

## FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



Mr T Kelso  
NI Director  
British Dental Association

[Tristen.Kelso@bda.org](mailto:Tristen.Kelso@bda.org)

Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
BELFAST, BT4 3SQ  
Tel: 028 9052 2556  
Email: [private.office@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@health-ni.gov.uk)

Your Ref:

Our Ref: CORR-0644-2021

Date: *TK* February 2021

Dear *Tristen,*

Thank you for your email correspondence of 28 January 2021 and the 9 February 2021 regarding the payment of the HSC Recognition Payments to the dental workforce.

My officials have been working tirelessly to ensure that we capture as many staff groups as possible in the scheme for the staff recognition payment, and I am delighted to advise you that general dental practitioners and their staff are included within the eligibility scope. My officials in the General Dental Services directorate are developing proposals on the implementation process and would welcome engagement with the BDA on how best this can be delivered.

In relation to the £2000 scheme for student placements I can advise that, since the re-commencement of healthcare training last summer after the first surge of COVID-19, the Department's focus has been on retaining students on their pre-registration training and minimising disruption to programmes so that they can join the workforce as soon as possible. I am sure you will agree that this is the correct priority. This has proven particularly challenging for dental students, given the demands of COVID-19 protocols. Indeed, during the pandemic, only a very limited amount of direct patient activity has been possible for dental students, and only in respect of years 4 and 5.

The special recognition payment announced has a specific purpose. It is targeted at students on pre-registration programmes which, during their clinical placement, have continuously actively participated in the direct delivery of care, often within Covid-19 environments, supporting patient safety and improving health outcomes.

The Department spends £5.497m per year in supporting the training of pre-registration dental students. This has been supplemented by £518k over 2020/21 to provide single surgery chairs and the personnel to supervise students undertaking dental care. It is anticipated that considerable further expenditure will be required in 2021/22 to manage the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on dental training

With regards to your enquiry concerning the vaccinator remuneration, the Business Services Organisation (BSO) has confirmed that doctors, and employed dentists, are paid under their existing terms and conditions. For any other individual applying for vaccinator roles, they are paid at the assessed level of the role, which was agreed by the four nations at equivalent to Agenda for Change Band 5.

I hope that you find this helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robin Swann', is positioned above the printed name.

**Robin Swann MLA**  
**Minister of Health**