

**FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
COMMISSIONING & SYSTEM MANAGEMENT**

To: All SHA Chief Executives
Cc: All PCT Chief Executives

Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

Gateway Ref: 10526

Tel: 0207 210 5455
E.mail: Mark.Britnell@dh.gsi.gov.uk

11 September 2008

Dear Colleague,

GMS Contract Settlement 2008/09

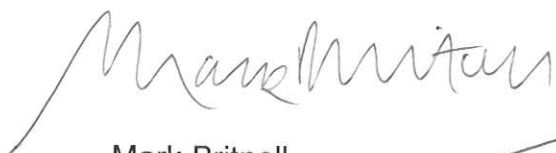
1. I am pleased to be able to write to confirm that NHS Employers and the BMA's General Practitioners Committee have reached agreement on all aspects of the 2008/09 GMS contract arrangements. This builds on the agreement, as part of last year's contract negotiations, to increase investment in GP services by 1.5% (an additional £105m nationally).
2. In summary, the changes agreed are:
 - a directed enhanced service on extended opening for GP practices. We published Directions to PCTs on 2 September, together with related amendments to the Statement of Financial Entitlements (SFE) and revised guidance. The new DES closely mirrors the arrangements for extended opening described in April's interim guidance. As of August, 45% of GP practices were offering extended opening for patients under these arrangements;
 - confirmation of changes to the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) for 2008/09, including removal of out-of-date indicators and reinvestment in indicators measuring patient satisfaction with advance booking and 48 hour access. Guidance on this has already been issued and the amendment to the SFE will follow in due course;
 - agreement to implementation of the DDRB recommendations for GMS contract uplift for 2008/09 at a cost of c.£5m. The SFE amendment bringing this into force was published on 4 September and will take effect from 1 October. Ben Dyson wrote as attached to SHA Directors of Commissioning on 17 July 2008 (Gateway reference 10232) with guidance on the implications for PMS agreements, which PCTs should be handling locally;
 - agreement to proposals for using the £100m balance of the new investment in GP services as follows:
 - £50m to be used to pay for five new directed enhanced services (DESSs) covering better treatment of heart failure, embedding best practice on osteoporosis treatment, annual health checks

for people with learning disabilities on local authority registers, better data recording to help improve patient care for people from black and minority ethnic groups, and increased support to overcome harmful drinking. NHS Employers and the GPC issued joint guidance on these DESs on 4 September. The Directions formalising these arrangements will follow in due course' and;

- £50m for PCT investment – through local contractual arrangements – to support further improvements in the accessibility and responsiveness of local GP services.
3. The £105m funding for these measures is already part of PCTs' allocations. To give effect to the last of these commitments, I would be grateful if you could ensure that investment in local enhanced services across the PCTs in your area increases by 20% (comparing 2008/09 with 2007/08) to make services more responsive for patients. In line with the new clinical DESs (which are two-year agreements), the overall £50m increase in local investment applies for two years (2008/09 and 2009/10).
 4. Decisions on this £50m local investment are for PCTs to agree locally with GP practices. SHAs will wish to support PCTs in making sure that the investment addresses patient priorities and represents good value for money.
 5. We recommend that PCTs consider (amongst other possible schemes) ways of using the investment to tackle areas where the GP Patient Survey shows patient concerns, such as advance booking of GP appointments where patient satisfaction (at 77%) still lags behind other access indicators.
 6. The national GP access team, led by Mike Warburton, has developed a range of other illustrative options that PCTs may also wish to consider, and Mike would be happy to discuss these with SHAs.
 7. When entering into new agreements for local services, we recommend that PCTs should agree with GP practices how those new services will be publicised, for example making better use of NHS Choices.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Britnell
Director General Commissioning and System Management