

**Sir Simon Stevens**  
Chief Executive  
NHS England  
NHSE Skipton House  
80 London Road  
London, SE1 6LH

17 July 2020

Dear Sir Simon,

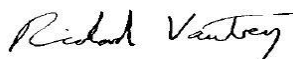
As you will be aware, at the outset of the pandemic the Government committed to providing the NHS with the resources it needed to tackle COVID-19. As part of this support package the Government committed to establishing a national COVID fund, to reimburse NHS out of pocket expenses related to the treatment and of COVID-19. The BMA and GPs have become increasingly frustrated at the holdups to the development of this fund and subsequent delays in funding from it reaching general practice.

In light of the Prime Minister's announcement today, of an additional £3bn to support the NHS in the ongoing battle against COVID-19, I am now seeking your immediate confirmation that the ongoing delay to releasing the national COVID fund, which we have discussed with NHSE/I on many occasions, will come to an end, and the fund will be released. This will allow GP practices to fund the equipment and staff which they need to continue to treat patients as we move into the next phase of tackling the pandemic.

General practices across the country have incurred significant additional financial obligations which they committed to in good faith and have repeatedly been told would be reimbursed. This includes, procuring personal protective equipment (PPE), establishing hubs to enable the swift and safe assessment and care of patients suspected of having covid-19, providing additional locum support and establishing necessary technology to allow for patients to continue to access GP services remotely. Our [most recent member survey](#) of almost 6000 doctors showed that significant numbers of practices were not being reimbursed by their CCGs for out of pocket expenses directly linked to tackling COVID-19. This included 29% of GP respondents who had purchased PPE for staff for which they had not been reimbursed; 29% who had not been reimbursed when purchasing face coverings for patients; and 27% left without reimbursement for additional staffing costs to backfill staff roles who are shielding or self-isolating. Without the reimbursement for these outgoings, which a national COVID fund would have covered, GP services will inevitably be severely hit, at a time when more resource than ever will be needed to support the backlog of non-COVID-19 NHS work, as core NHS services are resumed.

Now that the Government has provided NHS England with additional funding support, I ask as a matter of priority the NHS now begins the process of reimbursing practices for their additional expenses. I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible on this important matter. Please do contact Gemma Hopkins on [ghopkins@bma.org.uk](mailto:ghopkins@bma.org.uk) or 020 7383 6287 to arrange a suitable time to discuss or if you require further information.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Richard Vautrey**  
Chair, BMA General Practitioners Committee

**Chief executive officer:** Tom Grinyer

