

**STRATEGIC PLANNING and
PERFORMANCE GROUP of the
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH (“SPPG”)
PROCESS**

**PHARMACEUTICAL REBATE SCHEMES
IN
PRIMARY CARE**

June 2025

Version 0.7

1. Purpose

SPPG does not actively seek rebate proposals from pharmaceutical companies; however it is important that a process is in place to assess such proposals if they are offered. The purpose of this paper is to detail the process to be followed by SPPG when considering applications by pharmaceutical companies in respect of proposed Pharmaceutical Rebate Schemes in Northern Ireland (excluding any rebate schemes agreed at a national level for all administrations in the UK).

Pharmaceutical Rebate Schemes are separate from prescribing policy and guidance and in their nature are short term/terminable. SPPG considers it is not appropriate for pharmaceutical companies to contact any prescribing entity to communicate the existence, or share the content, of any Pharmaceutical Rebate Schemes.

2. Background

A Pharmaceutical Rebate Scheme is a scheme proposed by a pharmaceutical company in order to improve the cost-effectiveness of a medicine.

In March 2015, the former HSCB, now known as the Strategic Planning and Performance Group of the Department of Health, became a member of PrescQIPP which has already established a Pharmaceutical Industry Scheme Governance Review Board and robust process to assess rebates.

<https://www.prescqipp.info/about-prescqipp/>

Membership of PrescQIPP allows SPPG to access the PrescQIPP Review Board's rebate scheme assessments which are based on the clinical, contractual and financial aspects of a scheme.

A SPPG Pharmaceutical Rebate Scheme Review Team (**PRSRT**) has been established to develop and apply a local review process to consider whether or not any individual rebate proposal reviewed and published by PrescQIPP with grey or amber status should be recommended for acceptance by SPPG.

From April 2015, only those rebates that have been reviewed and published by PrescQIPP with grey or amber status will be considered for Northern Ireland (excluding any rebate schemes agreed at a national level for all administrations in the UK).. Following assessment by PrescQIPP Pharmaceutical Industry Scheme Governance Review Board, the PRSRT will then apply the local review process to the grey and amber schemes.

<https://www.prescqipp.info/our-resources/webkits/primary-care-rebates/>

3. Membership of PRSRT

A full Terms of Reference, including membership details, for the PRSRT is included at Appendix 1.

All information circulated by / discussed within the PRSRT will remain confidential in accordance with PrescQIPP membership.

All members of, and any advisers to, the PRSRT in addition to any other people attending the meeting will be asked to declare any interest or received hospitality in accordance with the Declaration of Interest form (Appendix 2) in advance of each meeting. Any action to be taken on the basis of these declarations will be at the discretion of the Chair. This will remain as a standing item on each agenda.

4. Review Process

The various stages in the review process are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Stage 1 Offers

The starting point for any rebate application to SPPG is an application to PrescQIPP. Applications received directly by SPPG e.g. via Business.supportwest@hscni.net or medicines.management@hscni.net, for consideration by the PRSRT will be directed on to PrescQIPP via this link:

<https://www.prescqipp.info/our-resources/webkits/primary-care-rebates/>

Stage 2 Assessment by PrescQIPP

PrescQIPP will assess these schemes, outlining issues, and highlighting inappropriate schemes. SPPG Medicines Management Team staff will take part in such assessment via teleconference or participate in the PrescQIPP Fast Track Approval Process. As a member of PrescQIPP, all documentation will be made available to SPPG representatives prior to the meeting. Outcomes for all schemes assessed will be published on the PrescQIPP website. Outcomes will be categorised as follows:

- Grey – Scheme considered; No significant reservations
- Amber – Scheme considered; Not fully appropriate
- Red – Scheme considered; Inappropriate

Schemes assessed as 'Red' will not progress any further in the process.

Stage 3 Local Review of Grey and Amber Schemes by PRSRT

Schemes which have been assessed by PrescQIPP as Grey or Amber will initially be reviewed for appropriateness by SPPG Pharmacy and Medicines Management Team staff representatives on the PRSRT taking into account SPPG prescribing practices. Only those schemes deemed appropriate will be presented to the full group for consideration.

Members of PRSRT and Advisers will then consider the PrescQIPP Review Board's comments and will complete the relevant sections of the information summary template (see Appendix 3). Schemes will be reviewed by the PRSRT taking into account the benefits vs. the burden of the proposed schemes; this will, for example, take into account factors such as complexity of the scheme, financial benefits, length of the scheme and local prescribing practice. A legal review of the contract will also be completed by a Representative of BSO Directorate of Legal Services (DLS).

