

TO: GDS Dentists

BY EMAIL ONLY

Strategic Planning and Performance Group

County Hall
182 Galgorm Road
Ballymena
BT42 1QE

Date: 30th November 2023

Dear Colleague

Expressions of Interest for participation in a revised PDS Pilot Scheme for unregistered patients, asylum seekers (PUPAS), including refugees in need of urgent dental care – December 23 to March 26.

The Department of Health (DoH) invites expressions of interest from General Dental Services Practices for participation in a **revised** PUPAS PDS Pilot Scheme.

As you are aware, in July 2023 the PUPAS Pathfinder Scheme was rolled out under Pilot PDS under Personal Dental Services (PDS) arrangements. The aim was to recruit 25 practices across NI (ideally 5 per LCG area) and run the service up to March 2026. Due to the limited response to the expression of interest from practices, we currently have only 9 practice providers.

We indicated that the scheme would be kept under review during the pilot period and amended or withdrawn at one month's notice should circumstances dictate. In an attempt to understand how we might improve access for unregistered patients with an urgent dental need and avoid pressure on existing PUPAS providers from excessive demand we sought your feedback. Some practices indicated that they would be interested in the scheme should the remuneration rates better reflect the work involved. We have therefore taken your views on board and can now offer significantly increased rates.

The revised per capita payment rates for each patient triaged, examined and treated will now be **£70** per unregistered patient and **£120** for asylum seekers and refugees with these payments uplifted annually in line with any uplift to the SDR fees. In addition, the usual SDR fees can be claimed for any patients treated under the scheme. PUPAS payments will also be factored into the calculation of the Practice Allowance payments. The implementation of these new rates will commence once the expression of interest exercise has been completed and selected practices have signed the provider agreement.

In order to apply, practices should be able to commit to an average of 3.6 PUPAS patients per week without adverse impact on access for registered patients. However, as demand will vary across the region there will be no minimum quotas applied. Maximum quotas may be applied by SPPG at any stage in order to manage total spend.

Practices interested in participating in the scheme should complete and return the attached Expression of Interest template (Appendix 4) to GDS.correspondence@hscni.net by 8th December 2023.

Practices will be selected primarily on the basis of capacity to treat additional unregistered patients without displacement of normal GDS work and a track record of treating unregistered patients under the GDS. Existing providers should reapply and their prior participation in the scheme will demonstrate compliance with the several of the criteria. Eligible practices will be selected according to geographical location to ensure, as far as is possible, equitable access for patients.

It is intended that selection of practices will take place during the week commencing 11 December with successful practices able to commence service provision in mid-December subject to contract documentation being appropriately signed and returned.

Late applications will be accepted and considered subject to there being available funding following the first round of practice selection.

If you have any queries in respect of the pilot scheme not covered in the specification please email GDS.correspondence@hscni.net

Yours sincerely



Michael Donaldson
Head of Dental Services

cc

Caroline Lappin
Michael O'Neill
Donncha O'Carolan

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Pilot Specification
Appendix 2 Sample Claim Form
Appendix 3 HSC R2 Application Form
Appendix 4 Expression of Interest Application Form - for completion and return by 8th December 2023.