



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1400
Ein cyf/Our ref EM/00166/24

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

11 March 2024

Dear Jack,

Petition P-06-1400 Fair and Adequate Resourcing of General Practice in Wales

Thank you for your letter of 18 January regarding the above petition.

I am grateful for the continued efforts of everyone working in general practice to maintain high-quality care in face of sustained high demand for their services. We know over 1.5 million people consistently access GP practice services across Wales each month.

On 7 February, I was pleased to announce that the General Medical Services (GMS) contract negotiations for 2023-24 have concluded and that despite the financial challenges and budget constraints, this conclusion to negotiations will see £20 million investment into general practice in Wales, the highest level of investment in many years. This pragmatic outcome will provide some certainty to practices and crucially, this investment will include an uplift of 5% to pay for all staff working in the practice – including GPs, practice nurses and administrative staff.

I am aware that the above Senedd Petition has collected a number of signatures, signalling the strength of feeling in relation to the sustainability of General Medical Services and the resourcing of general practice in Wales.

The BMA Cymru Save our Surgeries Campaign, which the petition notes, highlights that there are longstanding workforce and capacity issues that need to be addressed to ensure general practice is sustainable for the future. These issues will not be addressed through a one-year contract and pay agreement alone. We are committed to continuing to work with key stakeholders, including the BMA and GPC Wales, to develop strategic solutions.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

While a debate on these matters will surface several considerations around levels of funding in general practice and primary care and community care more broadly, this must be cognisant of current financial constraints. Unprecedented pressures on budgets this year have necessitated difficult decisions across all Welsh Government departments and within the health and care budget. The [draft budget for 2024-25](#) highlighted that the funding settlement for the forthcoming year is not sufficient to respond to the extraordinary pressures that Wales faces. In light of ongoing funding constraints, we need an open conversation on how we can maximise the effectiveness and integration of primary care services to achieve better outcomes for people in Wales.

Through our Primary Care Model for Wales, we have already taken steps to reduce demand on GPs. This includes the introduction of the NHS 111 Wales service and increasing the range of services community pharmacists can provide. Our investments in community care, for example, £5m to increase the allied health professional workforce and £8.24m to increase the community nursing workforce, will increase the support available to GPs via community resource teams.

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.

Our strong social partnership approach in Wales underpins our ongoing engagement with BMA Cymru Wales. We look forward to working with the GP profession to progress solutions to workforce and sustainability issues to safeguard general practice for the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

Eluned Morgan AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services