Details of scheme(s) under consideration, plus completed information summary templates (Appendix 3) for each scheme, will be circulated to all members of the PRSRT. Schemes to be considered will be reviewed either at the next PRSRT meeting (PRSRT will meet as appropriate, usually following the PrescQIPP Industry Review Board meeting) or via email and a report will be prepared for review by SPPG Pharmacy Team Leads (PTL)

Stage 4 PTL review

The report developed by the PRSRT detailing all schemes considered will be presented to PTL for approval to proceed.

Stage 5 Feedback to applicant

Once a decision is made by PTL, this is recorded formally in the PTL minutes.

If PTL grants approval to proceed with a pharmaceutical rebate scheme:

The company will be formally notified of the decision to proceed (Appendix 4) by way of a letter notifying the company that SPPG wish to take forward the rebate within primary care in Northern Ireland. Acceptance of the scheme is conditional upon agreeing the final contract terms and administration detail. Final approval of the final contract from the SPPG, DoH, will be by the Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management. All communications in relation to contract administrative detail between BSO DLS and a pharmaceutical company will be facilitated via the business.supportwest@hscni.net account, unless otherwise agreed between SPPG and the pharmaceutical company.

If PTL does not grant approval to proceed with a pharmaceutical rebate scheme:

Pharmaceutical companies are not routinely informed of the decision. A letter may be sent to the company from the chair of PTL at the request of the company (Appendix 5).

Stage 6 Review of decision (if requested)

Should the applicant have issues with the decision made by PTL, they should submit their comments in writing to the Chair of the PTL who will then initiate a review by a person independent of the process. Each company has 8 weeks from receipt of feedback from PTL to submit their comments to the PTL Chair.

The independent review will then be completed within a further 8 weeks and the company advised of the outcome of the review as soon as possible thereafter.

5. Review of SPPG Pharmaceutical Rebate Schemes Operational Process

The SPPG Pharmaceutical Rebate Schemes Operational Process will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Appendix 1

Terms of Reference

Roles and Responsibilities of the SPPG Pharmaceutical Rebate Scheme Review Team (PRSRT)

To develop and apply a local review process to consider whether or not any individual rebate proposal reviewed and published by PrescQIPP with grey or amber status should be recommended for acceptance by SPPG

Membership of the PRSRT

- SPPG Pharmacy Lead (Chairperson)
- Representative, Pharmacy and Medicines Management Information Team, SPPG
- Representatives, Pharmacy and Medicines Management Team, SPPG
- Business Support Manager, Primary Care, SPPG
- Representatives, Business Support, Primary Care, SPPG
- Representative, Finance (FHS), SPPG
- Statistician, Information & Registration Unit, BSO

Advisers to the Group

- Representative, BSO DLS
- PrescQIPP Head of Operations

Reporting to the Pharmacy Team Leads (PTL)

A monthly update report will be presented to PTL detailing progress on all locally reviewed schemes.

Conflict of Interest

At the start of every meeting, members of the group (and any other people attending the meetings) will be asked to declare any conflicts of interest that may influence any decisions or recommendations of a particular meeting (Appendix 2). Any action to be taken on the basis of these declarations will be at the discretion of the Chair.

Accountability

The PRSRT will act as a sub-group of PTL. PTL will make the decision whether to proceed with a scheme based on the report and information received from the PRSRT.

Third Party Organisations

The PRSRT will only work with representatives of the company, or clearly designated partner organisations, which are responsible for the scheme and its contents. The main contact should be someone who is able to act as a decision maker on behalf of the company submitting the schemes.

Representatives of PRSRT will not routinely meet with company representatives and all correspondence relating to Pharmaceutical Rebates in Primary Care should be directed through the dedicated email address.

Appendix 2



Department
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DECLARATION OF INTERESTS AND RECEIVED HOSPITALITY

Declared interest or received hospitality	Please state
Directorships, including non-executive Directorships held in private companies or PLCs (with the exception of those of dormant companies)	
Ownership, or part ownership, of private companies, businesses or consultancies held likely or possibly seeking to do business with the NHS	
Majority or controlling share holdings in organisations likely or possible seeking to do business with the NHS	
A position of authority in a charity or voluntary body in the field of health and social care	
Any connection with a voluntary or other body contracting for NHS products or services including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share holdings or other interests in pharmaceutical companies • receipt of departmental, staffing or personal sponsorship from the pharmaceutical industry • engagement by the pharmaceutical industry to provide advice, undertake presentations, lectures or tours of instruction 	
Any received hospitality exceeding £50 (this figure is for guidance purposes)	

Name:

Employing organisation:

Signed:

Date:

