduced in September. In the second part of this series, Anthony Carr, SRN, NDN Cert, Queen's Nurse, looks at the extra costs involved in implementing the new course.

THERE ARE many variables to take into account when costing the new district nurse training scheme. Unfortunately, the major costs, such as what rates to pay student district nurses, have not yet been settled by the Nurses and Midwives Whitley Council. Some costs are likely to remain unchanged, including book allowances and uniforms.

To give nurse managers some idea of the costs involved, I have taken as an example the present costs in Newcastle and those that may be incurred with 15 students undertaking the new course.

Salary costs

Salaries are an important factor in the new scheme.

ths. Three calculations have been suggested.

The first is based on an assumption that future students would continue to receive the salary of the post they held immediately before becoming a student district nurse. For the purposes of this exercise I have used an estimate of eight staff nurses at an annual salary of £6,156 and seven day sisters at £7,555 a year being accepted onto the course. The calculation becomes 8 (staff nurses) \times £6,156 + 7 (day sisters) \times £7,555 = £102,133 a year (or **£51,066** for the six month course).

The second calculation assumes the students receive the present rate of £7,122 (unqualified district nurse). This would be 15 (students) \times £7,122 \div 2 = **£53,415** for the six month course.

caseload. The student does relief work for days off and holidays and this is counted as service.

In calculating the loss of service, it is assumed that over the years some replacement is built into the service and to calculate that present cost, the unqualified district nurse salary is used.

The formula is 12.4 weeks non-service \times 15 students = 186 weeks. Assuming 45 weeks a year for full-time staff (including holiday allowance but not sickness or other leave), then 186 \div 45 = 4.13 staff are required. Based on the unqualified district nurse salary, the cost would be 4.13 \times £7,122 = **£29,413**.

● New course. The only certain factor for the new course is that the non-service element will be 26 weeks.

To calculate replacement on the ex-

Table 1: Extra cost for 15 students taking new course.

		NEW COURSE – OPTIONS					
		a) Salaries of students as sisters/staff nurses b) Cost of replacement district nurses c) Course fee: £500	a) Salary of students as at present b) Cost of replacement SRN in community c) Course fee £500	a) Cost of students as SRN in community b) Cost of replacement SRN in community			
	PRESENT COURSE	£300	£300	£300	£300	£500	£300
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Salaries paid to students	32,870	51,066	51,066	53,415	53,415	41,175	41,175
Non-service replacement	29,413	61,676	61,676	47,543	47,543	47,543	47,543
Cost of travel	4,475	2,448	2,448	2,448	2,448	2,448	2,448
Fees	2,130	7,500	4,500	7,500	4,500	7,500	4,500
Remove present cost from future cost	68,888	122,690	119,690	110,906	107,906	98,666	95,666
Extra cost for new course		53,802	50,802	42,018	39,018	29,778	26,778

● Present course. Fifteen students are employed for 16 weeks. If the average employer's salary per student is £7,122 a year (unqualified district nurse), then the cost of paying for the student would be 15 (students) \times £7,122 \times 16 weeks (duration of course) \div 52 weeks = **£32,870**.

All salaries are the mid-point on the scale, with all the employer's contributions for national insurance and super-annuation included.

● New course. The future costing is uncertain. The course will last six mon-

The third calculation assumes the SRN grade in the community is used (£5,490 a year). This would be 15 \times £5,490 \div 2 = **£41,175** for the six month course.

From the difference in total it is obvious the Nurses and Midwives Whitley Council must reach agreement on this subject urgently.

The non-service element

● Present course. Four of the 16 weeks are devoted to theory. Of the 12 weeks in the service area, only 30 per cent (3.6 weeks) is calculated as actual service. Most of this time is spent with the practical work teacher, sharing one

isting unqualified district nurse basis would be 26 weeks \times 15 students = 390 weeks. Again, on the basis of 45 weeks a year for full-time staff, 390 \div 45 = 8.66 staff required, and the final cost would be 8.66 \times £7,122 = **£61,676**.

If the SRN grade in the community is used, the costs reduce to 8.66 staff \times £5,490 = **£47,543**.

Travel costs

● Present course. Based on regular car users' allowance of 14.5p per mile. On a practical placement it is assumed that 100 miles per week per student is travelled and 50 miles during college placement. The total cost for 15 students is **£4,475**.

The author is area nursing officer for Newcastle Area Health Authority (T).

● New course. Calculated at the public transport rates with the same mileage arrangements as for the present course. With 120 student weeks in practical placement at 100 miles per week at 9.6p per mile, the cost is £1,152.

During the theory period, 270 student weeks at 50 miles weekly at 9.6p per mile, the cost is £1,296.

Total costs are £2,448.

Course fees

● Present course. Fees are £142 per course and the full cost is £15

students × £142 = £2,130.

