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Examinations - Phase 3 Remobilisation

Dear Colleague,

I am writing today as we have received feedback from a number of sources within the profession that the current restriction on the use of a 3 in 1 syringe to dry teeth for examination will result in a clinical assessment that is potentially compromised in its effectiveness.

To be clear, and as previously indicated in my letter of 9 July, this is not business as usual, rather this is about providing reassurance for patients that are not in need of urgent dental care. There are, however, many aspects of a clinical examination that can be carried out effectively without the use of a 3 in 1 syringe such as a soft tissue examination for signs of oral cancer and the importance of this cannot be understated.

We have listened to the profession about the current narrative requirements of item 1(a) (examination), and given the restrictions on the use of 3 in 1, are modifying this with immediate effect by way of the following Amendment No 146 to the SDR:

Pursuant to Regulation 22(3) of the National Health Service (General Dental Services) (Scotland) Regulation 2010, as amended, Scottish Ministers have amended on 27 July 2020 the Statement of Dental Remuneration. Amendment No 146, as follows:

In Determination I (Scale of Fees) for item 1(a) (Clinical examination) there shall be substituted:

“The assessment (including assessment of the oral mucosa) of, and the giving of advice to a patient.”

This will facilitate a form of examination that will enable an assessment of the head, neck and mouth and enable dentists to offer reassurance, appropriate advice to patients and where necessary onward referral. As in every aspect of the provision of clinical care dentists should consider discussing the limitations of the current assessment and give preventive advice where necessary to ensure that patients are informed of the risks and benefits of the decisions that are taken.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely



Tom Ferris (CDO)