SPPG /PHA Process for Managing Declarations of Interest August 2013

Type of interest	Outcome
<p>A specific personal pecuniary interest involves a current personal payment, which may either relate to the manufacturer or owner of a product or service being evaluated. This may include consultancy work, fee-paid work or direct share-holdings in the 12 months preceding the meeting at which the declaration is being made.</p>	<p>A person declaring a personal specific pecuniary interest <u>shall take no part in proceedings</u> as they relate to the intervention or matter and will normally leave the meeting until the matter has been concluded. In exceptional circumstances he or she may, at the discretion of the chair, be permitted to remain for the discussion where their expertise is specifically required to inform the other members in their discussions. This expert advice shall be restricted to the giving of factual and objective information before withdrawing from the meeting until a decision/vote is taken or the discussion has concluded.</p>
<p>A non-specific personal pecuniary interest involves a current personal payment, which may either relate to the industry or sector from which the product or service comes. This may include consultancy work, fee-paid work or direct share-holdings in the 12 months preceding the meeting at which the declaration is being made.</p>	<p>A person declaring a personal non-specific pecuniary <u>may take part in the proceedings</u> unless, exceptionally, the chair rules otherwise.</p>
<p>A non-personal pecuniary interest involves payment which benefits a department or organisation for which a person has managerial responsibility, but is not received by the person themselves. For example, charities or self-help organisations might receive funding such as sponsorship money or educational grants from the healthcare industry, which might be considered as affecting the objectivity of people working for the organisation N.B it is not always easy to know whether an organisation receives funding or payment from the healthcare industry, and you are not expected to make exceptional efforts to find out about such payments</p>	<p>A person declaring a non-personal specific pecuniary interest <u>may take part in the proceedings</u> unless he or she has personal knowledge of the intervention or matter either through his or her own work, or through direct supervision of other people's work. In either of these cases he or she should declare this interest and not take part in the proceedings except to answer questions</p> <p>A person declaring a non-personal non-specific pecuniary interest <u>may take part in proceedings</u> unless, exceptionally, the chair rules otherwise.</p>
<p>A specific personal family interest relates to the personal interests of a family member and involves a current payment to the family member of the employee or member. The interest is regarded as specific when it relates to the manufacturer or owner of a product or service being evaluated. This may include consultancy work, fee-paid work or direct share-holdings in the 12 months</p>	<p>A person declaring a personal specific family interest <u>shall take no part in proceedings</u> as they relate to the intervention or matter and will normally leave the meeting until the matter has been concluded. In exceptional circumstances he or she may, at the discretion of the chair, be permitted to remain for the discussion where their expertise is specifically required to inform the other members in their discussions. This expert advice shall be restricted to</p>

preceding the meeting at which the declaration is being made.	the giving of factual and objective information before withdrawing from the meeting until a decision/vote is taken or the discussion has concluded.
A non-specific personal family interest relates to the personal interests of a family member and involves a current payment to the family member of the employee or member. The interest is regarded as non-specific when it relates to the industry or sector from which the product or service comes. This may include consultancy work, fee-paid work or direct share-holdings in the 12 months preceding the meeting at which the declaration is being made	A person declaring a non-specific personal family interest <u>may take part in the proceedings</u> unless he or she has personal knowledge of the intervention or matter either through his or her own work, or through direct supervision of other people's work. In either of these cases he or she should declare this interest and not take part in the proceedings except to answer questions

Notes:

Personal interest

A personal interest involves payment to the member personally. The main examples are:

- a) Consultancies: any consultancy, directorship, position in or work for the pharmaceutical industry which attracts regular or occasional payments in cash or kind
- b) Fee-Paid work: any work commissioned by the pharmaceutical industry for which the member is paid in cash or kind
- c) Shareholdings: any shareholding in or other beneficial interest in shares of the pharmaceutical industry. This does not include shareholdings through unit trusts or similar arrangements where the member has no influence or financial management

Non-personal interests

A non-personal interest involves payment which benefits a department for which a member is responsible, but is not received by the member personally. The main examples are:

- a) Fellowships: the holding of a fellowship endorsed by the pharmaceutical industry
- b) Support by the pharmaceutical industry: any payment , other support or sponsorship by the pharmaceutical industry which does not convey any pecuniary or material benefit to a member personally but which does benefit his/her position or department e.g.
 - a. A grant from a company for the running of a unit or department for which a member is responsible
 - b. A grant or fellowship or other payment to sponsor a post or a member of staff in the unit for which the member is responsible. This does not include financial assistance for students
 - c. The commissioning of research or other work by, or advice from, staff who work in a unit for which the member is responsible

