



Dear Colleague

Amendment No. 169 to the Statement of Dental Remuneration

Summary

1. This circular advises of Amendment No. 169 to the Statement of Dental Remuneration (SDR), which provides for:
 - changes to prior approval (PA), effective from 1 November 2026;
 - miscellaneous updates, effective from 17 September 2026.

Prior Approval

Background

2. As advised in [PCA\(D\)\(2026\)2](#) amendments were made to the National Health Service (General Dental Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2010 to make changes to the system of prior approval for general dentistry.
3. An Amendment has been made to Determination I of the SDR to reflect the changes to prior approval and will come into effect from 1 November 2026.

17 September 2026

Addresses

For action
Chief Executives, NHS Boards

Directors of Dentistry

For information
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Determination I – Section XIA – Requirement to Obtain Prior Approval of the Board

4. A new section has been added to Determination I: 'Section XIA – Requirement to obtain prior approval of the Board' which sets out the requirements for all types of prior approval – individual items of treatment in the SDR indicated as requiring prior approval; orthodontic courses of treatment where the cost exceeds the specified amount; and the new system of prior approval for certain treatment plans for courses of care and treatment in general dentistry.

Care and Treatment – General Dentistry

5. The new system for general dentistry will require prior approval for courses of treatment which contain those treatments, or combinations of treatment, which are considered to be of higher clinical risk. The new system also introduces a tiered system for individual clinicians based on their experience working within the Scottish primary care system. The treatment items and treatment/restoration combinations of items will be the same for both tiers but the threshold limits for each tier may be different.
6. All dentists will fall into one of the following tiers:
- Tier 1 – this is the new base model of prior approval. It will comprise of the vast majority of dentists, who are expected to be familiar with NHS GDS care, and who do not fall into the criteria described under tier 2.
 - Tier 2 – this is for dentists who have limited experience of Scottish NHS GDS care and covers dentists who are:
 - undertaking vocational training (VT);
 - provisionally listed pending completion of mandatory training (MT); and
 - within 12 months of successful completion of mandatory training or vocational training.
7. Table A specifies the treatment items included in the new prior approval model for general dentistry and the thresholds which apply for Tier 1 and Tier 2. Where a planned course of treatment contains any item listed in the table and the number of treatments planned equals, or exceeds, the threshold number for the relevant tier then prior approval will be required.

Table A

Treatment Item and Description	Item Code	Tier 1 Dentist Threshold	Tier 2 Dentist Threshold
1-(d) Intraoral Radiograph	A004	15	15
3-(e) Posterior Composite Supplement	C005	8	4
3-(e) Posterior Composite Supplement - supplement for 2 fillings on one tooth	C015	3	2
3-(f) Endodontic Treatment (incisor/canine/lower premolar)	C006	4	3
3-(g) Endodontic Treatment (upper premolar)	C007	3	3

3-(h) Endodontic Treatment (molar)	C008	3	3
3-(j) Re-Root Canal Treatment Supplement	C010	2	2
3-(k) Internal Bleaching	C011	2	2
4-(b) Crown Placement	D002	4	3
4-(c) Post and/or Core retention for crowns and bridges	D005	4	3
4-(d) Inlay/Onlay Placement	D006	4	3
4-(e) Replacement Veneer	D009	3	2
4-(f) Conventional Bridge (per unit)	D012	3	2
4-(g) Resin Retained Bridge (per unit)	D015	4	2
5-(b) Surgical Extraction	E002	3	2
5-(c) Advanced Surgical Extraction	E003	3	1
5-(d) Advanced Surgical Procedures	E004	2	1
7-(g) Acid Etched Splint (per union)	G013	3	1
7-(h) Laboratory Made Soft Splint / Fluoride Tray / Trauma Retainer / External Bleaching Tray (per appliance)	G014	2	2
7-(i) Laboratory Made Hard Splint (per appliance)	G015	2	2

8. Some advanced treatments may not individually reach the prior approval threshold, however, when they are prescribed in combination with other advanced treatment items, it may indicate a higher risk of disease or higher clinical risk. Therefore, we have grouped certain items, specifically endodontic treatments and extracoronary restorations, and created combination thresholds for them. Table B specifies the endodontic items and Table C the extracoronary restoration items.

