

To: all NI GDPs

By email only

Strategic Planning and Performance Group

County Hall
182 Galgorm Road
Ballymena
BT42 1QE

Date: 25 May 2023

Dear Colleague

Process for Termination of a Continuing Care or Capitation arrangement

I am writing to clarify the process to be followed when a dentist wishes to terminate a continuing care or capitation arrangement with a patient. Under Schedule 2, paragraph 11 and 11A of the General Dental Services Regulations (NI) 1993, dental practitioners have the right to withdraw from continuing care and capitation arrangements with a patient. This must be carried out at an individual patient level as there is no facility for the block deregistration of dental patients.

Form WCA 966 must be completed for each patient for whom a dentist wishes to terminate the continuing care or capitation arrangement. This form has recently been revised and amended and a copy is attached with this letter. I would like to emphasise that the WCA 966 form **must** be submitted promptly in order to give the BSO sufficient time to de-register the patient within the 3 month notice period. Ideally, the form should be submitted at the same time as the letter of notice to the patient.

Failure to complete and submit this form in a timely way will mean that the associated capitation/continuing care payment will continue to be made resulting in an overpayment. The SPPG/BSO will recover any overpayments made.

The form can be downloaded on the BSO website at:

<https://hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2371.htm>

The WCA 966 form should be completed for each patient and submitted by post to:

**Business Services Organisation
Withdrawal Officer
FPS Dental Department
3rd Floor
2 Franklin Street
Belfast
BT2 8DQ**

I would draw your attention to Schedule 2, paragraphs 11 and 11A of the GDS Regulations which detail the requirements to be met when terminating a continuing care or capitation arrangement; the GDS Regulations can be viewed at the link below:

[GDS Regulations NI \(1993\) \(hscni.net\)](https://www.hscni.net/gds-regulations-ni-1993)

Consequences of Termination of a Continuing Care or Capitation arrangement

Before a dentist considers deregistering health service patients, it is important to consider the consequences of such action:

1. Practice Allowance

Under the Conditions of Entitlement for Practice Allowance (SDR Determination X) it states:

“notwithstanding regulation 2 (2) of the Health Services (Choice of Dental Practitioner) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998, the practice gives an undertaking to make available all proper and necessary care and treatment under general dental services (except for specialist services on referral) to the full range of health service patients for the following 2 years”. If this condition is not met due to the deregistration of health service patients, the DoH may recover the relevant practice allowance payments.

2. Revenue Grant Scheme

Almost £5 million was paid out under the 2021/22 Revenue Grant Scheme (RGS). The conditions of the RGS state:

- 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 deregister 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 deregister 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.

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 (SPPG).

The dentist to whom the RGS payment was issued will also have made a signed declaration on the RGS application form that they will meet the conditions of the scheme and that failure to meet these conditions will result in the grant allocation being recovered. The DoH SPPG will monitor patient registrations at a practice level up until 31 March 2024 and where patient registration numbers have dropped without justification, recovery of some or all of the RGS payment will be made as appropriate.

I hope this letter clarifies the process for the termination of a continuing care or capitation arrangement, the need to submit the WCA 966 forms in a timely way and the potential consequences for a practice when taking such action.

If you have any queries about this letter, please e-mail GDS.Correspondence@hscni.net

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Donaldson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

Mr Michael Donaldson
Head of Dental Services