STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE GROUP

**GMS ATTRACT, RECRUIT, RETAIN SCHEME**

**2022-23**

**INTRODUCTION**

GP practices are coming under increasing pressure in areas where recruitment has traditionally been challenging. In order to address this issue, SPPG have developed this scheme to promote recruitment in hard to reach areas.

**BACKGROUND**

Over the past few years, Northern Ireland has seen a number of GP retirements and there are also a number of GPs nearing retirement age.  The region is experiencing workforce difficulties, with many GP practices struggling to attract, recruit and retain GPs to their practice/area.  These difficulties can become compounded when any clinical staff who do come to work in the area are faced with working in a challenging and difficult environment which impacts on their willingness/desire to remain in the area.

**AIM**

This scheme aims to support practices in attracting and recruiting new GPs as well as retaining those who join their team.

**ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

All GP practices are eligible to apply to this scheme subject to budgetary constraints **all aspects of this scheme need prior approval from SPPG local office team**. **Practices must apply using the attached application form**.

**SERVICE OUTLINE**

This service will provide assistance to qualifying GP Practices with the recruitment and retention of GP Partners and Salaried Doctors.

The packages available under this scheme are:

1. **Golden Hello**

A Golden Hello payment of £20,000 paid over 5 years pro rata based on sessions\* will be paid to every GP taking up an eligible Salaried post or,

A Golden Hello payment of £40,000 paid over 5 years pro rata based on sessions\* will be paid to every GP taking up a GP Partnership.

\*Full Time is equivalent to 9 sessions per week

GPs recruited under this scheme will be required to stay employed in the GP Practice for a minimum of 5 years. There can only be one application under this scheme within 5 years for a Golden Hello. (exceptional circumstances will however be considered).

**\*\*Personal Taxation issues should be considered by the individual applying to this scheme\*\***

**Job Sharers**

Each partner in a job-sharing arrangement will be eligible individually for payment if he or she satisfies the appropriate conditions.

The amount of money payable will be dependent on the time commitment of the job-sharer.

**Changes in Circumstances**

If an eligible practitioner has a change in circumstances involving an increase in time commitment he or she may be entitled to make an additional claim.

**Return of Payments**

Where within 5 years, an eligible practitioner in receipt of payments stops providing or assisting in the provision of general medical services to the terms of the scheme the practice will be required to return some or all of the payment. The amount of the payment returnable will be pro rata dependent on the amount of time spent as an eligible practitioner.

The provisions for the return of the payments will not apply where the SPPG is satisfied that the practitioner has ceased to work in this capacity due to:

a) death;

b) enforced early retirement from general practice due to illness or injury;

c) exceptional personal circumstances and with the approval of the

SPPG;

d) maternity (or other extended parenting leave) agreed by the SPPG

provided the GP gives an undertaking that she/he will return to

practise and does so within a reasonable period, to be considered

case-by-case by the SPPG.

**Eligibility Criteria**

In order to qualify for the Golden Hello GP Practices must apply in writing on the attached application form providing evidence to the SPPG detailing:

1. Significant difficulties around recruitment and retention of GPs within the practice including information on:
   * + Ratio GPs : Patients
     + Ratio Staff : Patients
     + Turnover of staff
     + Other issues as identified by practice / cluster
2. Outline how the practice has attempted to recruit GPs to their practice, number of attempts, how they have advertised for GPs, including the time frame over which they have advertised and the packages offered to potential applicants.
3. Identified issues/ difficulties to the SPPG local Primary Care Office team and for example have been referred by SPPG to the Crisis Response and Improvement Team or identified difficulties to their LMC.

**Criteria for GPs applying for Partnership/Salaried Posts that are eligible for a Golden Hello:**

* **Sessional GPs who do not hold a partnership or salaried post in another GP Practice in NI who are on the NI Performers list**
* **GPs from outside of Northern Ireland****, and who are eligible to apply to join the NI Performers list**
* **Only in exceptional circumstances will consideration be given to GPs already employed in another GP Practice in NI. For example GPs proposing to relocate to another practice that is identified by the SPPG as a practice in difficulty and where the relocation does not adversely affect the stability of the practice and local area they are leaving.**

GPs who have been a partner or salaried doctor in a practice in NI who have left the practice, in the last 12 months prior to the application, or from commencement of this scheme, **are** **not eligible** for a Golden Hello.

**All applications for this part of the scheme will be assessed locally by SPPG and where required appeals will be assessed through an appeals panel. SPPG will try to ensure GP movement does not adversely affect the stability of the local area.**

**The Head of GMS has final approval on all applications subject to budgetary constraints.**

1. **Relocation Costs**

Practices who have received approval for this part of the scheme can claim where a GP (whether newly qualified or not) takes up a substantive post under this scheme. Support for relocation costs is available as follows:

GPs are eligible to claim up to £5,000 of relocation costs following submission of appropriate invoices to SPPG. For example (storage, removals, flights, hotels).

1. **Recruitment Costs**

Practices who have received approval for this part of the scheme are eligible to claim up to the first £2,000 of recruitment costs per annum. In exceptional circumstances the local office team will consider additional recruitment costs.

Applications for payment must be made to SPPG within 12 months including submission of appropriate receipts. Payment may be made in respect of an application submitted after this 12-month period at the discretion of the SPPG.

1. **Management Costs**

Practices who have received approval for this part of the scheme, are eligible to claim up to the first £2,000 of reasonable management costs (for example: practice management support, legal and accountancy fees, Practice Management training costs.)

Applications for payment must be made to SPPG within 12 months of approval. Payment may be made in respect of an application submitted after this 12-month period at the discretion of the SPPG

1. **Reimbursement for costs applying to NI Performers List**

Practices who have received approval for this part of the scheme, are eligible to claim the reimbursement of reasonable costs, if applicable when applying to NI performers list.

Applications for payment must be made to SPPG within 12 months of approval. Payment may be made in respect of an application submitted after this 12-month period at the discretion of the SPPG.

1. **Funding for International GPs**

Practices who have received approval for this part of the scheme are eligible to claim reimbursement for International medical graduate GP trainees who require a visa to remain working in Northern Ireland. A GP Practice seeking to become their employer is required to hold a sponsorship licence in order to enable them to employ the international doctors. Funding to assist Practices in obtaining the required licence is available under this Scheme.

**VERIFICATION**

Any aspect of this service may be subject to verification checks by the SPPG.

**PAYMENT PROCESS**

Practices will claim on behalf of the GP taking up the posts and can claim using the attached claim form for all parts of this scheme.