



Mr James Murphy  
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***By email only to [gdoscorrespondence@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:gdoscorrespondence@health-ni.gov.uk)***

24<sup>th</sup> June 2025

**Re. DDRB 53<sup>rd</sup> Report - Recommendations on Expenses**

Dear James

We are writing to seek the Department's response to specific recommendations contained within this year's 53<sup>rd</sup> DDRB Report, and to provide BDA data on Expenses/cost to provide care to be applied in 25/26 uplifts.

**1. On the Expenses methodology to be applied to this year's recommendation**

In determining an appropriate uplift to the practice operating cost elements of the contract uplift, the BDA has produced analysis on actual increases to the costs incurred to contractors in delivering NHS dental treatment. This is based on survey data from practice owners and general and specific inflation statistics from the ONS.

As such, we propose the following approach to be applied to the 25/26 uplift:

	Weighting	Index	Weighted value
Dentists' pay	0.47	4.00%	1.86%
Staff costs	0.22	24.58%	5.41%
Laboratory costs	0.06	16.46%	0.99%
Materials costs	0.07	4.70%	0.31%
Other costs	0.19	2.70%	0.51%
Overall			<b>9.08%</b>

Formula for overall contract uplift. Sources: Estimated average practice operating cost increases derived from BDA Practice Owners Survey 2024, along with data from the ONS.

**2. Developing an Index of Dental Costs to determine Expenses element of future uplifts**

We note the recommendation included in this year's DDRB Report at 1.119, whereby all nations should work together to develop an index of dental costs in conjunction with stakeholders, and that these indices can then be used to construct changes over time to determine the expenses element of the contract uplifts in each nation.

British Dental Association

The Mount, 2 Woodstock Link, Belfast BT6 8DD

**DDRB -53<sup>rd</sup> Report:**

*1.118 We (DDRB) note that the Department of Health in NI has announced a cost-of-service review in 2025-26 to determine what it costs to provide dentistry.*

*1.119 We recommend that all nations work together to develop an index of general practice costs and an index of dental costs. These can be based on the NHS cost inflation index used by the ONS to inform its healthcare productivity estimates.*

*This work needs to be transparent and to engage stakeholders, to ensure its independence and credibility. These indices can then be used to construct changes over time and to determine the expenses element of the contract uplifts in each nation. This should form part of discussions on contract reform.*

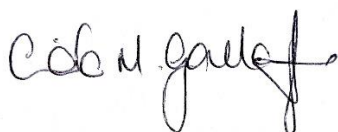
While DDRB recognises that a Cost-of-Service review will determine the true cost to provide dentistry at a point in time, alongside this an Index of Dental Costs should be developed to give an objective basis to determine changes over time on Expenses.

Therefore, we write formally to request that DoH accepts this specific DDRB recommendation and engages in this important piece of work on Expenses on a pan-UK basis, which BDA are proposing should result in an Index of Dental Costs to be ready for the 2026/27 uplift.

Finally, any update you can give on payment timescales for DDRB 25/26 uplifts, Cost-of-Service Review tender specification, and in relation to having sight of the detail of 'Investment proposals' for 25/26 and National Insurance mitigations -and opportunities for NIDPC feedback on same - would be gratefully received.

I look forward to an early reply.

Yours sincerely



Ciara Gallagher  
Chair, NIDPC

**Cc:** Mike Nesbitt, Minister of Health  
Gearoid Cassidy, Director of Primary Care, DoH  
Caroline Lappin, Chief Dental Officer  
Michael Donaldson, Head of Dental Services, SPPG