

Jim Fairlie MSP
Covener
Covid-19 Recovery Committee

Sent via eMail:
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Date: 19th May 2023
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Your Ref:
Enquiries to Prof Caroline Hiscox
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Dear Mr Fairlie,

Thank you for your enquiry. Please find below the response on behalf of NHS Grampian.

1. How much COVID-related funding did you receive from the Scottish Government to fund the following measures?

- **Ventilation improvements**
- **Equipment**
- **Variable speed drilling equipment**

Response

NHS Grampian received the following allocation:

	Received	Additional Comments
Ventilation Improvements	£486,901.00	
Equipment	Zero	No additional funding received. Funded from underspend of ventilation and variable speed drilling.
Variable Speed Drilling	£730,352.00	

2. What was the uptake (percentage or number of practices; and amount paid out) of the above funding by General Dentist Service (GDS) dentists?

Response

NHS Grampian has 92 independent GDS practices, all offering mixed NHS and private care. Of these practices, NHS Grampian received applications for funding as detailed below. NHS Grampian repeatedly encouraged expressions of interest through several communications to practices including the extension of deadlines on three occasions to support the submission of claims.

	Number of practices / %	Amount paid out £
Ventilation improvements	39 of 92 = 42.4%	£143,306.56

Equipment	51 of 92 = 55.4%	£339,973.82
Variable Speed Drilling	42 of 92 = 45.7%	£280,136.61

3. How many practices in your health board area have withdrawn or reduced NHS provision for patients – for example, registering and treating only children:

- No. and % withdrawn completely
- No. and % reduced provision

Response

- Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, no independent GDS practice (n= zero, 0%) has completely withdrawn from the delivery of NHS dental care in Grampian.
- Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, a total of 21 (23%) independent GDS practices have reduced their delivery of NHS dental care. The table below illustrates the reduction in provision over the last 3 years.

Reduced Provision	No of practices	% of practices	Additional Comments
2021	2	2%	Only part of the years data available
2022	9	10%	
2023	10	11%	

The reason for this reduction in capacity is not straight forward. A sample of some of the reasons for deregistration:

- Moving to a private model of service delivery with only adults being deregistered
- Patients who have not attended in 5 years or more
- Patients who have not attended in 3 years or more
- Patients have agreed to change to private provision of dental treatment
- Continued recruitment and retention issues

Other important factors:

- The above does not include the normal on-going / regular individual or small batches of deregistration requests received. These deregistrations tend to most be for failed to attend (FTA), unpaid bills, breakdown in relationships and individual cases of patients choosing private dental care. These deregistrations can add up and are not reflected in the percentages provided in the table above.
- Recruitment and retention problems continue to be an issue in Grampian with the potential to increase further.
- NHS Grampian are experiencing some practices working on reduced workforce, increased patient lists being held on temporary or Dental Bodies Corporate (DBC) list numbers with the potential to be unsustainable resulting in further deregistrations.
- We have a very low number of practices currently accepting new NHS patients and in some parts of Grampian, across Moray and North Aberdeenshire there are none at all. Other practices have reverted to long waiting lists as they are unable to offer registration to new patients.

4. What impact, if any, has a reduction in NHS GDS provision had on the Public Dental Service?

Response

The Public Dental Service (PDS) in Grampian is, in line with to GDS practices, experiencing significant challenge in recruiting to vacant posts. This, and the increased demand for the delivery of urgent care to those not able to access the independent sector are impacting negatively on the staff in post (burn out) and the ability of the service to deliver care to other priority groups. In summary:

- Demand for unscheduled dental care has increased during the COVID 19 pandemic and subsequent recovery period
- Dental Out of Hours services have required to provide and maintain an increased capacity - for both unregistered and registered patients unable to access care in a timely manner
- In hours unscheduled care service has experienced an increase in demand for care for unregistered and deregistered patients
- Inability to rebalance coupled with increased demand from unregistered/deregistered patients has meant priority groups and referral patients being disadvantaged
- Increased provision of scheduled single courses of occasional treatment for high need unregistered children and adults
- Unable to increase PDS capacity due to recruitment challenges
- Urgent and essential dental treatment for unregistered patients is diverting care from the registered PDS patient base, including Priority Groups.

5. How many patients are registered with the PDS in your Health Board area? Has the number risen since 2020? If so by how much?

Response

Data from Public Health Scotland (PHS) indicates that the numbers registered with the PDS are showing no discernible change from 2021 however there has been a reduction from 2019 in to 2020 and from 2020 to 2021. We have had an increased number of patients seen by the PDS for single courses of treatment who are not registered with the service.

Data excludes registrations held in abeyance (patients registered with a list number that ceased before the date of snapshot).

PDS Area	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Grampian	29,853	27,862	26,913	26,730	26,978

Source: Public Health Scotland, MIDAS. Date extracted May 2023.

6. What other funding do you receive to support dentistry in your Health Board area (for example, funding related to PDS, Child smile and any initiatives to improve recovery of services and access to dentistry for your population)?

Response

The table below illustrates the funding we receive to support dentistry for our Health Board.

Funding Source	£(000's) 2020 -2021	£(000's) 2021 -2022	£(000's) 2022-2023	Comments
PDS / Central Dental / MCN Services	6495	6495	6788	Allocation for core budgets
Winter preparedness funding	Nil	458	Nil	Additional covid allocation
Secondary Care Dental Services	2432	2632	2622	Received as core NHS allocation
Childsmile/Oral Health Improvement Services	1011	1045	1154	Earmarked funding
Emergency Dental services	113	117	117	Earmarked funding

Yours sincerely

Sarah Duncan
Board Secretary, NHS Grampian