

General Dental Services Rebuilding Support Scheme Frequently Asked Questions

(Version 1, 11 March 2022)

ELIGIBILITY

1. Who is eligible for the scheme?

All General Dental Practitioners undertaking General Dental Service activity in the period the Rebuilding Support Scheme (RSS) is active are eligible for the scheme.

PAYMENTS

2. How will RSS payments be calculated?

Upon successful application for RSS, the Business Service Organisation (BSO) will calculate the total gross Item of Service (IoS) claims (excluding orthodontic & PPE codes) for a GDP and add a 25% enhancement prior to completing payment.

3. Will patient contributions be included in the calculation?

Yes, all calculations will use gross figures which include patient contributions.

4. As orthodontists on occasion claim non orthodontic codes, e.g. exams, radiographs, will enhancements for non-orthodontic SDR codes will be applied to claims by specialist orthodontists as well as GDPs?

Yes, all non-orthodontic codes are eligible for the 25% enhancement irrespective of who undertakes the treatment.

5. Will the enhancement rate be changed?

Activity will continue to be monitored on a weekly basis, should overall activity following implementation be considerably higher or lower than the anticipated, adjustments may be made and at least a month's notice will be provided should a change be necessary. The Department will continue to work closely with the British Dental Association regarding any changes.

6. Will RSS payments attract superannuation?

Yes

7. What happens if I exceed my Baseline Assessment Year (BAY) average?

There is no limit to nor threshold for activity under RSS. All activity will be eligible for the enhancement subject to the other conditions of the scheme.

8. How long will RSS continue?

The Minister has approved RSS until 7 July 2022. The BDA will be consulted on any changes prior to them being implemented. The details of the arrangements beyond June 2022 are currently being developed.

CONDITIONS

9. Are there conditions attached to the scheme?

Yes, a full list of the conditions are detailed each month in the online application form and those dentists applying for the scheme must ensure that they meet all these conditions. Failure to meet these conditions may lead to a loss of eligibility to the GDS RSS and recovery of funding already provided.

Any recoveries will be discussed with the GDP in advance of action being taken.

GDPs availing of the RSS will be subject to a requirement to prioritise treatment of all patients, registered or unregistered, based on clinical need until such times as the Out of Hours (OOH) arrangements are reinstated. The HSCB will monitor compliance with this requirement

10. If I choose not to apply for RSS will I still be required to treat unregistered patients?

GDPs who choose not to avail of RSS will be under no obligation to see unregistered patients, the normal GDS contractual obligations will apply.

TREATMENT DATES

11. How will treatment started prior to 8 April 2022 be paid?

The date of submission of the claim will determine under which support scheme the claim will be paid. GDPs should continue to make claims as normal based on when the course of treatment is completed.

Given the transition from a guaranteed method of support to one that enhances current activity there are concerns that there may be an element of delayed claim-making.

There will be some legitimate reasons for treatment completed prior to 8 April 2022 being submitted under RSS but this will be closely monitored by the HSCB/BSO.

12. How will treatment started under RSS but not completed be paid?

As with treatment started prior to the introduction of RSS the date of submission of the claim will determine under which support scheme the claim will be paid. GPs should continue to make claims as normal based on when the course of treatment is completed. Submission of claims for incomplete treatment will be closely monitored by the HSCB /BSO.

OUT OF HOURS (OOH)

13. When will the Emergency Dental Clinics be reopened?

The HSCB and the Department are actively examining restoring these clinics as soon as practically possible.

GDS dental practices must have arrangements in place to ensure that registered patients requiring prompt care and treatment will receive such care and treatment as soon as appropriate. This may take the form of phone triage delivered remotely. Practices may wish to form local rotas or buddy up with another dental practice in order to give them the flexibility to provide the necessary cover at weekends and recognised public holidays.

ALLOWANCES

14. How will Practice Allowance be calculated?

Practice Allowance will be calculated based on IoS claims as well as support payments (RSS or FSS as applicable).

15. What clawbacks may be made in respect of which SDR allowances, HS grants, Covid payments and so on, if a dentist reduces their HS commitment/moves more to private practice?

Going forward, practices and GPs who choose to reduce their Health Service commitment may find that their Practice Allowance and Continuing Care & Capitation payments may change, as per the current arrangements, however it will depend on the individual's particular circumstances.

FSS payments already paid will not be affected, provided the contractor was eligible and has adhered to the conditions of the FSS. These conditions include the provision

of their DA1 to the HSCB and that they have continued to provide access to patients without any significant change to their pre-Covid-19 work pattern in terms of the balance between those exempt/non-exempt from fees and private patients.

No claw back is intended for those eligible GDPs and practices who have adhered to the conditions of the FSS, even if they now decide to reduce their Health Service commitment.

Details on the conditions of the GDS Revenue Grant Scheme are outlined in its Terms and Conditions.

https://hscbusiness.hscni.net/pdf/RGS_Letter_Jan_2022.pdf

https://hscbusiness.hscni.net/media/RGS_Annex_1_Appl_Form_310122.docx

https://hscbusiness.hscni.net/pdf/Annex_2_RGS_Jan_2022.pdf

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

16. Will I still be able to claim for the cost of Level 2 PPE?

The RSS will not impact the current arrangements for reimbursement for the additional cost of PPE, although the issue of the provision of Level 2 PPE for AGPs on the non-respiratory pathway is being reviewed towards the end of March 2022.

INCREASED COSTS

17. My fuel and electricity costs have significantly increased in recent months, what action is the Department taking to reflect these rises?

The Minister has agreed to a 3% pay uplift for 2021/22 that is being implemented shortly. The uplift in fee levels each year is informed by the recommendations from the UK wide Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (DDRB) and these have been implemented in full since 2016/17.

The Department is aware that as independent contractors, dentists and dental practices are not sheltered from fluctuations in operating costs and given the current rate of inflation those costs have increased. It is expected that this will be taken into account in the next publication of the DDRB report due in June 2022, the recommendations of which will be given full consideration.

18. What if activity is low and there is a surplus of funding in the GDS budget, will it be reinvested elsewhere?

No, it will be invested in GDS. Usually underspends in the dental budget can be invested in other essential health services, but the Minister has committed the anticipated additional investment for GDS, on the basis of current activity.

Options for how this could be invested will be discussed the BDA in early course.

FOUNDATION DENTISTS

19. What are the arrangements for Dental Foundation Trainees (DFTs) and Educational Supervisors (ES)?

As the training year runs from September-August, arrangements for the current DFTs and ES will remain in place until August 2022. Arrangements for next year are currently being developed.