



# Dental Schedule Communications

June  
2020



Welcome to the Schedule Communications where you will find all our latest news and useful information.

## COVID - 19

We are now into our third month making COVID-19 financial support payments to dental practitioners and practices as specified in [PCA\(D\)\(2020\)7](#). The operation of these payments has been a challenging time for practitioners and Practitioner Services staff alike. Whilst we have been able to calculate payments for the vast majority of practitioners without the need for additional information, we have had to request more information from some practitioners in order that we understand their particular situation and review our initial assessments based on that information. In order for us to make sure we get all the information we need, we have created a series of forms which must be submitted to advise of changes of circumstances.

Like all businesses, we have been affected by COVID-19 and the majority of our staff are working from home. We also have a depleted resource in many areas, since some staff did not have the technology to work at home or have childcare obligations. Therefore, the operation of the COVID-19 payments has fallen to a few committed individuals who have been working flat out including over evenings and weekends to do their best for the GDS in Scotland. Over the last three months we have received and responded to 900 queries from dentists, with around 200 of those resulting in a review of our initial assessment or the change in a payment because circumstances have changed. I would like to thank all the practitioners who have shown understanding and patience, and in particular would like to recognise those who have said thank you to the staff who are working so hard to make sure payments are accurate.

In the last 4 weeks we have had a number of meetings with colleagues from BDA Scotland and the Scottish Dental Practice Committee (SDPC). These meetings have been open and transparent and have allowed the BDA/SDPC insight into the work that is required to make COVID-19 payments in a fair and consistent way. The BDA have provided positive feedback on the our processes on their live updates page (<https://www.bda.org/advice/Coronavirus/Pages/Updates-from-week-commencing-1-June-2020.aspx> see article from 09.04 on 3rd June 2020).

I would remind practitioners that all of the payments being made will be subject to external audit later in the year and it is just as important that we can demonstrate the payment is correct and valid as it is for normal payments under the SDR. Any payments which have been made which were incorrect will be subject to

recovery from the practitioner or practice as appropriate. We are reliant on correct and valid information being supplied by practitioners to ensure that overpayments do not occur.

In order to make our interaction with practitioners as easy as possible I would draw the following to the attention of everyone. I do understand that this is a worrying time for many practitioners, and sometimes frustrations can creep in, but if we all follow the behaviours below, then we will.

| <b>Do</b>   | <b>Don't</b>   |
|---|--|
| <p>Read the FAQs before you contact us – see our COVID website page for the latest version<br/><a href="https://nhsnss.org/services/practitioner/dental/dental-covid-19-update/">https://nhsnss.org/services/practitioner/dental/dental-covid-19-update/</a></p> <p>Only email the correct secure mailbox <a href="mailto:nss.psd-dental-payments-covid19@nhs.net">nss.psd-dental-payments-covid19@nhs.net</a>. If you don't email this address, there is no guarantee that you will get a response.</p> <p>Complete the forms we send – don't supply the information in a long form narrative in the email when the form is structured to give us what we need.</p> <p>Be patient – we have only a small number of staff who have the knowledge to be able to respond. We are operating on a first come first service basis.</p> | <p>Send emails from non @nhs.net accounts – it will delay the response to you and take up more time in us responding to others.</p> <p>Expect that we can respond in one or two days – we need to be fair and respond to practitioners in order of receipt of their query.</p> <p>Delay resigning your list number at your old practice if you are moving on. Delays here will affect both your own payment at the new practice and any payments due to the incoming practitioner at your former practice.</p> |

Above all I would ask that you remember that the staff who are working on making COVID payments are human beings and they are genuinely doing their best to respond in very challenging circumstances. They can only make decisions within the scope of the COVID-19 payments scheme which is clear about what can be paid. The principle which runs throughout is to make a payment in lieu of what the practitioner would have received if COVID restrictions had not been put in place. The payment is to provide an income stream to support practitioner ad practices through the COVID-19 pandemic and it is not intended to be a complete replacement for practice income which might otherwise have been generated.

I am becoming concerned that a small number of practitioners have made allegations that we are acting unfairly or are discriminating against them since they would wish the scheme to take account of other circumstances or longer time periods. The financial support scheme is as defined by the Scottish Government and all the evidence that I and the BDA/SDPC have seen shows that Practitioner Services staff are acting fairly within the parameters of the scheme. I would ask practitioners to consider the impact of an allegation of discrimination received by the very staff who are working all hours to get as many payments made as possible and reflect on the content of communication before sending it.

In closing, I can confirm that Practitioner Services remain committed to ensuring the continuity of GDS in Scotland, a role that we will continue to provide as we move forward through the recovery phase of the provision of dental care and treatment.

Martin Morrison  
Associate Director  
Practitioner & Counter Fraud Services

# An update from the SPPA: Get your estimates online

At the SPPA, we've followed Scottish Government guidance and taken the appropriate preventative measures internally to move our full operation to a remote working environment. We've prepared well for the spread of COVID-19 and prioritised our core functions and critical retirement activity.

It's around this time of year we see an increase in the amount of pensions estimate requests. Whilst we try to produce these quickly, the calculation and payment of pension events will always be our priority. So why not get the latest estimation of your benefits on our online member portal –

<https://mypension.sppa.gov.uk>

It's free and a faster and simpler way for you to get your Annual Benefit Statement. This will estimate your pension benefits using the latest information we hold and is updated annually (by the end of August each year).

## Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorates issue PCA(D)(2020)

The Scottish Government have issued [PCA\(D\)\(2020\)9](#) providing further details on the requirements of NHS Boards for:

- Phase 1: the expansion of urgent dental care centres; and,
- Phase 2: the standing up of dental practices initially to see urgent patients for non-aerosol generating procedure (AGP) care.

A draft copy of Determination I of Amendment 144 of the [SDR](#) has also been issued.

### Claim cut-offs

Jun paid Jul 2020

Jul paid Aug 2020

### Electronic

5pm Tue 7 Jul 2020

5pm Fri 7 Aug 2020

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