



All NHS Dental Contract Holders (via NHS Shared Services)

21 January 2025

NHS Dentistry – Annual Uplift for 2024/25

Dear colleagues,

You will be aware that earlier this year the Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration Body recommended that pay should increase by 6% for the financial year 2024/25. For some time, the Welsh Government have been clear that pay awards for independent contractors are contingent on a wider package of reform and policy aims. In that context, I had set aside around £11m as the financial envelope within which pay negotiations could operate this year to meet the DDRB recommendation also, but to go beyond that and ensure all staff working in NHS dental services received a pay award. This sum would provide for a 6% contract uplift for all dental contracts.

During the autumn term Welsh Government officials and NHS representatives have negotiated with the Welsh General Dental Practice Committee (WGDPC) in an attempt to reach an agreement for this year's pay uplift. Regrettably, the WGDPC have rejected all offers on the grounds that 6% is not sufficient to meet the DDRB recommendation on dentist's pay and are not willing to negotiate further. This is disappointing given the current financial climate for public services and that the level of investment being offered is the largest annual uplift in living memory.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I have given careful consideration to how to resolve this matter. With little prospect of the WGDPC changing their position and given that we are approaching the last 3 months of the year, the most responsible action I can take is to implement a pay uplift that I consider fair and proportionate; ensuring the money reaches you as dental practitioners and your staff working hard to provide care for people across Wales.

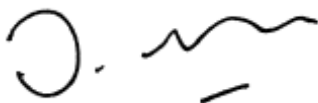
Therefore, a 6% contract uplift will be invested with the following conditions:

- Every dental contract holder, excluding orthodontic contracts, will be required to repeat the antimicrobial audit undertaken in 2023/24, compare and with previous findings and hold a discussion with practice staff to identify any actions required to improve antibiotic prescribing. This should be completed by the end of June 2025.
- All dental contract holders will be required to fully participate with the Welsh National Workforce Reporting System (WNWRS) including quarterly updates as a minimum.
- All contract holders are expected to record patient NHS numbers on forms submitted to NHS Business Services Authority. As a minimum patients must be asked for their NHS number and any appointment text/email/letter should remind the patient to have their NHS number available.
- All practice held waiting lists are to be transferred to the Dental Access Portal by the end of June 2025.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all dental teams for the work you do to look after the oral health of our nation. I very much value the work you do and am pleased to see that 90% of commissioned NHS dentistry has chosen to work under our reform arrangements this year. I understand that details of the variation offer for 2025/26 will be sent to you in the next few days. I very much hope that this will encourage the remaining contractor holders to participate in dental reform next year.

I am also very conscious that annual variations and their temporary nature don't give you certainty for the long term. I want to assure you that a substantive new dental contract is now very much on the horizon. Negotiations with your representatives took place over the period September 2023 to November 2024. My officials are now in the process of preparing consultation documents setting out the proposed new arrangements which will be published in the spring with the new contract then being ready for implementation from April 2026.

Yours sincerely,



Jeremy Miles AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

Copied to:

Directors of Primary Care
Chair – Welsh General Dental Practice Committee