

PRESS RELEASE

18th January 2018

For immediate release



Challenging times ahead for rural healthcare in Scotland

The Rural GP Association of Scotland (RGPAS) notes that the Scottish GP Committee (SGPC) and Scottish Government have agreed to go ahead with proposals for a new GP contract following endorsement by 29% of Scottish GPs.

Our concerns about the proposals have already been expressed in detail, and have been reported widely. We are disappointed that these concerns have not been adequately addressed by the Scottish Government nor SGPC.

Dr David Hogg, chair of RGPAS, commented: “Rural GPs are used to working in resource-limited settings, and delivering healthcare in difficult circumstances. It is disappointing that the proposals will make these circumstances even more challenging. The concerns raised by RGPAS about maintaining rural health services appear to have been ignored, and look set to remain so until they can be addressed in Phase Two of the contract. It is of great concern to our members that this is likely to be at least 3-5 years away, or not even see implementation if progression to Phase Two of the proposals does not happen.”

“We will continue to represent our concerns and solutions to maintain healthcare services in the rural communities that we know so well. We already work closely with other healthcare professionals, and advocate strongly for the health services in our communities, and we will not give up on this.”

“Along with our Deep End colleagues, we have raised significant concerns about the way in which the allocation formula appears to have been agreed without due scrutiny; placing rural practices on ‘income support’ whilst much-needed funding is missing for GP teams serving rural and deprived populations; and that the dialogue required between rural GP teams and health board management is simply not going to be possible with financial and capacity constraints.”

RGPAS members have invested much time and consideration in the appraisal and interpretation of the contract proposals. To see these swept to the side is surprising from a Scottish Government that we thought would place more importance on ensuring that healthcare proposals would be adequately rural-proofed for the 20% of the Scottish population who live in rural areas.

However, we remain committed to representing the needs of our rural communities, and will continue to engage with whatever opportunities present for that purpose. With this in mind, we seek urgent detail on how and when the Short Life Working Group for rural practice will be convened.

Notes for editors:

The Rural General Practice Association of Scotland represents Scotland’s rural GPs.
www.ruralgp.scot



The official RGPAS response to the contract proposals can be accessed ['Looking at the Right Map?'] at:

<http://ruralgp.com/2017/11/rgpas-response-to-the-scottish-gp-contract-proposals/>

The map published by RGPAS, showing which practices stand to gain under the contract proposals, is available here:

<http://ruralgp.com/2017/12/mapping-out-the-proposed-scottish-gp-contract-allocation-formula/>

Contact details: hello@ruralgp.scot

Please note that the RGPAS Committee and members are working GPs, with no media team nor administrative support. Availability for interview or response is limited particularly during this period when pressures on NHS Scotland resources and GP appointments have already been widely reported.

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