Clinical Issues Information Summary**Scheme Title:**

NO.	ISSUES	INFORMATION
1	Assessment outcome by PrescQIPP i.e. amber (not fully appropriate) or grey (no significant reservations). Include any additional comments made at time of assessment	
2	Name of Drug Company	
3	Name of Drug Generic/Proprietary	
4	NI Formulary Inclusion:	
5	Current Place in Therapy (e.g. as per NICE, Managed Entry process)	
6	Clinical Endorsement (NI) – e.g. NICE/SMC/ SPPG /PCE	
7	Patent Expiry (as per UKMi database)	
8	Dispensing Information (Last 12 months):	
9	Spend: No. of Prescriptions:	
10	Additional Clinical Information	

Completed By.....**Date**

Contracting/Administrative Issues Information Summary

Scheme Title:

NO.	ISSUES	INFORMATION
1.	Length of contract	
2.	Nature of opt out/termination clause:	
3.	Is the administration of the scheme straightforward/ routine? If no, please state why?	
4.	Are contract monitoring arrangements for the rebate in line with routine SPPG processes (quarterly in arrears upon submission of invoice)? If not, what are the arrangements?	
5.	Any other relevant comments	

Completed By.....

Date

Financial Issues Information Summary

Scheme Title:

NO.	ISSUES	INFORMATION
1	Description/process of the rebate	
2	Estimated level of annual rebate	
3	Arrangements for claiming rebate in line with SPPG processes (quarterly in arrears upon submission of invoice)? If not the above, please state?	
4	Any other relevant comments	

Completed By

Date

Summary of outcome

For internal use	
Scheme title	Internal reference no
Date considered by SPPG Rebate Group	
Recommendation made To be considered by PTL	
Date of PTL meeting and outcome	
Date communication sent to company	

Completed By.....

Appendix 4

Sample Acceptance To Proceed Letter

*From The Assistant Director of Primary Care,
Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management*

Joe Brogan



Strategic Planning and Performance Group

Gransha Park House
Clooney Road
Derry
BT47 6FN

By email

Tel: 028 9536 3375

Email: joe.brogan@hscni.net

Date: ** ****

Dear

PHARMACEUTICAL REBATE SCHEME – [TITLE OF SCHEME]

The Strategic Planning and Performance Group of the Department of Health (“SPPG”) is a member of the PrescQIPP. As a result the SPPG have utilised the PrescQIPP process within their Operational Process for the Review of Pharmaceutical Rebate Schemes in Primary Care.

[Pharmaceutical Industry - DOH/HSCNI Strategic Planning and Performance Group \(SPPG\) – formerly HSCB](#)

A local review has been undertaken of rebate schemes currently published on the PrescQIPP website and a decision was made by the Pharmacy Team Leads (PTL) on *DATE* that we wish to proceed with the rebate scheme submission for [TITLE OF SCHEME].

Please note that acceptance of this scheme is conditional upon agreeing:

- Amendments to contract as set out in Appendix 1
- Data used to calculate rebate will be dispensing data as provided by Business Services Organisation
- Data will be provided to companies by the end of the following quarter (an example of the format of the quarterly monitoring report is provided Appendix 2)

I would be grateful if you can advise of next steps. Please note that this proposal has been assigned the reference RS***. Any communication should be made through the following email address business.supportwest@hscni.net and should include the reference RS*** in the title.

Yours sincerely

Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management

Appendix 1

RS TITLE OF SCHEME***

Required Amendments to contract

This Agreement is acceptable provided the following amendments can be made:

[Insert proposed amendments from SPPG and BSO DLS]

Appendix 2

[illegible]

Appendix 5

Sample Letter for Schemes where decision is not to proceed with the Scheme

*From The Assistant Director of Primary Care,
Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management*

Joe Brogan



Strategic Planning and Performance Group

Gransha Park House

Clooney Road

Derry

BT47 6FN

By email

Tel: 028 9536 3375

Email: joe.brogan@hscni.net

Date: ** ****

Dear

PHARMACEUTICAL REBATE SCHEME – [TITLE OF SCHEME]

The Strategic Planning and Performance Group of the Department of Health (“SPPG”) is a member of the PrescQIPP. As a result the SPPG have utilised the PrescQIPP process within their Operational Process for the Review of Pharmaceutical Rebate Schemes in Primary Care.

[Pharmaceutical Industry - DOH/HSCNI Strategic Planning and Performance Group \(SPPG\) – formerly HSCB](#)

A local review has been undertaken and a decision was made by SPPG Pharmacy Team Leads (PTL) on *DATE* that we do not wish to proceed with the rebate scheme submission for [TITLE OF SCHEME].

Should you have any issues with the decision made by PTL, please submit comments in writing via the following email address – business.supportwest@hscni.net. SPPG will then initiate a review by a person independent of the process.

Yours sincerely

Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management