



## **BDA Scotland – Monthly Update**

**July 2021**

**This document summarises recent key developments and BDA Scotland activities. We publish regular updates on these issues on the BDA's Coronavirus Live Updates web page:**

**[Live updates: Coronavirus and dentistry \(bda.org\)](https://www.bda.org/live-updates/coronavirus-and-dentistry)**

### **1. General Dental Service**

#### IPC Guidance Letter

The CDO [wrote](#) to dental practices on the 8 July to advise that infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance was currently being reviewed with the aim of relaxing measures proportionately and safely depending on the level of Covid risk. He also noted a few recent revisions to the guidance.

Following this communication, members raised several concerns and queries. Some commented the letter was premature for primary care dentistry, as the recent revisions only applied to those working in a hospital dental setting. Many were unaware of the recent revisions and asked where this information had been initially announced. Some were unclear on the specifics of the information and what impact this would have on them. Feedback showed that clarity from the Scottish Government was required including dentistry-specific, evidence-based guidance to allow dentists to work safely.

We collated members' feedback and submitted this to the Scottish Government for comment. We will keep you updated with our progress.

#### Ventilation funding for NHS practices

On 6 July, the Scottish Government issued a memorandum with details of [ventilation funding available to NHS dental practices](#). To apply for this funding, practices need to complete a form via their NHS Board and only claims occurred during 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2022 will be accepted.

In response to our queries on the draft proposals, the Scottish Government provided clarity on a number of points:

- Ventilation standards are defined as 10 air changes per hour.
- HEPA filters are not recommended as a universal mitigating solution, but they might be used as a short-term mitigating solution where other ventilation solutions are not available.

- The figure of £1,500 per surgery was based on the results of a survey which indicated that existing investment has commonly ranged between £500 and £2,000, and showed that among those who had previously carried out an upgrade, the most common category for intended future spending is '£1,001 - £2,000' (40%).
- The Scottish Government will make a contribution to the costs of the initial equipment only, comparable to the funding model for disinfectors and defibrillators.
- Funding will not cover waiting rooms.

While we welcomed this clarification, some members expressed concerns that the level of funding allocated by the Scottish Government to increase ventilation in dental surgeries (£5 million in total) will be inadequate for many practices. For example, many large practices, and practices in old buildings, will be unable to install properly certificated ventilation for £1,500 per surgery. We will review how well the scheme is working in practice and will continue to campaign on this issue on behalf of all dentists in Scotland.

### PPE

We continue to meet regularly with Paul Cushley, NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) Director of Dentistry, to discuss PPE issues and to relay members' concerns. NSS increased the quantity of PPE to NHS Boards by 50% in August and will review subsequent uptake by practices NSS will model the volume of PPE they require to make available to dental practices.

NSS recently [wrote to Dental Directors](#) to advise that from August an allocation of free PPE will be made available to NHS practices who have taken on dental nurse trainees. Eligible practices will have the extra allowance added to their allocation through Pecos, the online ordering platform. With the number of reported dental nurses leaving the profession increasing during the course of the pandemic, and adverts for recruitment on the rise, this development may help to support NHS practices to re-establish dental nurse training.

### £500 Payment for Locum Dentists

Following the First Minister's announcement in November, the [Scottish Government issued guidance](#) to GPs explaining how to receive the £500 one-off payment for helping Scotland cope with the pandemic. On 7 July, we received an update for locum dentists who were initially unable to have a claim made of their behalf by a service provider. Locums now have the opportunity to claim the bonus [by clicking on this link](#). We welcome this change which ensures locum dentists working in Scotland are acknowledged for their efforts.

## **2. Revised system for maternity, paternity, adoptive and long-term sick leave payments**

Following the Scottish Government's recent [change to the calculation for maternity pay](#), we collated examples from colleagues of how the new arrangements were negatively impacting some dentists and presented this information to the Scottish Government.

Our main concern was that dentists who work part-time – particularly those who have higher earning potential over fewer working days – would be financially worse off. We subsequently received a response from the Scottish Government advising that the system had been changed to prevent dentists from being disadvantaged by Covid support payments (85% of pre-Covid gross Item of Service income). They also noted that, using the old system, a dentist would need to gross annual earnings of £166k to be eligible for the full maternity payment of £1,399 per month, therefore they anticipate the new system is a more achievable metric.

We welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to keep this change under review and discuss any further concerns from the profession with us.

