



11 July 2024

**By Email**

Mr Tristen Kelso  
NI Director  
BDA

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Dear Tristen

**BSO AND DENTAL CONTRACTS**

Thank you for your letter dated 2 July, highlighting your concerns regarding BSO's engagement with BDA and to seek assurances in respect of future processes; I am sorry that you felt the need to contact us in respect of this.

In understanding your concerns and how best to address them I asked Orla Donachy, Assistant Director Family Practitioner Services to review the three points you raise in your letter. In follow up to your concerns Orla met with staff on 3 and 4 July to better understand the concerns you have raised. She corroborates your understanding in respect of gaps of key staff within the Dental Payments Team who have either recently retired or continue to be absent as a consequence of ill health. In recognition of both these resource pressures, BSO have commenced both short and long term activities to reinforce the Dental Payments Team and we would hope in the next month to be in a position to name a replacement for Daniel Bartsch (Dental Services Manager), who had strong relations with the BDA in the past. In the interim, I am providing you Orla's and other key staff contact details:- ([Orla.Donachy@hscni.net](mailto:Orla.Donachy@hscni.net), 02895361632 or [David.Craughwell@hscni.net](mailto:David.Craughwell@hscni.net) , 02895363806) should you wish to make contact directly, they will be very happy to assist you.

In response to the three points you raised, see BSO's considered responses below:

**1. Outstanding replies to BDA correspondence:**

- I understand that Damian Denver (Dental Operations Manager) responded to the BDA letter of 16 May with a detailed response on 29 May, in respect of Maternity Payments referring to the Statement Dental Remuneration (SDR)

with particular reference to Determination V – Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave Payments which sets out Conditions of Entitlement (Section 2). On review, it was considered that this response did not specifically deal with your query in respect of “*what is eligible for maternity pay*”.

Consequently, I have requested that Damian revise this response with more precise information of what constitutes a maternity payment. Therefore, this revised response will strive to provide detail as to what elements are generally considered in maternity payments and why those you detailed are not. However, it is my understanding that maternity payments are specific to individual practitioners’ circumstances and thus payment calculations are unique to them. I have asked Damian to share his revised response with you by 31 July. This date is to enable a detailed response to be prepared in conjunction with BSO Data Analysts and ITS colleagues, it is also reflective of that the Dental Payments Team current focus on calculating the dental payment for next week which coincides with the holiday period.

- I have asked Damian to prepare a response to your letter of 4 June, relating to Orthodontic payments, this should also be provided by 31 July.

Should either response be available sooner, we will seek to provide it to you.

## **2. The points of contact for Dentists:**

In your letter, you highlighted practitioners are confused in respect of appropriate points of contact. I am advised, that the email address [dental.BSO@hscni.net](mailto:dental.BSO@hscni.net) you identified in your letter to us is detailed on the BSO website; this email address relates to BSO Dental Committee specifically. In response to your concerns, I have asked that this email address is repositioned on our website. I am also advised that in June 2023, the Dental Payments Team shared a flyer (**Appendix 1 refers**) setting out a list of email addresses for practitioners to use in raising their specific enquires with the Dental Services (Payments) Team. I am advised this flyer has been recirculated again recently to all practitioners via [GDS.Correspondence@hscni.net](mailto:GDS.Correspondence@hscni.net) and we have updated our website to mirror the details set out in this flyer.

In order to support improved channels of communication between BDA and BSO, once key members of staff are in place as detailed above, we will share a revised list of contacts for the Dental Payments Team. I am aware that members of the Dental Payments Team have been invited to the next Non-Contract Meeting on 18 September, I am assured that BSO will also have senior Family Practitioner Services staff present at that meeting and would request that they are included in these meetings going forth.

## **3. Payment / backpay clarity.**

It is my understanding, that in respect of backpay owing, on the release of the annual Memorandum of Dental Services (MDS) by DoH to practitioners; BSO seek to process payments within a three-month window. I understand in respect of the DDRB 2023/24 back payments, the following has or will be paid each month:

May 2024: 1<sup>st</sup> arrears all treatments + CAPS (Capitation and Continuous Care).

June 2024: CPDA uplift arrears;  
Clinical audit uplift arrears;  
Maternity, paternity and adoption uplift arrears;  
Long term sickness arrears;  
Urgent dental care arrears;  
TC3001 uplift arrears; and  
2<sup>nd</sup> arrears all treatments + CAPS (Capitation and Continuous Care).

July 2024: Scale additions;  
2<sup>nd</sup> arrears payments;  
Dental Foundation Trainees salary arrears (April 2023 to date) and;  
Trainers grant arrears.

I can confirm that the Dental Access Scheme (April 2024 to date) will be paid in August 2024.

You have also set out concerns in respect of “*practitioners not having adequate paperwork to explain what they are receiving*” and the “*provision of itemised breakdown of payments*”. I believe we can best address these concerns working with you via enhanced BSO attendance at the Non-Contract Meetings in the future. At this forum, I would also like BSO to explore the timeliness and detail of our communications in respect of payments to be made to practitioners.

I appreciate you raising these issues of concern with us, we will seek to work with the BDA Team to improve understanding of the dental payment process and our communication with you and practitioners going forward.

Yours sincerely



Karen Bailey  
Chief Executive

Enc

cc. Michael Donaldson <[Michael.Donaldson@hscni.net](mailto:Michael.Donaldson@hscni.net)>;  
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