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Dr David Hogg  
Sent by Email: chair@ruralgp.scot

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Dear Dr Hogg,

Thank you for your letter in relation to Realistic Medicine and the proposals for the Scottish GP contract. I recognise that there is anxiety amongst your members and we have recently discussed this ourselves during a valuable telephone call. In light of the content of your letter I have sought further clarification from Primary Care Division in relation to some of the issues you raise.

In the Cabinet Secretary's speech to the SLMC conference delegates on 1<sup>st</sup> December, she made clear that no practice in Scotland will see any reduction in nationally agreed funding as a result of this contract. The income and expenses guarantee ensures this. That guarantee is not time limited. It will be updated along with wider practice funding – an improvement on the current situation where correction factor payments are not always annually updated. The new Income and Expenses Guarantee is more secure than the previous MPIG arrangements.

In addition, NHS Board Allocated Funds for each Health Board in Scotland will not reduce under the new contract. The mechanism for distributing Board Allocated Funds will not be changed. This means that each Health Board will continue to receive the same share of funding that it has already.

We are yet to settle pay and expenses uplift for 2018-19, however we are confident that it will produce an uplift that will mean every practice sees their funding increase next year.

The guarantee is a commitment by this Government to maintain stable funding for as long as it is needed. It will be visible in the Statement of Financial Entitlements (SFE) to be published in 2018 to support the new contract regulations if the profession accepts the offer.

It is our joint intention with BMA Scotland to introduce clear measures that improve the attractiveness of general practice as a career, that stabilise income, reduce risk and reduce workload. These measures are intended to improve the sustainability of general practice across the whole of Scotland – include our remote and rural communities. A rural working

group will be established to help inform the implementation of phase one and inform the negotiations on the development of phase two to ensure rural general practice is supported.

I can assure you that the Scottish Government and I value rural GPs very highly. It is a critical role, integral to communities, that is absolutely vital to effective care in rural areas. I am pleased that we are providing £850,000 in increased support to cover relocation and recruitment costs in 2018/19; and permanently expanding eligibility for relocation and Golden Hello funding to all 160 remote and rural practices. By making rural practice more attractive and encouraging more GPs to work in rural areas, we intend to protect, sustain and invest in the future of Rural General Practice.

Thank you for your support for Realistic Medicine. I note also your request to meet me to discuss refining the workload allocation formula. Whilst I am happy to meet you to discuss any aspects of Realistic Medicine which you feel the association want to contribute, any meeting to discuss the formula would best be undertaken with representatives from Primary Care Division who I know you are in contact with.

Yours sincerely



Dr Gregor Smith  
Deputy Chief Medical Officer