BDA Scotland contributed to a [blog](#) by Shareena Ilyas, BDA Board Member, published on 8 July on the BDA's efforts to secure fair Covid payments for dentists on maternity leave in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

### **3. Public Dental Service**

At a recent meeting of SPDSC there was a discussion about the need to have a nationally agreed overtime rate for PDS dentists as part of their Terms and Conditions. BDA Scotland has sought a range of views from committee members and BDA accredited representatives on this issue and will be seeking a meeting with the PDS Leadership Group to discuss this matter and other issues in due course.

### **4. DDRB recommendation on pay uplift for dentists**

The Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (DDRB) published its 49<sup>th</sup> report on 22 July. The Review Body recommended a 3% pay uplift for:

- SAS dentists in Scotland
- Dentists in training in Scotland
- Independent contractor GDPs
- Associate and salaried GDPs including Public Dental Service practitioners.

We contributed to the BDA's UK-wide written evidence submission to DDRB in January, and SDPC Chair David McColl took part on the oral evidence session in April. The Scottish Government's remit letter to DDRB in February stated that it will "be necessary to consider the affordability of the DDRB's recommendations within the confines of the Scottish Public Sector Pay Policy". This includes capping the basic pay increase to £800 for those earning £80K or more. However, the DDRB report noted that:

*"(The Scottish Government) said that, when considering affordability for medical and dental pay awards, the DDRB should view the Scottish Public Sector Pay Policy as an anchor rather than an absolute position, and they would not want to see doctors and dentists in Scotland disadvantaged compared to their counterparts in the rest of the UK."*

We await details from the Scottish Government about how the pay uplift will be applied in Scotland.

### **5. Impact of the Pandemic on Dentists' Mental Health**

A [study](#) by NHS Education for Scotland in partnership with the University of Dundee and the University of St Andrews aimed to understand how the pandemic has affected anxiety, feelings of uncertainty and preparedness for practice in the profession. The survey report contained some concerning results on dentists' mental health – for example:

- 27% of survey respondents reported significant depressive symptomology
- 55% of primary care staff rated themselves as emotionally exhausted.

BDA Scotland and the Scottish Government jointly produced a [summary of mental health and wellbeing resources](#) for dental teams earlier this year. While this is hopefully a useful resource for dealing with the problem, the primary focus needs to be on prevention. NHS Education for

Scotland (NES) has stated that it will incorporate dentists' mental health in its future work, including follow-up studies.

BDA Scotland staff met with David Felix, Postgraduate Dental Dean, NHS Education for Scotland (NES) on 22 July to discuss the above report. He advised that the survey only had a low response rate therefore the results should be treated with a degree of caution. He also referred to TURAS, the unified platform for health and social care professionals and advised that NES would be providing online stress management courses free of charge. We agreed to promote these courses through our regular updates, newsletters, committees and other networks.

## **6. BDA Scottish Council Membership and Communications Working Group**

The BDA Scottish Council Membership and Communications Working Group met again on 30 June. Issues discussed included BDA Scotland membership trend data, how to attract final year students and VTs and the importance of working more closely with the Dental Schools. The group also discussed how to engage better with the profession, both members and non-members, by strengthening links with the Local Dental Committees and inviting committee members to act as social media ambassadors as a way of promoting the BDA. Input to social media would be more valuable from dentists than BDA staff but it was recognised that this was a sensitive issue and there were challenges in this area.

It was agreed to invite BDA indemnity colleagues to the next meeting of the group to discuss the promotion of the product in Scotland.

### Student Interview Blog

Georgia Halkett, a student at Dundee Dental School, kindly agreed to be interviewed by the BDA media team about the effect of the pandemic on her studies. She welcomed the additional funding provided for students in Scotland during the pandemic who were required to extend their studies, the BDA's role in securing this funding, as well as other support and the benefits of becoming a member of the BDA. The interview has been published as a [blog](#) on the BDA website.

## **7. Transfer of Core and Specialty Trainees to NES as Lead Employer**

BDA Scotland has been involved in discussions with NES and NHS Boards about plans for NES to replace individual NHS Boards as the lead employer for all new Core and Specialty trainees from September. (NES will become the lead employer for Vocational Dental Practitioners from August 2022). This change was planned to take place in September 2020 (August 2021 for VDPs) but was delayed by a year due to the pandemic. Existing Specialty dental trainees in an ongoing programme will be moved under the Lead Employer model at a later date, likely to be November 2021, and NES will contact current trainees to confirm exact dates and necessary steps.

There are various advantages in having NES as a single employer, such as having one central HR function and a consistent approach to employment policies. Having one employer for the duration of their training programme reduces duplication of onboarding processes as trainees rotate round placements. The result provides a more consistent journey through the programme and builds a positive employment experience.

