

From the Office of the Minister
Diane Dodds MLA



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Richard Graham
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Our Ref: INV1480-2020

2nd July 2020

Dear Richard,

Thank you for your letter, dated 8 June 2020, requesting a meeting regarding the grave financial situation facing private, and mixed private/Health Service, dental practitioners in Northern Ireland.

Whilst the regulations for the dentistry industry is the responsibility of the Department of Health, the Economy Minister has been working with Executive Colleagues, to provide support to businesses and the economy in response to the Covid-19 crisis and we are responding in this context.

The Covid-19 public health crisis has created major challenges and difficulties for society at large, and the economic impacts are significant. The NI Executive and the UK Government introduced an unprecedented number of interventions and packages of financial support to help those who have been affected by the consequences of Covid-19.

Despite government's best efforts, and the significant amount of funding that has been made available, the Minister acknowledges that some businesses, employers, organisations and individuals have been unable to avail of all or some of the support options thus far

The Minister fully understands the frustration shared by some businesses or individuals in the community who have not been able to avail of as much support as others, but it is impossible to provide funding for every scenario that has presented itself during this pandemic. Dentists in Northern Ireland have been able to provide non-urgent care to the public from 29 June, Phase three, which will permit dentists to carry out aerosol-generating procedures (AGPs) including fillings, is scheduled to start from 20 July.

The Minister would like to assure you, that she, along with her Executive colleagues, continue to examine and pursue further means to support the local economy in whatever way possible.

Unfortunately the Minister is unable to meet with you at this time but please be assured that the key economic priority for the Minister, along with her Executive Colleagues, is to move forward with economic recovery while, keeping the health, wellbeing and safety of people at the centre of the approach to doing so.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Cartland', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Dan Cartland
Private Secretary to the Minister