

SCOTTISH DENTAL PRACTICE COMMITTEE

5 AUGUST 2020

REPORT

The Scottish Dental Practice Committee (SDPC) held an interim meeting by video conference on Wednesday 5 August 2020, to discuss the latest Covid-19 developments. This report provides a contemporary record of that meeting, but as this is a fast-moving situation, its content is likely to become rapidly out of date. The BDA provides live updates at <https://www.bda.org/coronavirus>

1. Chief Dental Officer – Question and Answer Session

The Chief Dental Officer attended the meeting and answered a number of questions posed by SDPC members.

1.1 Communication with Scottish Government

Members highlighted to the CDO the importance of the need for regular communication with the profession to avoid the confusion that currently existed and for better and more timeous engagement with SDPC during discussions and negotiations. The CDO explained that his small team was currently working under exceptional pressures and that not all targets were being met during the pandemic. He accepted the comments from members and said he would be more proactive about communications going forward. He also explained that he and the Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing viewed BDA Scotland/SDPC as key stakeholders and chose to negotiate only with them.

1.2 Contingencies for Future Pandemics

Members asked if Scottish Government had contingencies in place should there further Covid-19 spikes and for any future pandemics. The CDO offered reassurances that Scottish Government was working on contingency planning. The aim of Scottish Government was to keep the 'R' number low. He used Aberdeen as an example of where a renewed lockdown was about to take place and said the Government was planning for a second spike. He stated that dental practices could continue to operate in Aberdeen in line with Phase 3b.

1.3 Financial Sustainability

It was highlighted to the CDO that a two-tier dental system was emerging and that financial support measures were required for mixed and private practices as well as those in place or NHS practices to ensure viability. The CDO stated that his remit was for NHS dentistry only.

BDA Scotland had received a reply from K Forbes, Finance Secretary, Scottish Government to letter issued on 22 April, 20 May and 22 June highlighting concerns about the financial viability of private dentistry in Scotland. The Minister had referred to the UK government initiatives to help the self-employed and stated that she continued to lobby UK MPs about the financial issues.

1.4

Business Support Grant

Members highlighted the perceived post code lottery for practices applying for the local authority Business Support Grant. The CDO said this was a matter that was dealt with by the Scottish Government Policy Team. He offered to liaise with them on the issue and advised members to continue to submit Freedom of Information requests.

1.5 AGPs in Dental Practices

Members asked what would happen if there was little take up of the provision of urgent only AGPs for urgent cases after 17 August 2020. The CDO stated he had received a great deal of correspondence urging him to open dental practices for AGPs and others asking that he delay. He suggested that by allowing practices to open from 17 August it offered GDPs a choice since it was not mandatory. It allowed those to who wished to treat provide AGPs to move forward after being fit tested and with the provision of enhanced PPE paid for by Scottish Government. For those GDPs who did not wish to treat AGPs they would be expected to contact their NHS Board in order to arrange to work in their local UDCCs. The CDO reported that there was a sufficient supply of enhanced PPE at the NSS National Distribution Centre and that all Boards would be able to supply all of the 1100 dental surgeries in Scotland.

1.6 SDR – Open Courses of Treatment

It was reported that that the section of the SDR about closing open courses of treatment had not been well received by the profession and was being viewed as a clawback of monies by Scottish Government. The CDO replied that he and his team were reviewing this issue which had already been raised by SDPC and were in ongoing discussions with their financial and legal teams. The CDO was not hopeful of an outcome that SDPC was seeking.

1.7 Phase 4 of the Scottish Government Route Map

The CDO referred to the cautious approach the First Minister was taking in relation to Covid-19 and that the availability of PPE also had to be taken in account. The CDO suggested it would be some time before Phase 4 was implemented.

1.8 Long-Term Future of Dentistry

There was a lengthy discussion about future models of care and that the profession no longer expected to return to the SDR as a way of payment. The CDO stated that Scottish Government had begun to review the SDR under the Oral Health Improvement Plan, which had been paused. He said he would take advice from the profession moving forward and that SDPC would be involved in discussions about the financial and regulatory changes.

1.9 Ventilation in Dental Surgeries

The CDO referred to the document which had been issued the evening before by NHS NSS, noting that it was a technical document and not a guidance paper, and not one that he had commissioned. He stated that he anticipated that the SDCEP team would review the document and collate the information and provide more user- friendly guidance for the profession. There was a discussion about suitable ventilation rates and the CDO advised that the one hour fallow time quoted in the technical document should be adhered to as a default measure.

1.10 SDPO and SDA

The CDO reiterated that he chose to negotiate only with BDA Scotland/SDPC. He said that as with all correspondence addressed to his office he had responded to mail from the Scottish Dental Practice Owners group and Scottish Dental Association. There were no plans to meet with either group. It was noted that the SDPO group was not mandated.

1.11 Vocational Dental Practitioners

Concerns were raised about the level of experience VDPs would receive when they begin work in September due to the current restrictions and use of PPE. The CDO said that discussions were ongoing with NHS Education for Scotland. Page Break

2. DDRB

The DDRB had recommended a 2.8% pay uplift backdated to April 2020, which Scottish

Government had accepted. The CDO's team was currently considering how this would be calculated in respect of allowances and Phases 3 and 4 of the recovery plan. Expenses are a separate element and Scottish Government and SDPC planned to meet to negotiate this element.

3. Key Worker Status

BDA Scotland had contacted all but two Scottish Local Authorities asking which had awarded KWS in respect of child care for dental teams. To date, seven responses had been received and all had awarded the status. Most had also stated that this service would be withdrawn when the schools returned in August 2020.

4. Stirling Office Accommodation

The lease for the Stirling office would terminate in May 2021, and it was suggested that committee meetings by video conferencing were working well and that there was no longer a requirement to pay for the BDA Scotland committee meeting room. It was also suggested that one face-to-face meeting could be held per annum if required. Members agreed with these proposals.

5. Ongoing and Future Items of Discussion

Remobilisation
GA Waiting times
Orthodontic treatment

6. Date of next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 9 September 2020 at 13:30hr by video conference.

David McColl
Chair SDPC

August 2020