We recently wrote to Core and Specialty trainees as part of the communication strategy about the change.

## **8. Parliamentary Questions**

There have been a number of recent dentistry-related Parliamentary Questions at Holyrood – these are listed in the Appendix. The Scottish Parliament is in now recess till 29 August.

## **9. Forthcoming meetings**

- 4 August Meeting with Scottish Government policy officials
- 19 August Scottish Council meeting
- 23 August Meeting with Paul Cushley, NSS Director of Dentistry
- 27 August Scottish Obesity Alliance Executive Group meeting

**BDA Scotland  
August 2021**

## Appendix: Recent Parliamentary Questions

### 1. Question ref. S6W-01095

Jackie Baillie, Dumbarton, Scottish Labour, 25 June 2021

To ask the Scottish Government how many suspected cancer referrals have been made by NHS dentists in each year since 2014-15.

Answered by Maree Todd on 26 July 2021

The information requested is not held centrally by the Scottish Government or by Public Health Scotland.

Information relating to the number of suspected cancer referrals made by NHS dentists would be held by individual Health Boards.

### 2. Question ref. S6W-01221

Alexander Burnett (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party), 6 July 2021

To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S6W-00961 by Maree Todd on 2 July 2021, what its position is on providing vouchers to mothers to enable them to receive free NHS dental treatments after their child's first birthday, in situations where the treatments would have been free prior to the birthday but the mothers were unable to have them within this timescale due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Answered by Maree Todd on 23 July 2021

Free NHS dental treatment for expectant mothers or those who have borne a child within the previous 12 month period is part of The National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978. The 12-month period is fixed by primary legislation and would require a primary legislation amendment (i.e. a Bill) to change this. Therefore, it is not possible to change the exemption entitlement for free treatment at present. However, the Scottish Government has committed to the removal of all charges for NHS dental treatment within the lifetime of this parliament.

### 3. Question ref. S6W-01098

Jackie Baillie (Scottish Labour), 25 June 2021

To ask the Scottish Government how many referrals each NHS dental hospital has received in each year since 2014-15.

Answered by Maree Todd on 25 July

Validated information on referrals to NHS dentals hospitals is not held centrally. However the member may find it useful to know that information relating to outpatient activity including total number of attendances by NHS Board and location of treatment can be found in the Acute Hospital Activity publication using the link

[below.https://publichealthscotland.scot/media/4991/table-1-outpatient-activity-consultant-led.xlsx](https://publichealthscotland.scot/media/4991/table-1-outpatient-activity-consultant-led.xlsx)

### 4. Question ref. S6W-01097

Jackie Baillie (Scottish Labour), 25 June 2021

To ask the Scottish Government how many emergency NHS dental consultations there have been in each month since January 2020.

Answered by Maree Todd on 25 July 2021

The Scottish Government does not hold this information centrally. Information on how many NHS dental consultations were emergencies is held with the individual dentist. However, the overall number of NHS dental consultations can be found on Public Health Scotland at: <https://publichealthscotland.scot/publications/dental-statistics-fees-and-treatments/dental-statistics-fees-and-treatments-statistics-as-at-march-2020/> .

**5. Question ref. S6W-01096**

Jackie Baillie (Scottish Labour), 25 June 2021

To ask the Scottish Government how many NHS dental consultations there have been in each year since 2017-18.

Answered by Maree Todd on 23 July

The Scottish Government does not hold this information centrally. Information on the number of NHS dental consultations can be found on Public Health Scotland at:

<https://publichealthscotland.scot/publications/dental-statistics-fees-and-treatments/dental-statistics-fees-and-treatments-statistics-as-at-march-2020/> .

**6. Question ref. S6W-00920**

Jackson Carlaw, Eastwood, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, 21 June 2021

To ask the Scottish Government how many independent contractors, including GPs, dentists, optometrists and pharmacists, are fulfilling the role of vaccinator in the COVID-19 vaccination programme, and what percentage of the total vaccination workforce is comprised of independent contractors, broken down by NHS board area.

Answered by Humza Yousaf on 22 July 2021

While the Scottish Government has access to management information (MI) on the number of independent contractors participating in the Covid-19 vaccination programme. This MI has not been subject to the same level of validation and checking as National Statistics or Official Statistics. Therefore, the data are not publicly available; however, as individual Health Boards have responsibility for local deployment decisions, they are best placed to advise on the composition of their respective workforces.