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27 January 2022

Dear Practice Principal

REVENUE GRANT SCHEME (RGS) FOR GDS DENTAL PRACTICES 2021/22

Background

The Health and Social Care Board will fund a £5 million non-recurrent revenue grant scheme in 2021/22. This RGS funding will be targeted at the Covid response to improve patient safety, practice efficiency and improve the resilience of practices in order to mitigate against future transmission of aerosol based respiratory diseases, and other infectious diseases. The funding for this scheme is in addition to the existing GDS budget and must be fully utilised by 31 March 2022. Given the scale of the funding for this RGS and in order to avoid a large accrual and facilitate recycling of any underspend, it is imperative that all the claims for this funding are **received by 4 March 2022**. We appreciate that this is a very tight turnaround; therefore we recommend that practices follow the scheme application instructions carefully in order to secure their grant allocation.

Allocation of Grants

Grants will be paid, at the HSCB's discretion, to dental practices towards the cost of improving and increasing their delivery of General Dental Services. As with previous Revenue Grant Schemes, it has been agreed that grants will be made at a practice level. The HSCB have calculated each practice grant using a capitation formula based on the available funding and the number of GDS registered patients in a practice in January 2022. The BSO have supplied HSCB with registration figures for all NI GDS dental practices.

For High Street specialist oral surgery and orthodontic practices, the HSCB will use a similar formula to the one applied to clinical waste payments to determine their potential grant.

The amount of grant allowance allocated to your practice will soon be issued by post to the practice principal/lead dentist together with the application form.

In the event of an underspend in the Revenue Grant Scheme, we may be able to pay a proportion of costs above your notified allocation. **Therefore you should submit all eligible receipts in full for the specified period, rather than just up to your allocated amount.**

Allowable Expenditure

This RGS is aimed at addressing the response of Health Service dental practices to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic including ventilation, improvement to IT connectivity and functionality, level 1 PPE and upgrading practice infrastructure and equipment to support compliance with the GDS operational guidance.

Full details on the areas deemed suitable for funding are outlined in Annex 2.

Further advice in relation to ventilation is outlined in Annex 3.

Application for Grants

Applications for grants should be made by practices to the HSCB using the application form (Annex 1) which you will shortly receive in the post. Return the completed form along with scans of the appropriate receipted invoices (dated within the financial year 2021/22) which must be with the HSCB, preferably via email, no later than 4 March 2022.

If invoices are not receipted, or marked as paid by the supplier, or an alternative proof of payment is not provided then the grant will remain unpaid and a member of the HSCB team will be in contact to advise.

Please note that original receipts/documentation should be held at practice level and provided to HSCB if required.

Please be advised that practices will be able to submit paid receipts for appropriate equipment /materials which have been purchased prior to the issuing of this letter. However, only receipts dated for the current financial year, 2021-22, will be considered.

Conditions

The HSCB will want to satisfy itself that the funding has been used for the agreed purpose, that the terms of the scheme have been complied with and that any dentist receiving an allowance is compliant with their terms of service under the GDS Regulations (NI) 1993 and practices with the Minimum Dental Standards (2011).

The following terms will be applied to the scheme:

- The practice commits to maintaining (or increasing) current patient registration numbers until 31st March 2024 within a 5% tolerance level.
- A practice cannot make a claim against this RGS¹ if they proactively de-register patients or switch HSC patients to private/independent care during the remainder of 2021/22, other than for the reasons set out in the GDS Regulations.
- Where a practice will proactively de-register patients or switch HSC patients to private/independent care during 2022/23, other than for the reasons set out in the GDS Regulations, then they must not make a claim against this RGS¹.

In addition, where a practice is not already computerised, it is expected that the practice will prioritise their grant allocation against this area (Category 4, Annex 2) unless there are justifiable reasons for not doing so.

The HSCB will undertake an evaluation of this scheme to ensure that it has achieved its stated outcomes.

Summary of RGS Scheme: What you need to do.

1. Read the list of priority areas for funding contained in Annex 2 and advice in Annex 3.
2. Read the conditions of the scheme detailed above.
3. Decide whether you want to:-
 - Submit a receipt for equipment already purchased in 2021/22
 - Make a new purchase before 4 March 2022

In either case your purchase must comply with the priority list contained in Annex 2

¹ Where there is evidence of the deregistration of patients or switching HSC patients to private/independent care, other than for the reasons set out in the GDS Regulations, then the grant allocation will be recovered by the HSCB.

4. For an existing purchase or cost incurred – email the receipted invoice to GDS.Correspondence@hscni.net along with a completed application form (Annex 1) **as soon as possible and no later than the 4 March 2022**. Receipts received on or before 4 March 2022 should be paid in the March 2022 schedule.
5. For a prospective purchase – purchase the goods and email the receipted invoice to GDS.Correspondence@hscni.net along with a completed application form (Annex 1) **no later than the 4 March 2022**.
6. If your purchase(s) complies with the list in Annex 2, HSCB will instruct BSO to reimburse you up to your maximum practice allocation or the sum of your accepted receipt(s) (whichever is the lesser amount).
7. **Ensure that you submit scans of all eligible receipts in full for the specified period, rather than just up to your allocated amount.** In the event of an underspend in the Revenue Grant Scheme, we may be able to pay a proportion of costs above your notified allocation.

Contact Us

If you have any queries about this scheme, the most effective way to contact your local office is via email GDS.Correspondence@hscni.net or if necessary, by telephone **028 9536 2812**.

Yours sincerely



Michael Donaldson
Head of Dental Services