



Date: 16 December 2024

Circular Number: NCO-45-2025

Temporary Supports for General Practice – UEC

Dear Doctor,

As will be aware our health services across General Practice, Community and Acute Hospitals during this winter, as in previous years, will continue to require a strong coordinated and integrated approach to successfully respond to current and anticipated levels of increased activity and service demands.

I wish to advise that in the above context, the HSE with the support of the Department of Health and following agreement with the Irish Medical Organisation have agreed to introduce a number of General Practice service oriented support measures for both daytime general practice and out-of-hours services through GP Co-ops.

The Support measures are outlined hereunder;

1. Day Time General Practice

General Practice will continue to experience significant and additional patient demand for the coming weeks in this context the following daytime and out of hours arrangements will be in place with effect **from 27th December, 2024 to 28th February, 2025 inclusive**. The STC Rate of €41.63 will be available to GPs for GMS patients from 8am to 9am (inclusive) and from 5pm – 7pm (inclusive) Monday to Friday and from 9am -1pm (inclusive) on Saturday.

It is recognised that all GP sessions are a mix of GMS and private patients and that practice should continue for the extended/additional sessions with private patients paying as normal and in line with practice policy.

It is also recognised that not all practices will be in a position to undertake the additional hours and it is further acknowledged that there is a requirement to protect GP time in terms of their commitment to Out of Hours services, which will continue to operate during these hours.

All claims for reimbursement are to be submitted in the normal way for STCs through PCRS online portal or manual in line with existing practice protocols and should be submitted no later than three to five working days of the consultation. In line with existing practices all forms must be signed by the individual patient noting the date and time of consultation.

In addition to the STC payment model set out above, the following Ancillary Support Grant support will be available to assist GMS GPs in the operation of the additional day surgery sessions:



- GMS GPs who claim between 30-59 STCs in the above hours during the above dates will receive an additional grant payment of €500.
- GMS GPs who claim between 60 and 89 STCs in the above hours during the above dates, a grant payment of €900 will be paid.
- GMS GPs who claim between 90 and 119 STCs in the above hours during the above dates, a grant payment of €1400 will be paid.
- GMS GPs who claim 120+ STCs in the above hours during the above dates, a grant payment of €1800 will apply.

Such grant amounts are per GMS GP and are in recognition of the additional costs involved in non-core hour appointments. All STC claims will be reviewed after the 28th February 2025 and a grant payment will be issued via PCRS to the qualifying GMS GP, where applicable.

In line with normal administrative procedures, the HSE reserves the right to audit all claims and relevant practice records pertaining to such consultations, which will need to be accessible to HSE for such purposes. These measures are exceptional in nature, time bound and do not erode, substitute for or replace existing legislative, circular or contractual terms pertaining to the General Medical Services Contract with GPs.

2. Out of Hours

The HSE will provide funding to the current grant funded Co-ops to enable them roster additional doctors in out of Hours Treatment Centres between the hours of 6pm and 10pm. This exceptional measure will commence on **27th December, 2024 and will operate to 26th January, 2025 (inclusive)**.

This additional funding will enable more patients to receive in person consultations by Co-ops with the objective of reducing the number of referrals to ED as well as the number of patients presenting directly to EDs without having been first seen by the relevant GP Out of Hours service. The additional rostered doctors can be locums engaged by the Co-ops or existing GP Co-Op members.

If you have any queries on the above please contact the National Contracts Office by email natcontractsoffice@hse.ie; or by phone 044 9395519

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your practice team for your continued support and to wish you all a Happy Christmas and all the very best for 2025.

Yours sincerely,

Pat Healy
National Director
National Services & Schemes