

## **National policy for reimbursement of home dialysis costs – January 2024**

### **Background**

The Health and Social Care Management Board has agreed that there is a requirement for a national policy for the reimbursement of electricity costs associated with life-saving dialysis equipment for patients receiving treatment at home. This policy will reimburse the additional electricity costs for patients using Home Haemodialysis (HHD), Automated Peritoneal Dialysis (APD), and Continuous Automated Peritoneal Dialysis (CAPD) treatments. The total annual reimbursement cost is expected to be between £60k and £85k per year across all NHS Scotland.

### **Patients impacted**

According to the latest figures from the Scottish Renal Registry, in 2021 there were around 46 HHD patients, 131 APD patients, and 68 CAPD patients in Scotland. These home healthcare options make use of equipment which has become more expensive to run due to recent increases in energy prices. Protecting patient choice is key, so where patients have opted to undergo home treatment, they should not be in a position of disadvantage versus in centre treatment due to increased household energy costs.

### **Finance implications**

Reimbursement costs have been calculated based on the type of dialysis, type of equipment, and average usage per week according to several treatment plan options. A further breakdown can be found at **Annex A**.

Currently, some health boards such as Greater Glasgow & Clyde already fully reimburse costs for home dialysis, while others offer partial reimbursement. The expectation is that Health Boards will provide reimbursement from existing budgets. It is recommended that payments be made quarterly to keep up with any changes in the energy price cap. However, this would be at the Boards' discretion, and Boards should consider more regular payments where patient circumstances necessitate this, such as for patients who pay for energy costs through pre-paid meters. It is further proposed that reimbursement be the default policy with an opt-out process, and it is expected that Boards will proactively identify eligible patients and communicate the change in reimbursement policy to them timely and appropriately. Due consideration should be paid for any patients on prepayment meters to ensure their supply is not at risk.

During consultation with NHS Boards a request was made for a standard sum for home dialysis is set for smaller Boards who do not have sizable finance teams. It is suggested that a current annual rate of £424.42 should cover someone on a 3 hours, 5 times per week Home Haemodialysis treatment regime.

Heating costs associated with home healthcare equipment have been raised as a key issue by frontline practitioners and third sector advocates, as home dialysis equipment requires certain temperatures to operate efficiently, which necessitates use of heating in rooms which contain healthcare equipment. The current policy would look to reimburse electricity costs only. However, Boards may wish to consider the reimbursement of associated heating costs in addition to electrical running costs. Scottish Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel is considering the results of the Scottish

Government's recent Warm Homes Prescription pilot and any consideration of this as a policy initiative. Such an initiative, if agreed, might be able to provide assistance to patients struggling to meet heating costs.

**Review and communication with patients**

We propose that a review take place 6 to 12 months after implementation to assess whether reimbursement has been provided, and to gather views of healthcare practitioners, patients, and third sector organisations.

**Basis for a calculation**

The UK Kidney Association (UUKA) has provided guidance and a tool for calculating the reimbursement value that should be applied in the case of reimbursing dialysis patients. This covers the whole of the UK and includes aspects that we do not need to consider for this proposal, such as extra costs associated with increased water charges. This guidance and tool can be found on their website.

According to this tool, annual energy costs for the 46 home haemodialysis patients across Scotland would total £18,769.84 if receiving treatment 4 hours 4 times a week, £19,523.32 for 3 hours 5 times a week, and £43,618.12 for 8 hours overnight 6 times a week. The overnight cost will in fact be lower as this has been based on daytime energy prices, which are more expensive than night-time energy use. Annual energy costs for APD will be £35,524.58 and annual energy costs for CAPD will be £6,237.64. This information is broken down by monthly and annual costs per patient in the table below.

In total, the cost of reimbursement for all home dialysis methods would be between £60,530 and £85,379 per year across all health boards.

<b>HHD</b>	<b>4hrs 4x/wk</b>	<b>3hrs 5x/wk</b>	<b>8hrs 6x/wk</b>
<b>Monthly (£)</b>	34	35.37	79.02
<b>Annual (£)</b>	408.04	424.42	948.22
<b>For 46 patients (£)</b>	18,769.84	19,523.32	43,618.12

<b>CAPD</b>	<b>30 minutes 4 times a day</b>
<b>Monthly (£)</b>	7.64
<b>Annual (£)</b>	91.73
<b>For 68 patients (£)</b>	6,237.04

<b>APD</b>	<b>8 hours every night</b>
<b>Monthly (£)</b>	22.60
<b>Annual (£)</b>	271.18
<b>For 131 patients (£)</b>	35,524.58