



Mr Tim McDonnell
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Scottish Government
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By email

11 March 2022

Dear Tim

Following the recent meeting between the SDPC Executive and Scottish Government, there are a few issues that we would like to raise.

Negotiation

SDPC reiterate our strong concerns about the lack of meaningful negotiation over the recent PCA about the interim funding model and being handed another “done deal”. The lack of movement on several of the Committee’s key issues, including the low fees for treatments such as extractions and denture repairs, the measurement of all practice activity, and the 3-month review of the multiplier, left us with the impression that the meeting was “for information” rather than for any in-depth discussion. This view was strengthened by the PCA being issued to the profession shortly after the meeting ended, closely followed by a Scottish Government news release. **We again call for regular and genuine negotiation with the Scottish Government as the profession adapts to the interim funding model.**

We remain concerned that there was no clear methodology for the new examination fee and the introduction of such a fee regardless of the complexity of the case will only serve to increase health inequalities.

We are most disappointed that the CDO and his team have not used the data on non-fee-generating codes which practices have been gathering since reopening for face-to-face treatment in June 2020. This information would have formed the basis on an interim and new model of care, and demonstrates a lack of insight into the current operation of GDS and healthcare delivery.

The CDO and his team had an excellent opportunity to pilot a new model of care as GDS has effectively been salaried from March 2020. They were advised to do so by SDPC and the Directors of Dentistry but unfortunately failed to do so.

Multiplier review

Given the number of dental staff that are currently self-isolating, we remain concerned that next month is not the time to end Covid support payments. We also reiterate our misgivings about the planned 3-monthly review of the multiplier and the considerable difficulties this will present for practices in planning both treatments and finances. **It is imperative that SDPC representatives**

are involved in regular discussions with the Scottish Government about the latest activity data from April and any proposed change to the multiplier.

SG have taken no cognisance of the cash flow implications for practices and in particular the extended time it takes for complicated treatment plans associated with patients from deprived areas and the wait for payment on conclusion of such treatment plans. The current SG policy will only serve to increase health inequalities.

SDPC input to policy decisions

Throughout the pandemic, SDPC have offered to provide early comment and insight (based on committee members' considerable frontline experience) on proposed Scottish Government changes. However, the Government did not call for SDPC's input on decisions such as the funding for red band handpieces, or the recent announcement on funding for practice maintenance improvements. We believe this was an oversight on the Government's part. The committee would like to **repeat our offer to provide expert opinion on proposed changes** as the profession adapts to a new funding model.

Long-term contractual reform

There was widespread recognition before the pandemic – among both dentists and the Government – that the low-value, high-volume fee-per-item system was not fit for purpose and did not reflect modern dentistry. This view has strengthened in the past two years, and SDPC and the wider profession are clear that dentistry has moved on and there will be no return to the pre-pandemic “treadmill”. You have indicated that a number of the committee's concerns – including the aforementioned low fees and measuring all practice activity – will be addressed during the appropriate “reform space” for negotiations about a new long-term model of care. **Can you please advise when you expect these discussions to begin?** Again, it is essential that BDA/SDPC are involved in these discussions from the beginning to ensure the views of frontline GDPs and their teams are presented. The CDO stated during the pandemic that we would not be returning to the SDR yet here we are returning to a broken model which is not fit for purpose, not patient-centred and risks the collapse of NHS GDS.

Finally, I appreciate that you are still relatively new to the dentistry portfolio, therefore I would like to repeat the invitation to attend my practice (which is in a deprived area of Glasgow) to help increase your understanding of how NHS dentistry works, and the pressures that dental teams continue to face.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely



David McColl
Chair, Scottish Dental Practice Committee

CC. Mr Humza Yousaf, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

CC. Mr Tom Ferris, Chief Dental Officer

CC. Ms Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Public Health, Women's Health and Sport