

Dear Colleague

1. PHASING DOWN OF DENTAL AMALGAM
2. AMENDMENT NO. 138 TO THE STATEMENT OF DENTAL REMUNERATION (SDR)

Summary

1. This letter advises NHS Boards and Practitioner Services of the new arrangements relating to the phasing down of dental amalgam. This includes guidance regarding alternatives to dental amalgam, when they should be used and the exceptions to this.

2. This letter also advises of Amendment No. 138 to the Statement of Dental Remuneration (SDR), which takes effect from 1 July 2018.

Background

3. From 1 July 2018 an EU Directive will place a legally-binding obligation to terminate the use of dental amalgam in deciduous teeth, children under 15 years of age and for pregnant and breastfeeding women (in Scotland dental amalgam is currently not used for pregnant and breastfeeding women). Further information can be found at:

<http://www.sdcep.org.uk/published-guidance/dental-amalgam/>

4. The Memorandum to this letter provides more information on the changes to the SDR.

15 June 2018

Addresses

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards

Director, Practitioner Services

For information

Chief Executive,
NHS National Services Scotland

Chief Executive,
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Action

5. NHS Boards are asked to urgently issue the Memorandum to this letter to all dentists and dental bodies corporate on their dental lists.

Yours sincerely

MARGIE TAYLOR
Chief Dental Officer

**DENTISTS/DENTAL BODIES CORPORATE
NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE
GENERAL DENTAL SERVICES**

**1. PHASING DOWN OF DENTAL AMALGAM
2. AMENDMENT NO 138 TO THE STATEMENT OF DENTAL REMUNERATION (SDR)**

1. This Memorandum advises of new arrangements relating to the phasing down of dental amalgam. This includes guidance regarding alternatives to dental amalgam, when they should be used and the exceptions to this.

2. It also advises of the inclusion of new fees to ensure compliance with an EU Directive that places a legally binding obligation to terminate the use of dental amalgam in deciduous teeth, children under 15 years of age and for pregnant or breastfeeding women. This is brought into effect by Amendment No. 138 to the Statement of Dental Remuneration, which takes effect from 1 July 2018.

Background

3. The phasing down is not because of safety concerns regarding the use of dental amalgam. The initiative is part of a wider environmental drive. Based on current scientific evidence, dental amalgam is not harmful to the health of the general population.

4. The Directive accepts the continued need for dental amalgam fillings in dentistry but has challenged Member States to improve oral health to minimise the need for fillings and to phase down the use of amalgam fillings over time. The Directive does allow for the continued use of dental amalgam where the dental practitioner deems it necessary based on the medical requirements of the individual patient.

5. The changes to the SDR for each of the affected groups is summarised below. The full Amendment No. 138 is available to view or download at <http://www.scottishdental.org/>.

Amendment No. 138 to the Statement of Dental Remuneration

Deciduous Teeth

6. The Directive necessitates the use of non-amalgam filling material for deciduous and retained deciduous teeth in all patients. The Directive does not require a change in item 44(a) which allows for use of alternative filling material in minors. However, the Directive does necessitate a new item 14(c)(1)(ii) (new code 1428) for retained deciduous teeth in adult patients. The relevant section of the SDR is copied below for reference:

14(c)(1)(ii) in retained deciduous teeth:

filling, including any dressing, pulp capping and pin or screw or acid etch retention and other preparatory treatment:

1428	[TS]	per tooth	£8.75	(£7.00)
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You should also note that 14(c)(1)(i) now refers only to permanent teeth in adults (the reference to retained deciduous teeth has been removed).

Children Under 15 Years of Age

7. The Directive necessitates the use of non-amalgam filling for posterior teeth in children under 15 years of age. The revised SDR has a new item 43, with the inclusion of two new codes (4301) and (4302) to allow for a resin filling in patients under 15 years of age. The relevant section of the SDR is copied below for reference (the standard proviso for replacement fillings also applies):

43 Treatment Special to Minors: Resin* filling, including acid etch retention in permanent molar and pre-molar teeth in a patient under 15 years of age at the beginning of a course of treatment:

4301	[TS]	per tooth	£18.40	(£0.00)
4302	[TS]	per tooth where the mesio-occlusal and/or disto-occlusal surfaces are involved	£28.60	(£0.00)

Proviso to Item 43

No fee shall be payable under item 43 to repair or replace a filling where the same dentist provided the original filling to the same tooth within the previous 11 complete calendar months unless the repair or replacement is required as a result of trauma.

*Resin means any non-amalgam filling.

Pregnant or Breastfeeding Women

8. These changes do not affect pregnant or breastfeeding women in Scotland as NHS dentists currently do not use dental amalgam for this group.

Courses of Treatment before 1 July 2018

9. Practitioners should apply for a discretionary fee where a non-amalgam filling is completed on or after the 1 July 2018 but the course of treatment commences before 1 July.

Further Guidance/Patient Information Leaflets

10. Further guidance can be found at the following link (this also includes sample patient information letters):

<http://www.sdcep.org.uk/published-guidance/dental-amalgam/>

Enquiries

11. Any enquiries arising from this Memorandum should be taken up with your NHS Board.

Scottish Government Population Health Directorate
15 June 2018