

Primary Care Directorate
GP Contract Division



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Addresses

For Action

Chief Executives NHS Boards
General Medical Practitioners

For information

Director of Practitioner Services
Division, NHS National Services Scotland

Enquiries to:

Michael Taylor
Primary Medical Services
1 East Rear
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Tel: 0131-244 5483

Michael.taylor@gov.scot

28 July 2020

Dear Colleague

GP Practices – Additional Funding – COVID-19 - update

Background

1. On 7 April 2020, the Scottish Government announced additional funding of £15 million to be shared across all GP practices for the period from 3rd March 2020 to recognise the impending pressure on General Practice from COVID-19. Scottish Government and BMA (SGPC) agreed that no practice should receive less than £4,000 and the remainder of the £15 million sum (excluding £5 million for the April Public Holidays) would be distributed to practices by the Scottish Workload Formula (plus Income & Expenses Guarantee).
2. The SGPC and Scottish Government agreed a key principle of our response to COVID-19 would be that no GP practice should be left out of pocket, or have any financial detriment as a result of responding to COVID-19 and that additional work incurred by practices at this time and any reasonable additional expenses should be funded, while other routine general practice income was protected
3. Practitioner Services Division of NSS informed practices of their share of the £15 million which included their April Public Holiday funding allocation (0.8% of the global sum). These payments were made to practices by PSD the week beginning 13th April 2020. A further payments of £5 million was paid to practices in May to cover the May Public Holiday funding allocation.

Summary of Funding

4. [PCA\(M\)\(2020\)06](#) and [PCA\(M\)\(2020\)09](#) advised practices of the process and timescales for submitting claims against this Additional Funding up to end of June 2020.
5. In April 2020 the [Statement of Financial Entitlement](#) was updated to reflect the arrangements for sickness leave reimbursement costs for locums.
6. Practices were asked to record all additional COVID-19 related costs incurred over the period from **3rd March** to **30th June 2020**, to be reimbursed in line with the guidance provided. Practices were asked to document as appropriate all other necessary costs and expenses for submission to their Health Board/ Practitioner Services Division by **3rd July 2020**. All practices were asked to submit the General Practice Additional Costs related to Covid-19 Reimbursement claim form giving a total amount claimed, even in circumstances where no or very little expense had been incurred i.e. nil returns were also required.
7. These costs and expenses are currently being reconciled against the advance payments received by practices (less the amount allocated to cover April Public Holidays) to calculate where a practice may be over or underspent against the initial allocation.
8. Where practices have spent more than their additional funding, following approval by their Health Board any additional expenditure not already funded will be reimbursed in August 2020 by PSD (on behalf of the relevant Health Board).
9. If practices do not provide evidence to indicate that they have spent all of their advance funding within this 2020/21 financial year PSD (on behalf of the board) will reconcile any balances at the end of the financial year and make recoveries relating to any underspends.
10. This letter provides further information to practices regarding Additional Covid-19 funding from July 2020 onwards.
11. Some practices may continue to experience some COVID-19 related expenses from July 2020 onwards: in those circumstances the following guidance applies.

COVID-19 Related expenditure from July 2020

12. PCA(M)(2020)06 waived pre-approval by Health Boards of any Covid-19 related GP partners and staff expenses (for sickness/ self-isolation cover/ backfill and additional Covid-19 related work) until **30th June 2020** to allow practices to spend as required to meet their immediate needs and to reduce the administrative burden on practices and Health Boards.
13. Pre-approval for GP Partner and staff expenses will continue to be waived until the end of July or until the Scottish Government announces that vulnerable patients need no longer Shield. From that date GP partner or staff expenses for self-isolation cover/ backfill and additional COVID-19 related work must be agreed in advance by practices with their Health Board as per the Statement of Financial Entitlement.
14. The Statement of Financial Entitlement issued on **28th April 2020** removed the requirement for pre-approval of GP performer sickness leave cover. The Scottish Government intends to issue a revised Statement of Financial Entitlement which will come into backdated effect from **28th July 2020**. The revised Statement of Financial Entitlement will reintroduce the requirement for approval in advance of reimbursement for GP performer sickness leave.

15. Unless there is a further surge of COVID-19, or the reintroduction of lockdown in specific areas, or the impact of Test and protect on a practice staffing levels, Scottish Government expects that the above costs will be an exceptional occurrence.
16. PCA(M)(2020)06 also waived pre-approval of non-staff expenses less than £500 per single item. Any non-staff expenses greater than £500 required prior approval from practice's local Health Board Primary Care Team. From **28th July 2020** no further additional new non-staff expenses will be approved or funded. Ongoing costs approved before **30th June 2020** will continue to be funded, e.g. telephony expenses.
17. Where practices incur additional expenses as per paragraphs 13, 14, 15, and 16 above, they should continue to record any expenses and submit claims forms to their Health Board on a monthly basis. Where practices have already spent all of their additional funding, the Health Board/ PSD will carry out a reconciliation and any additional approved expenses will be reimbursed at the end of the month. Where practices have not used all of their additional funding these expenses will be accounted for against their initial allocation.
18. In summary
 - Practices have until the end of March 2021 to spend their share of the initial COVID-19 Advance Payments, if appropriate COVID-19 expenses arise;
 - Approved COVID-19 expenses that exceed practice's initial allocations will be reimbursed in August;
 - As the prevalence of COVID-19 continues to fall across Scotland Scottish Government expects that additional claims for funding will be minimal from the end of the Shielding period onwards, and
 - This position will be reviewed and additional funding may be made available in the event of a second wave of COVID-19.

ACTION

19. NHS Boards are requested to bring this circular to the attention of all GP contractors. Please bring policy enquiries to the attention of Michael Taylor (Michael.taylor@gov.scot).

Yours sincerely



Naureen Ahmad

Deputy Director and Head of GP Contract Division