

Focus on the Dispensing Doctors Fee Scale from 1 October 2009 – 1 April 2010

England & Wales

The General Practitioners Committee (GPC) and NHS Employers have agreed a new fee scale for dispensing doctors, which will begin on 1 October 2009.

From 1 October the fee scale for dispensing doctors will be lowered by 8.7 per cent for the remaining six months of the financial year, representing a 4.9 per cent decrease across the whole year. From 1 April 2010 there will be an increase to produce a figure that is appropriate for the full new financial year.

The new mechanism splits the fee scale into two components – “cost” and “pay”¹. These components are balanced so that awards for dispensing doctors are comparable to the annual award that the Doctors and Dentists Review Body (DDRB) grants to all GPs, while allowing for the additional costs of the dispensing process. It works by increasing the “pay” in line with the DDRB annual award and uplifting the “cost” to reflect the annual national volume increases in dispensing.

The Department of Health have agreed to perform a ‘cost of service inquiry’ to gain a full picture of the costs of providing dispensing services. The inquiry will begin in early 2010.

The GPC is very disappointed at a decrease in the fee scale for dispensing doctors. Many patients in rural areas rely on dispensing practices to obtain their medicine and we are concerned that NHS Employers has underestimated the costs of the providing dispensing services, which inevitably rise with increasing volume.

The ‘cost of service inquiry’ should help develop a fairer cost analysis and reimbursement structure in future but, the government needs to act urgently to deal with the unilateral withdrawal of discounts by many of the drug wholesalers, which could threaten the viability

¹ The Technical Steering Committee has agreed the calculated figures in the new fee scale. The Technical Steering Committee (TSC) is chaired by the NHS Information Centre (NHS IC) and has representation from the four UK health departments, NHS Employers and the British Medical Association.

of some dispensing practices. GPC has made strong representations to the NHS Employers and the Department of Health about the loss of discounts and believes that the cost of service inquiry should begin immediately.

Details of the new fee scale can be found below.

GMS STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ENTITLEMENTS

The following amendments have been agreed to the Dispensing Fee Scales within the GMS Statement of Financial Entitlements, with effect from 1 October 2009.

The following changes to the bands and prices per prescription within the dispensing fee scales will take place:

ANNEX G PART 2 DISPENSING FEESCALE FOR CONTRACTORS THAT ARE AUTHORISED OR REQUIRED TO PROVIDE DISPENSING SERVICES

Total prescriptions calculated separately for each individual dispensing practitioner, in bands	Prices per prescription in pence
Up to 418	210.8
419 - 522	207.8
523 - 627	205.1
628 - 731	202.5
732 - 836	200.1
837 - 940	197.9
941 - 1305	195.8
1306 - 1828	194.0
1829 - 2089	192.4
2090 - 2611	190.8
2612 - 3133	189.5
3134 - 3655	188.4
3656 - 4178	187.4
4179 and over	186.7

**ANNEX G PART 3
DISPENSING FEESCALE FOR CONTRACTORS THAT ARE NOT
AUTHORISED OR REQUIRED TO PROVIDE DISPENSING SERVICES**

Total prescriptions calculated separately for each individual practitioner, in bands	Prices per prescription in pence
Up to 418	219.7
419 - 522	216.7
523 - 627	213.9
628 - 731	211.4
732 - 836	209.0
837 - 940	206.8
941 - 1305	204.7
1306 - 1828	202.9
1829 - 2089	201.2
2090 - 2611	199.7
2612 - 3133	198.4
3134 - 3655	197.3
3656 - 4178	196.3
4179 and over	195.6