Table B

Endodontic Treatment Combination Items	Item Code	Tier 1 Dentist Threshold	Tier 2 Dentist Threshold
3-(f) Endodontic Treatment (incisor/canine/lower premolar)	C006	4 or more	3 or more
3-(g) Endodontic Treatment (upper premolar)	C007		
3-(h) Endodontic Treatment (molar)	C008		

Table C

Extracoronary Restoration Combination Items	Item Code	Tier 1 Dentist Threshold	Tier 2 Dentist Threshold
4-(b) Crown Placement	D002	6 (including units) or more	4 (including units) or more
4-(c) Post and/or Core retention for crowns and bridges	D005		
4-(d) Inlay/Onlay Placement	D006		
4-(e) Replacement Veneer	D009		

4-(f) Conventional Bridge (per unit)	D012		
4-(g) Resin Retained Bridge (per unit)	D015		

9. The item descriptions for the relevant treatment and restoration items have been updated to state: 'Prior approval may be required – see Section XIA, paragraph 3'.

Item of treatment

10. The regulations continue to allow individual items of treatment to be specified in Determination I as requiring prior approval. No changes have been made to the items specified therefore prior approval will continue to be required, in all cases, for the following items:
- Proviso 1 for item 32 – fee for item 32(a) in relation to the closure of central diastemas where the associated permanent canines have not erupted;
 - Item 32(f) – Any other orthodontic treatment; and
 - Item 39 – Miscellaneous balancing fee.
11. These items have typically been denoted with an asterisk but with this amendment the item descriptions for these codes have been updated to state that: 'Prior approval is required – see Section XIA, paragraph 1'.

Orthodontics

12. No changes have been made to the requirements for prior approval for orthodontic treatment. Courses of orthodontic treatment where the cost exceeds, or is likely to exceed, £660 should continue to be submitted for prior approval.

Transitional Arrangements

13. Any courses of general dental treatment started before 1 November 2026 will be subject to the existing system and so will require prior approval if the cost exceeds, or is expected to exceed, £660 or an individual treatment item is denoted as requiring prior approval.
14. All courses of general dental treatment started on, or after, 1 November 2026 will be subject to the new prior approval system.
15. Dentists who have completed mandatory training or vocational training prior to 1 November 2026 but are still within 12 months of successful completion of that training will be in Tier 2 when the new system comes into effect. They will be in Tier 2 for however many months are required to reach 12 months post VT or MT. Some examples of how this will work have been provided below.

Example 1: a dentist successfully completed MT on 30 April 2026. By 1 November they will be 6 months post-completion of MT, therefore they will be required to be in Tier 2 for 6 months.

Example 2: a dentist has completed VT on 31 August 2026. By 1 November they will be 2 months post-completion of VT, therefore they will be required to be in Tier 2 for 10 months.

Example 3: a dentist successfully completed MT on 31 October 2026. They will be required to be in Tier 2 for 12 months.

Education and Training Opportunities

16. PSD Scotland has prepared an educational resource to support the transition to the new system of prior approval. This e-learning module and table guide can be found at the following web page: <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/92799>. The learning module will be available from 17 September 2026.
17. The module will prepare you for the new process by describing the new clinical triggers for prior approval, explaining the tiering system and reinforcing those elements of prior approval that will remain unchanged from 1st November 2026. The module is unable to prepare you for any interface changes that are specific to your practice management software system. Your PMS supplier should provide any necessary support to ensure that you are familiar with your new user interface prior to the implementation date.

Other consequential SDR changes

18. A minor change has been made to Section XI – Conditions of Payment of Remuneration and Submission of Dental Payment Claim Forms to remove references to a financial threshold for prior approval and instead refer to the requirements set out in Section XIA.
19. A definition for “prior approval”, “Tier 1 dentist”, and “Tier 2 dentist” have also been added to Section XII – Interpretation.

Miscellaneous Updates

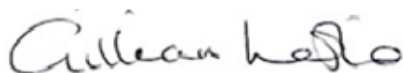
20. Updates have been made throughout the SDR to change references to NHS Education for Scotland (NES) to the Common Services Agency (CSA) (i.e. Public Services Delivery Scotland) following the transfer of NES’s functions to the CSA on 1 April 2026.
21. Updates have also been made to change any outstanding references to a VT being ‘employed’ by a trainer to ‘engaged’ by a trainer to reflect the previous change to VTs being employed by NHS Education for Scotland (now the CSA).

Actions

NHS Boards

22. NHS Boards are asked to issue this PCA to all dentists and dental bodies corporate on their dental list.

Yours sincerely,



Gillian Leslie
Chief Dental Officer