

**From: Michael O'Neill  
General Dental, Ophthalmic Services &  
Criminal Justice Healthcare**



To: Michael Donaldson, Head of Dental Services (for  
onward transmission to GDPs)

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Dear Michael

## **COVID-19 CLINICAL NEGLIGENCE INDEMNITY FOR GENERAL DENTAL PRACTITIONERS**

I am writing to advise you of the clinical negligence indemnity arrangements that have been agreed for General Dental Practitioners (GDPs) in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We do not want indemnity to be a barrier or cause delay to anyone assisting with the response to COVID-19. These arrangements reflect the principles set out in Section 13 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 – NI indemnity clause. This clause allows the Department of Health to provide clinical indemnity coverage for health and social care professionals and others carrying out activities connected to care, treatment or diagnostic services provided under arrangements for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This ‘emergency’ indemnity will apply where liability for the provision of such services is not already provided for under an individual’s existing indemnity arrangements.

The indemnity powers in the Coronavirus Act 2020 are not intended to replace existing indemnity arrangements. For existing GDPs, Department of Health indemnity cover would only apply where their current indemnity arrangement does not extend to the additional activity undertaken in response to COVID-19.

Where the terms of the existing indemnity arrangements require GDPs to make their indemnity provider aware of any changes in circumstances (e.g. if they are going to increase their hours in their practices) GDPs should continue to do so in the usual way.

Where a GDP is advised that their existing indemnity arrangement will not cover this work or where indemnity will only be available at an additional cost, the Department of Health will provide clinical negligence indemnity to cover this work.

**GDPs should keep a record of where and when they performed any additional work that is not covered under their existing indemnity arrangements, including additional sessions, Out of Hours sessions or work in an Urgent Dental Care Centre.**

Clinical negligence indemnity provided by the Department of Health will be administered using the existing reporting and administration arrangements within Health and Social Care Trusts. In the event of any future clinical negligence claim arising, the GDP should contact their MDO and the relevant HSC Trust for the area in which they worked. Email addresses are provided below.

Belfast HSC Trust – [CAL-LegalServDept@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:CAL-LegalServDept@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

Northern HSC Trust – [risk.management@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:risk.management@northerntrust.hscni.net)

Western HSC Trust – [Therese.Brown@westerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:Therese.Brown@westerntrust.hscni.net)

Southern HSC Trust – [Litigation.Department@southerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:Litigation.Department@southerntrust.hscni.net)

South Eastern HSC Trust – [litigation.services@setrust.hscni.net](mailto:litigation.services@setrust.hscni.net)

I would be grateful if you could draw this to the attention of all GDPs.

Yours sincerely



**MICHAEL O'NEILL**

**Head of General Dental, Ophthalmic Services & Criminal Justice Healthcare**

cc: Paul Montgomery, Director of General Healthcare Policy

Charles Barnett, Finance Policy, Accountability and Counter Fraud Unit