

P-06-1400 Fair and adequate resourcing of general practice in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 22 Ebrill 2024
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Petition title: Fair and adequate resourcing of general practice in Wales

Text of petition:

General Practice in Wales is under significant and growing strain. GP numbers are declining, demand is rising, and practices are struggling to recruit and retain staff.

General practice is being forced to try and cope with inadequate resources, an unsustainable workload, and a workforce under pressure across the whole of Wales, with some areas in crisis.

Current inadequate capacity is a product of longstanding workload, workforce, and well-being issues, which correlate to the chronic underfunding of general medical services.

BMA Cymru Wales's Save Our Surgeries campaign asks Welsh Government to commit to a rescue package for General Practice, to provide GPs and their patients with the support they need.

By taking one minute to sign this petition, you can amplify our calls for the Welsh Government to provide a rescue package for General Practice.



1. Background

BMA Cymru Wales' [Save Our Surgeries campaign](#), highlights that, in the last ten years:

- the number of patients registered at GP practices in Wales has increased by 93,317 (2.9%);
- the number of practices has decreased from 470 to 386 (18%);
- the number of full time equivalent (FTE) GPs has decreased by 456 (21.7%) from 1901 to 1445;
- there has been an increase in the average practice list size from 6780 to 8378 patients (23.5%);
- the number of patients per FTE GP has risen from 1675 to 2210, an increase of 32%.

It calls for urgent action to commit to: **funding** general practice properly; invest in the **general practice workforce**; produce a **workforce strategy**, and; address **staff wellbeing**.

2. Welsh Government action

General practice is a core element of primary care - those services which provide the first point of contact in the NHS. A [strategic workforce plan for primary care](#) has been developed by Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) and the [Strategic Programme for Primary Care \(SPPC\)](#), in collaboration with stakeholders. This is expected to be launched in Spring 2024.

A key action in HEIW's 10 year [workforce strategy for health and social care](#) (October 2020) is to introduce a Health and Wellbeing Framework across the health and social care workforce setting clear and measurable standards to help drive improvement.

Most GPs in Wales are independent contractors, commissioned by the relevant Health Board to provide care under the General Medical Services (GMS) contract. In a February 2024 **written statement**, the Minister for Health and Social Services confirmed that negotiations for the 2023-24 General Medical Services (GMS) contract had been concluded. She said:

I have heard the strength of feeling from GPs about the future of general practice, through the Save Our Surgeries campaign and reinforced by the Senedd petition. [...] I welcome the pragmatic conclusion which will see £20m invested into GMS at a time of significant financial constraint, while recognising that the outcome this year does not fully resolve ongoing sustainability issues in general practice. We will continue to work together to take forward shared priorities over the coming year.

In her response to the petition (letter dated 11 March 2024), the Minister also highlighted action taken through the [Primary Care Model for Wales](#), to reduce demand on GPs. This includes the introduction of the NHS 111 Wales service, and investment in community care and general practice staff:

We have invested £12 million over three years to enable practices to build their capacity through additional staff and we are seeing an increase in the number of nurses and direct patient care staff employed in general practices, supporting patient access to care. The new Unified GMS Contract also will help to reduce bureaucracy and free up more time for GPs to see patients.

3. Welsh Parliament action

The Health and Social Care Committee hasn't carried out any specific inquiries on general practice (or primary care more broadly) in the Sixth Senedd, although relevant issues have been raised for example in [budget scrutiny](#), the Committee's current inquiry into [supporting people with chronic conditions](#), and ongoing work on the [health and social care workforce](#) ('workforce' was identified by the Committee as one of its [priority issues](#) for this Senedd term).

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