

**GENERAL HEALTHCARE POLICY
DIRECTORATE**



To: All NI General Dental Practitioners
BY EMAIL

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**COVID-19: FUNDING FOR PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) FOR NI
GENERAL DENTAL PRACTITIONERS**

As you will know in March 2021 and August 2021 top up payments were made to address issues caused by using the removal of the 20% abatement as a means of compensating GDS for increased PPE costs. This was a key feature of the Financial Support Scheme (FSS) arrangements that were in place from July 2020 until September 2021, and is paid retrospectively.

Arrangements are being finalised for a similar payment to be made to practices for the final two months of FSS2 and the British Dental Association will be consulted in advance of the final payment.

The transition to FSS3, that introduced a new GDS PPE code, also requires further consideration in terms of how to deal with those claims that straddle the transition date (9 September 2021). For instance, claims for which PPE was used both prior to the transition date and following the transition date. We very much recognise the increased cost of Level 2 PPE in terms of continuing to provide dental services and want to make sure that GDPs are fairly compensated. To that end, we will soon issue further advice in relation to this matter.

The vast majority of claims in this payment month do not straddle the transition date and are, therefore, unaffected and will be processed depending on when the claim

was submitted. Claims made during the September cycle have been paid under the FSS2 arrangements. Claims made during the October cycle will be subject to the new FSS3 arrangements. The component of the claim relating to the loS treatment and any component relating to the use of Level 2 PPE under FSS3 will be paid as previously outlined. Any component of the October claim relating to Level 2 PPE used prior to 9 September 2021 will follow as soon as possible.

As minimum activity thresholds relate to loS treatment only (claims for PPE do not count towards activity), there will be no impact on the measurement of GDPs' activity rates.

GDPs are also reminded (as advised in the recent communication from Business Services Organisation (MDS 747)) that if the dates of a claim straddle 9th September 2021 (start prior to and completed after 9th September), observations are required to list the use of Level 2 PPE for AGPs between the 9th September and the completion date. These observations are key to helping the BSO determine a fair means of payment for the PPE used in advance of the transition date.

We are also aware that there are software issues with some practices submitting treatment claims with SDR Item code 3001. A leading dental software supplier has advised the BSO that they have identified problems with their software, which appears to have led to the problem with submission of item 3001 claims. We understand that these software problems have now been addressed by the supplier. BSO would advise dentists to proceed with the submission of all loS treatment claims to ensure that FSS activity thresholds are not adversely impacted. Noting the software issues affecting some practices, BSO have **extended the submission deadline until 17:00 on 8 October 2021.**

Any queries relating to this specific matter should be sent to Dental.Enquiries@hscni.net with 'Item Code 3001' in the subject heading.

For those practitioners unable to submit claims in respect of code 3001 for the October 2021 payment cycle, BSO will provide guidance to all GDPs regarding the methodology for claiming any outstanding payments.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment and support.

Yours sincerely



Michael O'Neill
Head of General Dental & Ophthalmic Services

Cc: Michael Donaldson, Head of Dental Services HSCB