● New course. Future costs are based on two fees – a lower one of £300 and a higher one of £500. Totals are 15 students × £300 = £4,500 and 15 students × £500 = £7,500.

Total future costs

This is difficult to estimate until the salary of the students is known. Given the figures used in this paper, there are six possible costs for training 15 students ranging from £53,802 to £26,778 extra (Table 1).

If an authority changes from providing its own course to sending students to a college, then the present costs would not contain a fee but would show salaries for tutors and secretarial assistance, overheads for accommodation and other costs associated with running courses.

There is now great urgency for the Nurses and Midwives Whitley Council to reach agreement on the cost of the new students' salary and the grading of staff (if any) employed to assist the district nurse □

Feature – WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

Early impressions

Gerard Edwards looks at the writings of William Ernest Henley, who as a patient in the 1800s recorded his impressions of hospital life in books and poems.

HE COULD be taken for a pirate or a Viking chief rather than an editor or a poet. He was masterful, autocratic, often violent in his language and eccentric in his behaviour. Yet on the other hand he was loyal, devoted, prodigally generous and a lion for courage."

Thus was described William Ernest Henley who recorded for posterity his impressions of life as a patient in the old Edinburgh Infirmary. The eldest of five sons of a Gloucester bookseller, he contracted tuberculosis of the bone at the age of 12. His early treatment was both crude and unorthodox. A doctor would visit him at home and apply a caustic pencil over his painful feet.

Slaughterhouse treatment

It was then decided that young William should visit a slaughterhouse for treatment. Accompanied by his brother, Joseph, the afflicted boy bravely set off on two crutches. In later years Joseph recalled what happened: "He and I went into the slaughterhouse and saw a poor beast not long down and the butcher cutting open its inside. He greeted my brother with 'I'll be ready for 'ee in a jiff, Master Henley.' I was a bit scared, but my brother sat down on an old bench and I removed the covering off his bad foot.

"Then I saw the butcher drag a great mass from the beast's interior and pull it across the stone floor to where my brother was sitting, making a large slit in it with his big knife, and into this my brother put his bad foot, keeping it there for ever such a long time, all the while talking to the butcher and his man in

such a way that you would have thought he knew all about pigs, sheep and bullocks and their killing."

Despite this treatment – or because of it – Henley had a below-knee amputation. The disease was contained for a few years but when he was in his early twenties, there was a recurrence. Medical opinion pointed to amputation of the other foot if his life was to be saved. Henley refused, and decided to seek the help of Professor Lister in Edinburgh, whom he had heard was outraging the settled canons of medicine with his "new-fangled" antiseptic treatment. Henley decided to make the journey from Gloucester to Edinburgh and place his future in the hands of Lister. Racked with pain, crippled and almost destitute, he eventually arrived at the infirmary. After a long wait, Lister appeared and was amazed to learn that this young man of 24 had travelled such a distance to seek treatment. Lister asked why he did not heed the doctors in Gloucester. Henley's reply was devastating and characteristic: "The world regards you as a blockhead, but I seek your help." Lister kept his own counsel but agreed to admit this outspoken young man. Henley was to remain in Edinburgh Infirmary for 20 months, but his faith was justified – Lister saved his other leg.

Rash statement

This enforced stay in hospital resulted in the book of poems *Hospital Outlines*, which he sent to Leslie Stephen, editor of *Cornhill Magazine*. It happened that Stephen was to make a study tour in Edinburgh and he decided to visit his young contributor. Leslie Stephen took along with him another young man who had submitted an article on Victor

Hugo. The name of this young writer was Robert Louis Stevenson, and this first meeting of Henley and Stevenson was to take its place in literary history. They became close friends until a rash statement in later years on the part of the outspoken Henley caused a rift between them that was never healed. Henley regretted his own rashness and recalled the years of friendship when he penned the words: "We that were dear, are all too near, with the thick of the world between us."

Robert Louis Stevenson based his most forceful character on Henley – Long John Silver. He wrote to Henley: "It was the sight of your maimed strength and masterfulness that begot John Silver. Of course, he is not in any other quality or feature the least like you; but the idea of the maimed man, ruling and dreaded by the sound, was entirely taken from you."

Henley's only child, Margaret, inspired James Barrie to immortalise her as Wendy in *Peter Pan*. In her short, happy life, the child brought happiness and joy to all who met her; Barrie was amused at her attempt to say "friend", because instead she lisped "fwendy", thus the character of Wendy Darling was created. Barrie also based a character in his book *Sentimental Tammy* on the child. Margaret's death left her father heart-broken, and in the nine remaining years of his life, he never recovered from the sad loss.

In his verses on hospital life, William Henley brought dispassion and ability to record the tragi-comedy within: "The gruesome world of scissors and lint and apothecary's jars." His opening poem sets the scene. He recalls the day he arrived weary from his long journey from his hometown: "The briskness of

The author is clinical teacher, South Manchester Schools of Nursing.