

# NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group

Primary Care Sub Group - 31 March 2021

Primary Care Committee - 14 April 2021

## Discretionary reimbursement of GP performer payments for maternity leave cover

Lead Executive:	Ian Atkinson, Executive Place Director
Lead Officer:	Sara Hartley, Contract and Service Improvement Manager (Primary Care)
Lead GP:	Dr Avanthi Gunasekera, SCE GP Lead for Primary Care

### Purpose:

To review and consider Blyth Medical Centre's application for discretionary maternity leave reimbursement in line with the 2017/18 NHS England guidance – *Protocol in respect of locum cover or GP performer payments for paternal and sickness leave*.

### Background:

Under the General Medical Services Contracts Statement of Financial Entitlement (SFE) Directions, GP practices are entitled to reimbursement of costs incurred to backfill GP performers (both partner or salaried posts) where the performer is absent from the practice due to parental or sickness leave.

Blyth Medical Centre has approached NHS England to determine whether alternative roles to cover maternity leave can be funded from monies reimbursed under the *Protocol in respect of locum cover or GP performer payments for paternal and sickness leave*. NHS England has advised that practices can only claim for cover provided by a GP, whether that be an existing partner, salaried GP or locum GP.

However, the protocol does allow for commissioners to make discretionary payments where there are exceptional circumstances and as such the practice has asked that its request be reviewed.

### Delegation responsibility:

Does this paper relate to Rotherham CCG or delegated business?

Rotherham CCG	
Delegated	✓
Both Rotherham CCG and delegated	

Please tick which area of delegated responsibility this paper covers:

Commissioning, procurement and management of GMS, PMS and APMS contracts including taking contractual action	
Newly designed enhanced services (including DES)	
Local incentive schemes	
Discretionary payments	✓
Commissioning urgent care for out of area registered patients	
Planning Primary medical care services (PMCS)	
Managing practices with CQC concerns	

Decisions on premise cost directions	
Planning the commissioning of PMCS	
Manage the delegated allocation for commissioning of PMCS	
Assurance to the governing body on the quality and safety of PMCS	

Please indicate which of the Delegated Duties Decisions this paper requires:-

Delegated Duties – iii – Decisions in relation to the establishment of new GP practices (including branch surgeries) and closures of GP practices.	N/A
Delegated Duties – iv – Decisions about 'discretionary payments'.	✓
Delegated Duties – v – Decisions about commissioning urgent care (including home visits as required) for out of area registered patients.	N/A
Delegated Duties – b – The approval of practice mergers.	N/A

### Analysis of key issues and of risks

The Protocol sets out that the maximum amount payable for maternity leave cover is £1,131.74 per week for the first two weeks and then £1,734.18 per week for weeks three to 26. These costs can be claimed where the cover is provided by:

- A locum
- A GP already working in the practice but who is not full-time (either employed or a partner)

The Protocol also sets out that a commissioner can use its discretion to make payments outside of the SFE and the terms listed above. It is likely that any discretionary payments will be made in exceptional circumstances for example (but not limited to):

- Demonstrable financial hardship
- Areas of significant deprivation
- GP recruitment difficulties
- Applications from single-handed GPs
- Applications from nurse-led PMS practices

The practice has provided additional information for the CCG to review in respect to its decision, particularly as the landscape within primary care has changed since the document was published. The introduction of Primary Care Networks and the associated additional roles have broadened the primary care workforce and its potential to cover parental and sickness leave.

In February 2020 the practice used a number of locum GPs and Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP)/Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP) locums and found it was easier to access ANP/ACP support than GP locum support. The ANP/ACP roles predominantly dealt with a similar group of patients to locum GPs, as the locum GPs would only see/telephone patients and did not undertake tasks such as filing of blood results or practice letters, covering baby clinic etc.

A locum GP costs in the region of £100-£115 per hour, which would equate to between £400-£460 for a four hour session (three hours clinical time plus one hour paperwork). The £1,734.18 would provide approx. 4 sessions per week, whereas the GP on maternity leave currently covers 8 sessions per week. Any sessions provided over and above those covered by the reimbursement would be at a cost to the practice.

An ANP/ACP costs approximately £45 per hour plus on-costs, which would equate to approx. £337.50 plus on-costs for a 7.5 hour working day. The £1,734.18 would allow the practice to cover approx. 32 hours per week. The practice feels these two roles could cover 95% of the work undertaken by a locum GP.

The practice has advised that the pharmacy trained ACP (currently working at the practice two days per week) is covered by alternative funding streams which are due to cease as at 31 March 2021. The tasks currently carried out include:

- Home visits
- Structured medication reviews
- Medication requests
- Filing hospital letters
- Prescribing incentive scheme work
- Chairs nursing home MDT meetings
- Learning disability reviews

The ANP is former nurse that has been trained by the practice and is newly registered. The practice is proposing to increase the ANPs hours to cover the maternity leave and backfill the nursing hours that are left vacant during this period.

As both roles are currently working at the practice and know the patients registered there, the practice feels this would be a more effective service model.

However, the practice would need to be aware that that the GP partner on maternity leave would have to support the practice should the other partner be unable to work.

A similar request to use ANPs rather than locum GPs was made by another practice in October 2018. The practice stated that they wished to use ANPs as they would be able to cover more hours for the funding available and deal with 'almost all' the patients that a locum would. NHS England advised at the time that ANPs covering maternity leave were not eligible for reimbursement unless there were exceptional circumstances, and felt the request was suggesting that the ANPs were a cheaper option for the practice. Therefore, NHS England did not consider this as being an exceptional circumstance and as such the CCG did not support this request.

**Patient, Public and Stakeholder Involvement:**

Not applicable

**Equality Impact:**

Not applicable

**Financial Implications:**

Parental and sickness absence payments, whilst managed by NHS England, are reimbursed through CCG funding streams. The total funding required to cover a 26 week maternity leave period would be £43,883.80.

**Human Resource Implications:**

Not applicable

**Procurement Advice:**

Not applicable

**Data Protection Impact Assessment:**

Not applicable

**Approval history:**

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**Recommendations:**

The Committee is asked to approve the request for discretionary payments to cover maternity leave.

**Paper is for approval**