

NORTHERN AREA HEALTH BOARD

Report No 23/2001

General Medical Services (Payments) Board Report to the Year ended 31st December 2001

Functions of the Board.

The General Medical Services (Payments) Board manages, on behalf of the ten health boards, the following functions in relation to the provision of services by General Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists under Sections 58, 59 and 67 (i) of the Health Act 1970:-

- (a) the calculation of payments to be made for such services;
- (b) the making of such payments;
- (c) the verification of the accuracy and reasonableness of claims in relation to such services;
- (d) the compilation of statistics and other information in relation to such services.

Payment Arrangements.

Almost all payments for services provided in the community by General Practitioners, Community Pharmacies, Dentists and Ophthalmologists are made by the G.M.S. (Payments) Board. Payments for the year 2000 were in excess of £644m (€18m). Estimated payments by the Board for 2001 are £750m (€52m). Payments are made under the following schemes/payment arrangements:-

- General Medical Services (G.M.S.)
- Drug Payment Scheme (D.P.S.)
- Long Term Illness Scheme (LTI)
- Dental Treatment Services Scheme (D.T.S.S.)
- European Economic Area
- High Tech Drugs (H.T.D.)
- Primary Childhood Immunisation Scheme
- Health (Amendment) Act 1996
- Methadone Treatment Scheme
- Health Board Community Ophthalmic Services Scheme (HBCOSS)

Number of Agreements as at 31st December 2000.

Health Board	Doctors	Pharmacists	Dentists	Optometrists
3 Area Health Boards,ERHA	573	389	380	148
Midlands	101	65	70	34
Mid-Western	163	116	82	30
North Eastern	145	100	127	46
North Western	120	66	63	15
South Eastern	194	131	146	45
Southern	289	189	243	54
Western	213	124	95	48
National	1,798	1,180	1,206	420
Corresponding figures for 1999	1,679	1,174	1,141	3,64

217 Dentists who are employees of Health Boards and who provide services under the Dental Treatment Services Scheme are included above.

Persons Eligible for Services.

Persons who are unable without undue hardship to arrange general practitioner medical and surgical services plus dental and optometric/ophthalmic services for themselves and their dependents are provided with such services free of charge under the GMS Scheme.

Number of Eligible Persons as at 31st December 2000.

Health Board	GMS	DP	LTI
3 Area Health Boards, ERHA	333,390	330,848	39,547
Midland	71,403	52,465	3,423
Mid Western	95,611	91,268	5,481
North Eastern	105,223	865,16	5,321
North Western	97,901	44,487	3,839
South Eastern	135,545	100,603	6,907
Southern	169,929	151,086	12,844
Western	139,053	84,920	5,257
National	1148,055	942,193	8,2619
% of Population	30.32%	24.88%	2.18%
Corresponding figures for 1999	1,164,187	699,867	76,848

GMS – General Medical Services Scheme. DP – Drugs Payments Scheme. LTI – Long Term Illness Scheme

Payments – year 2000.

Payments by the GMS (Payments) Board in the year 2000 totalled £644m. This is broken down as follows:-

Total of Payments for the Year
£644,380,532 (€818,194,498)

Doctors	Fees	£89.69m	(€13.88m)
	Allowances	£44.14m	(€6.05m)
Pharmacists	Fees & Mark-Up	£103.95m	(€31.99m)
	Drugs & Medicines	£311.57	(€95.61m)
Dentists		£29.98m	(€8.07m)
Investment in General Practice Development		£8.05m	(€10.22m)
High Tech Drugs Scheme			
Payment to Wholesalers		£38.47m	(€8.85)
Patient Care Fees Paid to Pharmacists		£2.40m	(€0.05m)
Optometrists		£6.85m	(€6.69m)
Administration		£9.28m	(€1.78m)

Summary of activity during year 2000

- At year end there were more than 2.17m persons registered as being eligible to benefit under the General Medical Services, Drugs Payment, Long Term Illness, Dental Treatment and Health Board Community Ophthalmic Services Scheme.
- More than 88% of eligible GMS persons availed of GP, Pharmaceutical, Dental or Ophthalmic services provided by more than 4,600 Doctors, Pharmacists, Dentists and Optometrists/Ophthalmologists.
- More than 32m prescription items were paid for by the Board – an increase of over 4.5m items on 1999.
- Fees and allowances paid to Doctors totalled £133.83m (€69.93m).
- Payments to Pharmacies totalled £417.92 (€30.65m)
 - GMS £266.83m;
 - DP £110.73m;
 - LTI £32.87m;
 - EEA £1.04m;
 - Patient Care Fees under the High Tech Drugs Scheme £2.40m;
 - The Health (Amendment) Act 1996, Methadone Treatment Scheme and DTS Prescriptions £4.05m.
- Payments to Dentists under the DTS totalled £29.95m (€8.03m)
- Payments to Optometrists/Ophthalmologists under the HBCOS totalled £6.85m (€8.69m)
- Payments to Wholesalers under the High Tech Drugs Scheme totalled £38.47m (€8.85m)
- Administration costs in the accounting period of 2000 were £9.28m (€1.78m)
- Claims processed are in respect of services provided in the community and availed of by almost 50% of the population.

M. Windle
Chief Executive

18th September, 2001