

GP funding must reflect small business pressures

In response to the Autumn Statement made on November 22, 2023, the DDA calls on GP negotiators to ensure funding settlements reflect the reality of operating a small business.

In the Autumn Statement¹, Chancellor Jeremy Hunt announced an average 15.2 per cent increase in the minimum wage from April 2024.² However, from April 2023, GPs have received only a 6 per cent rise for staff salaries.³



Dispensing GPs, which usually employ additional staff in the dispensary, now face the greatest and unprecedented challenges to their staffing budget. This also comes right after an announcement by NHS England that vital dispensing IT will fall outside the scope of NHS funding.⁴

Other announcements from the Autumn Statement that may affect dispensary teams include potential confrontations with disengaged Universal Credit recipients who will no longer receive free prescriptions.

In his recent report, Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Witty called for directed resources for rural areas, which typically serve older, more vulnerable populations.⁵

Dispensing Doctors' Association Chairman Dr Richard West commented: "Dispensing GPs provide one of the few sources of skilled employment in rural areas, and this should be supported rather than penalised. Dispensing GPs all over the country face well-documented additional costs of rural service delivery.

It is vital that dispensing GPs are supported and appropriately funded to provide a health service that in rural areas may be otherwise completely unavailable to patients. Levelling-up is not just about deprivation it is also about geography, and it is high time that GP funding policy recognised this."

Other key points in the Autumn Statement:

- The main rate of Class 1 employee National Insurance contributions (NICs) will be cut from 12% to 10% from 6 January 2024, with employees benefitting from January onwards.

¹ [Autumn Statement 2023 \(HTML\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

² [National Minimum Wage to rise to £11.44 from April - DDA - Dispensing Doctors' Association](#)

³ [RCN and GPCE Joint Statement on GP practice staff pay uplift 2023/24 \(bma.org.uk\)](#)

⁴ [Securing Excellence in Primary Care \(GP\) Digital Services: The Primary Care \(GP\) Digital Services Operating Model 2021-2023](#)

⁵ [CMO calls for directed resources for rural areas - DDA - Dispensing Doctors' Association](#)

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