

(v) Devolved nations

Scotland

GPs practising in Scotland should be aware of the following key differences in the Scottish arrangements:

Option 'A'

- **Funding** – The Scottish DES will be funded from £6.5m of existing funding from the current Access DES and £9.5m of **new funding**.
- **48 hour access** – Discussions are taking place about the potential to retain the current Scottish language around 48 hour access which does not insist that patients are "...able to consult a GP within 2 working days" but instead provides "Guaranteed access to a GP, nurse or other health care professional in accordance with the clinical needs of the patient".
- **Contracted Hours** – Where GP practices have reached local agreements that core hours end at 6pm, extended hours will run from 6pm and not from 6.30pm
- **Extended Hours Sessions** – Discussions are ongoing between the Scottish Government and SGPC about how discussion between GP practices and NHS Boards could allow extended hours sessions and timings to be more flexible to suit local circumstances (e.g. in remote and rural areas)

Option 'B'

- The Scottish Government's alternative proposals mirror the English proposals in terms of the removal of 135 points from the QOF but the funding released from the QOF would be made available to GP practices via a DES to improve patient access to GP services. This is different from the English position where released QOF funding would be allocated to PCOs.
- In the event that Scottish GPs reject offer 'A', the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing has indicated that she would not introduce the Scottish Government's alternative proposals without further negotiation with SGPC. It is highly likely, however, that the Scottish Government would wish to maintain a UK position on QOF (i.e. removal of 135 points from QOF) and negotiations would be centred on how the funding released from QOF would be re-allocated.

GPs in Scotland will receive further details directly from SGPC once the poll documents have been sent out.

Northern Ireland

Details are as set out in section (ii) of this letter. NIGPC has written to all GPs in Northern Ireland detailing the situation.

Wales

In Wales discussions between GPC Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government continue. The money from the current Access DES will be used to support new Ministerial priorities and details are under development with GPC Wales. Further details are set out in section (ii) of this letter and GPC Wales will communicate any further developments directly to GPs in Wales as these are clarified.