

**GENERAL HEALTHCARE POLICY  
DIRECTORATE**



To: All NI GDPs

Via Email

General Healthcare Policy  
Directorate  
Room D2.9  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
BELFAST  
BT4 3SQ

Email:  
[gdocorrespondence@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:gdocorrespondence@health-ni.gov.uk)

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**GENERAL DENTAL SERVICES PPE SUPPORT 2020/21**

Further to my letter of 19 March 2021, I am writing to confirm details of further support of £2million towards the cost of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) related to activity carried out by general dental practices since July 2020.

As you know, in light of the risk to public health due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the delivery of routine dental care across the UK was suspended in March 2020 and in response, the GDS Financial Support Scheme (FSS) was established. To date approximately £47m has been invested via the FSS.

Initially an abatement adjustment of 20% was applied to FSS payments to account for some variable costs practices were not incurring when activity levels were very low. However in July 2020, when many of the clinical restrictions were lifted and the use and cost of PPE significantly increased, the abatement was removed as a mechanism to allocate funding to GDPs to reflect these new costs.

Removal of the FSS abatement as a mechanism to allocate PPE funding worked well when activity levels were low across practices. However, as activity levels have increased, the value to practices of removing the abatement has diminished. So for those practices whose activity has increased in recent months, relative to their 2019/20 Baseline Assessment Year (BAY), the mechanism has not provided the intended level of PPE funding.

Over the last two months the Department, the HSCB and BSO have reviewed PPE funding to practices since July 2020. This data showed that on average non-

orthodontic practices have been provided with approximately £0.50 in PPE funding for each £1 of IoS claims. The data also showed that the practices who have completed the most IoS activity in relation to their BAY have received the least PPE funding as a proportion of their IoS claims, because of the method of payment.

To address this imbalance, and following engagement with the British Dental Association (BDA), the intention is to provide those affected practices with a top up payment to bring their net total of PPE funding to IoS claims (received by GDPs collectively within the practice) from July 2020 to April 2021, to the average £0.50 per £1 of IoS claims. Annex A outlines in more detail how this will be calculated.

The decision to make these payments at a practice level has been made on the understanding that, in the majority of cases, PPE costs are met by the practice owners rather than by associate dentists. Where different arrangements are in place within practices, for instance where dentists have been asked to pay a proportion of PPE costs, practice owners will wish to consider the implications of this additional payment on existing arrangements.

A specific examination has also been undertaken to assess the level of PPE funding on a per patient basis, in addition to the per IoS claim basis outlined above. This has identified that it is not appropriate to provide PPE funding for orthodontic practices and general dental practices in the same way. Orthodontic practices are not as dependent on the more expensive Level 2 PPE in the first instance. Further, due to the significantly higher average value of IoS claims per treatment from orthodontic practices, a funding mechanism based on IoS claims, only, is not optimal. An initial review of PPE funding for orthodontic practices has concluded that sufficient funding has already been provided and, therefore, this additional funding scheme will not apply to orthodontic practices. A more detailed review of orthodontic PPE requirements will take place during Q1 21/22 and further engagement will take place with the BDA on the outcomes.

Whilst the approach outlined above addresses the issue since July 2020, additional work is required to ensure that going forward, the available PPE funding is allocated as fairly as possible and on the basis of dental activity. Further engagement will continue on these matters with the BDA, with wider correspondence issuing in due course.

I trust you find this helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael O'Neill', written in a cursive style.

Michael O'Neill  
**Acting Director of General Healthcare Policy**

## GDS PPE FUNDING TOP-UP CALCULATION

GDP totals

DS Number	Practice	Total Gross IoS Jul20-Mar21	Total FSS Jul20-Mar21
111111	99999	£19,198	£31,819
222222	99999	£19,819	£31,942
333333	99999	£13,764	£21,204
444444	99999	£9,169	£9,017
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£61,950</b>	<b>£93,982</b>

Practice totals

Practice	Total Gross IoS Jul20-Mar21	Total FSS Jul20-Mar21	PPE Funding (Cost of abatement removal) (20% of total FSS)	PPE/£1 IoS	Average PPE Funding (@ £0.50/£1IoS)	Top Up Payment (Average PPE Funding - PPE Funding)
99999	£61,950	£93,982	£18,796	£0.30	£30,975	<b>£12,179</b>