

**GENERAL HEALTHCARE POLICY
DIRECTORATE**



To: All NI GDPs
BY EMAIL

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**RESUMPTION OF NON-URGENT DENTAL SERVICES: FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO
GENERAL DENTAL PRACTICES**

As referred to in the Chief Dental Officer's letter to you of 18 June 2020, I am writing to set out the financial support arrangements for General Dental Practitioners (GDPs) operating in Northern Ireland (NI) as routine dental care resumes.

In response to the significant reduction in normal Item of Service (IoS) payments due to the suspension of non-urgent dental care in March 2020, the Financial Support Scheme (FSS) was established as a temporary measure to reduce the risk to the financial viability of the service. Approximately £12 million in FSS payments have been made to GDPs over the past 3 months, in addition to £3 million in Item of Service claims.

The restrictions on non-urgent dental care are due to be eased, starting from 29 June 2020, with all services to resume from 20 July 2020. However, it is expected that activity will remain below normal levels for the short to medium term, with an impact on the level of IoS payments. Whilst this issue is recognised, there is also the risk of continuing to make payments for activity which has not been undertaken under the provisions of the FSS scheme. Although the FSS approach was reasonable when the restrictions were in place, it is not appropriate when GDPs are able to provide non-urgent dental care.

In this context, it is planned that GDPs will still be able to apply for additional FSS support in respect of their July and August 2020 IoS payments. For the remainder of 2020-21 it will be necessary to adopt a different approach. This will be based on providing GDPs with as much support as possible, within the available budget, but will be more closely aligned with the actual level of dental activity. Further details will be provided when available, although it is expected that they will need to be

reviewed and amended throughout the remainder of 2020-21 as more information becomes available in respect of the ongoing impact of social distancing and infection control measures.

Yours Sincerely

Paul Montgomery

**PAUL MONTGOMERY
DIRECTOR OF GENERAL HEALTHCARE POLICY**