

22 December 2021

## **Patient Registrations and Contractual Obligations During The Covid-19 Pandemic**

Dear Colleagues,

The HSCB would like to remind practitioners that patient registrations have been extended on a number of occasions due to the COVID-19 pandemic as outlined below. As such no patient should have had their registration lapse due to the impact of the pandemic on practice capacity.

As a general rule of thumb patients who have attended or had their registration updated since the **12 March 2018** will remain registered to at least the **31st March 2022**. The “two year rule” no longer applies.

This extension of registrations will not appear on practice management systems and the HSCB continue to receive daily phone calls from patients who have been incorrectly advised that their registration has lapsed. As such the HSCB would ask that you inform your practice staff of this registration extension and to update practice procedures to ensure that patients are not refused care when they are entitled to it as registered patients.

The HSCB is aware that some registered patients are experiencing difficulty contacting their dentist at weekends and public holidays. We would ask that at weekends and recognised public holidays, GDS dental practices should have arrangements in place to ensure that registered patients requiring prompt care and treatment will receive such care and treatment as soon as appropriate. This may take the form of phone triage delivered remotely. Practices may wish to form local rotas or buddy up with another dental practice in order to give them the flexibility to provide the necessary cover.

A further update on patient registrations will be issued prior to the end of the current financial year.

Thank you for your continued help on this matter.

GDS Correspondence