

Pay uplifts delay until new year



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Dentists in England are set to receive a 1.68% uplift in their December pay run, effectively seen in early January 2019.

The BDA said it had been given confirmation that practitioners would receive the uplift – four months since it was announced in August 2018 – meaning dentists only now know¹ the extent of the uplift on contract values for 2018–19, even though this will be eight months since the award should have been in place in April 2018.

Although contractors will see the 1.68% uplift backdated to April 2018, plus an additional 0.65% award to be made on 1 April 2019 to realise the full 2% promised back in July, the BDA said it was annoyed there was such a delay in the extra money being distributed.

The union said on 15 November 2018 that the Statement of Financial Entitlements was finally signed to allow contract uplifts to be paid in January and contractors would not see any increases in their uplift until 2 January 2019.

This delay represented a new low for pay reviews, said the BDA, which at this stage of the year had usually submitted the evidence for the next year of pay awards with a date in the diary to give oral evidence.

It was concerned that the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (DDRB) process was only just commencing, although the delay does not affect the nature of any future award being made from April 2019.

The delays to the process in England seem to be set now on a delayed course meaning late award implementation for the April 2019 pay award, added the union.

In Scotland for GDPs, the government has agreed a 2% uplift on pay and a 3% uplift on expenses, making an overall uplift of 2.55%, which will be backdated to 1 April 2018.

For GDPs in Wales, the Assembly has agreed a 2% uplift on pay and expenses uplifted in line with RPI, making an overall uplift of 2.77%, backdated to 1 April 2018. There has been no announcement on uplifts in Northern Ireland.

BDA Vice Chair Eddie Crouch said: 'Dentists are usually bitterly resigned to the late application of the contract in addition to the paltry amount being offered. However this year's delays represent a new low.

'Pushing the uplift back to a January 2019 receipt date cannot be justified given the challenges many practices are facing to simply maintain viability. For reasons of affordability, the recommended uplift was announced as a staged award back in July. We know the profession has suffered under austerity and pay restraint, and even though pay ceilings have been lifted, we are still adversely affected.

'While the Government is tied up by Brexit negotiations and political wrangling, hard-working NHS dental colleagues are seeing ever eroding income and decline in earnings. A once stable profession is struggling to stay afloat and maintain the high quality care that our patients deserve.

'These delays have been unacceptable, the failure to implement the award in full in 2018 is inexcusable.'

1. BDA. Pay announcement for UK dentists and the Government response for England. 2018. Available at <https://bda.org/dentists/policy-campaigns/campaigns/Documents/DDRB%20announcement%2020%20November%202018.pdf> (accessed November 2018).