

NHSBSA Dental Services

In the spotlight

Article 1: A course of treatment and examination June 2019

This is the first of a series of short articles intended to raise awareness of appropriate claiming. The article topics have been selected based upon patterns of inappropriate claiming that have been seen in clinical record reviews conducted by NHS Business Services Authority Dental Services. The intention is to either reinforce understanding, or to correct misunderstanding of current regulations in order to facilitate appropriate claiming. Therefore, the articles may be of use for designing self-audits or for management of Contracts.

Units of Dental Activity are credited based on claims for urgent treatment, treatment that falls into a charge exempt category (such as denture repair), or banded courses of treatment (Band 1, Band 2 or Band 3).

What is a course of treatment?

The following is an extract from the NHS GDS/PDS Regulations, and relates to a course of treatment for which either a Band 1, 2 or 3 claim would be appropriate:

“(a) an examination of a patient, an assessment of his oral health, and the planning of any treatment to be provided to that patient as a result of that examination and assessment; and

(b) the provision of any planned treatment (including any treatment planned at a time other than the time of the initial examination) to that patient.

(c) each and every component of the planned treatment has been provided to the patient, or

(d) the patient either voluntarily withdraws from, or is withdrawn by the provider from, treatment.”

Examination

An examination to identify all necessary treatment is considered a prerequisite for a Band 1, 2 or 3 claim, essential to the clinical diagnosis of dental disease and the clinical records should reflect that an examination was provided. An examination would normally include (but not be limited to) the recording of a dental chart, soft tissue examination, periodontal examination other diagnostic tests as appropriate, risk assessments, treatment plan and a recall interval.

If a Band 1, 2 or 3 claim was submitted and there was a lack of evidence to support that an examination was provided, it may bring into question whether the claim is appropriate, or the clinical/record keeping standards of the dentist.

Is an examination required for an Urgent course of treatment?

Unlike Band 1, 2 and 3 claims, an examination is not a prerequisite in order to submit a claim for urgent treatment. Assessment of the presenting complaint may be provided as part of urgent care, and the treatment associated with the urgent claim may extend across more than one appointment to resolve the problem.

A change of the treatment plan?

If, during provision of a Band 1, 2 or 3 course of treatment, a patient requires more treatment than that originally planned, or an alteration to the treatment planned, it should then become part of the course of treatment currently being provided, and a separate claim would be considered inappropriate. Depending on the nature of treatment within this amended treatment plan, a change in the Band for the course of treatment may or may not be necessary. A new NHS FP17DC form should be issued to the patient with any amended treatment plan.

Key points:

1. An examination is a prerequisite for all Band 1, 2 or 3 courses of treatment (ie a Band 1, 2 or 3 claim).
2. Prior to submission of a Band 1, 2 or 3 claim, each and every component of the planned treatment has been provided to the patient, unless the patient withdraws from all or part of the planned treatment.