

Community Health and Social Care
Directorate
Primary Care Division



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Addresses

For Action

Chief Executives NHS Boards
General Medical Practitioners

For information

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Dear Colleague

GP Practices – Additional Funding – COVID-19 – update and clarification

Update

1. [PCA\(M\)\(2020\)06](#) advised that Additional Expenses would only be reimbursed where practices had had to purchase supplies or equipment that is not ordinarily supplied by the Health Board (for example telephony equipment, headsets, additional telephone lines etc.). Costs incurred relating to areas which are provided by the Health Board (for example, IT expenses and PPE) would not be reimbursed through this funding.
2. Scottish Government and SGPC continue to discuss how other costs clearly related to responding to the coronavirus (including recovery preparations) should be met and practices are advised to record all coronavirus related expenditure even if it is not currently reimbursed under Additional Expenses. This letter is the first update to [PCA\(M\)\(2020\)06](#).
3. Scottish Government and SGPC have now agreed that practices can claim reasonable PPE expenses during the early pandemic period before they were routinely being supplied with PPE by their board. This will cover the period from 3rd March until adequate supplies were provided by the Health Board.
4. Practices will be able to claim for routine PPE consistent with available HPS guidance where that existed at the time; fluid resistant surgical face masks (FRSM), disposable gloves, disposable plastic aprons, and eye protection.

5. John Connaghan's letter to Health Board Chief Executives on the 14th May noted that "service delivery, where clinically appropriate, should be via telephone and digital consultations; Boards have a responsibility in ensuring that practices have the appropriate hardware, software and connectivity infrastructure to maximise the use of digital technology". Scottish Government and SGPC will be considering how to best ensure this responsibility is met.

Clarification and reiteration

6. Practices should continue to seek reimbursement for sickness leave cover for GP partners and salaried GPs as set out in Chapter 7 of the [Statement of Financial Entitlement](#) whether the cause of the sickness is COVID-19 related or not. Where the sickness leave cover is for COVID-19 related reasons, practices should claim this as an Additional Expenses so it can be reconciled against their advance funding. The table in Annex A has been updated to reflect this. For the duration of the coronavirus pandemic pre-approval is not required for sickness leave reimbursement whether or not it is related to the coronavirus.
7. [PCA\(M\)\(2020\)06](#) noted that some practices may have staff in the shielding category who may be absent for up to 12 weeks and that those staff should continue to receive their normal pay, and any additional staff costs required to cover their absence can be reimbursed as set in the circular. This also applies to GP partners and salaried GPs who are unable to attend their practices. Backfill costs can be claimed as set out in Chapter 7 of the [Statement of Financial Entitlement](#). This will also be funded from the advance funding.
8. [PCA\(M\)\(2020\)06](#) noted also that practices with high Covid-19 related costs may require further advance funding, if they used their share of the £15 million before the end of June 2020. In those circumstances, where practices are experiencing cash flow difficulties they can approach their Health Board/ PSD and request a further advance of funding. This additional funding will be part of the reconciliation process in July 2020. In recognition that Covid-19 related expenses may continue beyond July 2019 PSD will not make any recoveries of unused funding in July 2020. A further reconciliation exercise, if needed, will happen at the end of the financial year in March 2021.
9. Practices should continue to note that any non-staff expenses greater than £500 will require prior approval from your local Health Board Primary Care Team.

Action

10. NHS Boards are requested to bring this circular to the attention of all GP contractors. Please bring policy enquiries to the attention of Michael Taylor (Michael.taylor@gov.scot).

Yours sincerely



Heather Campbell
Deputy Director and Head of Primary Care Division

Annex A – Further guidance on allowable expenses

Cost group	Cost type	Description/guidance
GP partner costs	Additional sessions to meet demand	<p>Additional sessions provided by GP partners above their normal sessional commitment as per their partnership agreement, where required to meet additional workload pressures on the practice generally. The applied pay per partner, should be £290 per session (this includes on-costs).</p> <p>Does not include locum cover for GP partner or employee sickness – see below. Does not include additional sessions for public holidays (this is covered by the public holiday payment). Does not include extra sessions for covering a practice GP that has been released to a hub where the hub sessions are paid for separately.</p>
	Additional internal or external locum cover GP partner/salaried GP sickness leave	<p>Additional costs associated with internal or external locum cover for GP partners or salaried GPs on sickness leave related to COVID-19 only.</p> <p>Note practices will be reimbursed for these expenses as set out in Chapter 7 of the Statement of Financial Entitlement.</p>
Medical/clinical staff costs	Additional sessions to meet demand	<p>Additional sessions provided by salaried medical/clinical staff above their normal sessional / or hourly commitment where required to meet additional pressures on the practice generally.</p> <p>Does not include locum cover for salaried GP sickness – see above. Does not include additional sessions for public holidays (this is covered by the public holiday payment). Does not include extra sessions for covering a practice GP that has been released to a hub where the hub sessions are paid for separately.</p>
	Additional internal or external cover for sickness leave	<p>Additional costs associated with internal or external cover for clinical staff who have to self-isolate or are on sickness leave (incl. locums for salaried GPs).</p>
	Sick Pay Entitlement – new staff	<p>New members of staff may not be entitled to the same level of sick pay as other practice employees depending on their contracts. In the event that any new members of staff require to take sick leave or isolation leave during the period of the pandemic, they should be allowed to the same level of sick pay as other practice</p>

		employees. Any additional costs as a result of this can be claimed for this group of staff only.
Administration staff costs	Additional sessions to meet demand	Costs associated with administrative staff working additional hours to meet increased demands on the practice. For example, entering Key Information Summaries for vulnerable and high risk patients.
	Additional sessions to cover sickness absence of staff	Additional costs e.g. overtime costs associated with administrative staff covering sickness leave or self-isolation of other administrative staff. This must only be for additional hours worked.
	Additional sickness leave payments to new staff	New members of staff may not be entitled to the same level of sick pay as other practice employees depending on their contracts. In the event that any new members of staff require to take sick leave or isolation leave during the period of the pandemic, they should be allowed to the same level of sick pay as other practice employees. Any additional costs as a result of this can be claimed for this group of staff only.
Additional expenses (pre-approval required for expenses greater than £500)	Expenditure on additional equipment	E.g. telephony or remote working equipment headsets to allow staff to carry out telephone triage etc., additional phone lines to make it easier for patients to get through to practice Remote working IT should be funded by the Board. PPE before the 8 week delivery if it was consistent with HPS guidance at the time.
	Additional indemnity costs	For practice-based work only. GPs or practice staff engaged by Health Boards for work in hub/assessment centres are covered by CNORIS.
	Other	Other Covid-related expenses incurred by the practice not otherwise mentioned.