19 January 2017

Relaxation of the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) up to March 2017

Dear colleagues

Welsh Government and GPC Wales are pleased to announce that the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) element of the GP contract has been relaxed until 31 March 2017. The relaxation of QOF comes into effect from the date of this letter. The supporting legal Directions will be issued shortly.

The relaxation of QOF aims to free up more capacity for GPs and practice nurses to manage their most vulnerable and chronically sick patients during the winter period where there is a significant increase in demand for their services. Whilst the actual amount of time freed up for GPs and practice nurses as a result of relaxing QOF is difficult to quantify, Welsh Government and GPC Wales are confident this initiative will help GPs and practice nurses at a time when they are at their busiest.

Of the 567 total QOF points, GP practices will be able to opt out of over 75% of the total points. The only elements of QOF which practices will be not be able to opt out of during the period to 31 March 2017 are the two Influenza indicators worth 20 points and the cluster network domain indicators worth 115 points (CND 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5). 55 points in relation to CND 1 and CND 2 have already been achieved.

The intention is to ensure that no GP practice loses out financially as a result of QOF relaxation up to 31 March 2017. Accordingly, for each indicator the practice elects to opt out of, the achievement for 2016/17 will be compared with the 2015/16 achievement for the relevant indicator and the health board will make a payment to the practice at the higher of the two levels of achievement. This will be set out in the revised legal Directions.

Both GPC Wales and Welsh Government remain committed to working positively and collaboratively to improve access to services. We will jointly reflect on QOF and the lessons from this 'relaxation'. Finally, thank you to you and your staff for your continued hard work. This proactive initiative is possible because of the strong working relationship we have in Wales.

Yours sincerely

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Deputy Director

Dr Charlotte Jones
Chair, GPC Wales