

**Board Medical Director's Office**

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Mr Jim Fairlie MSP  
Convener  
COVID-19 Recovery Committee

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023  
Your Ref: BP/SL  
Our Ref:

Sent by email:  
[Covid19.Committee@Parliament.Scot](mailto:Covid19.Committee@Parliament.Scot)

Enquiries to: Dr Boyd Peters  
Extension:  
Direct Line:  
Email:

Dear Mr Fairlie,

**RE: Recovery of NHS dentistry services**

Thank you for your enquiry. Please find below the responses from NHS Highland:

**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**

In line with the following Primary Care Administration (PCA) memoranda issued from Scottish Government:

PCA(D)(2021)3 – Ventilation allowance payment  
PCA(D)(2022)4 – Dental sustainability  
PCA(D)(2022)5 – Dental equipment repairs  
PCA(D)(2022)6 – Improvement allowance

NHS Highland received £824028 funding, in total.

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

77% of NHS Highland Dental Practices applied for funding and payments of £289144 were distributed to Practices.



**Headquarters:** Assynt House, Beechwood Park, INVERNESS IV2 3BW

Chair: Sarah Compton-Bishop  
Chief Executive: Pam Dudek

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 How many practices in your health board area have withdrawn or reduced NHS provision for patients – for example, registering and treating only children:**

- No. and % withdrawn completely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

3 NHS Highland Dental Practices (5%) have withdrawn from NHS dental provision or closed permanently.

28 NHS Highland Dental Practices (47%) have reduced their registrations from pre-covid levels.

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

The Public Dental Service (PDS) in Highland is, experiencing significant challenges in recruiting to vacant posts. This factor, and the increased demand for the delivery of urgent care to unregistered dental patients are impacting negatively on Public Dental Service staff and the delivery of dental care for 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?**

Data from Public Health Scotland (PHS) indicates that the number of NHS Highland Public Dental Service registered dental patients has decreased from 2020.

Number of patients registered with the NHS Highland Public Dental Service and snapshot date -

	31/03/2020	31/03/2021	31/03/2022	31/03/2023
Highland	27,550	26,206	25,528	26,045

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

The following are in regard to additional funds only:

NHS Highland received funding to support the work of the Childsmile Team. For 2022/2023 the Scottish Government allocated funding to support the expansion of the Childsmile Community and Practice Programme to reach out to vulnerable families and address inequalities on oral health and access to dental support. Funding of £62647 was received.

For 2021/2022 the Scottish Government allocated £309835 Winter Preparedness funding for Dental Services.

Yours sincerely,

**DR BOYD PETERS**  
**BOARD MEDICAL DIRECTOR**