

7 September 2023

Dear

ATISN 18869 – GP Practices

Thank you for your request to the Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 23 August 2023. You had requested the following:

1. *How many GP Practices were there in Wales in 2013?*
2. *How many GP Practices were there in Wales in 2018?*
3. *How many GP Practices are there in Wales today (or the most recent date on which data is held)?*
4. *How many patients have been affected by the closure of their GP practice in Wales since 2013?*

You do not want the merging of surgeries to be included.

Our Response

1. In September 2013 there were 470 active practices in Wales.
2. In September 2018 there were 420 active practices in Wales.
3. Our most recent date on which data is held is for September 2022 and there were 386 active practices in Wales.
4. Unfortunately we do not hold information as far back as 2013, but from data we do hold, we estimate that between Sept 2018 and Sept 2022 around 132,000 patients would have been registered to practices which ceased to be active during the period. The estimate is based on the closure of main practice sites which ceased to be active and includes existing and new patients. It's important to note that the accuracy of the estimate is limited due to variables like changing demographics.

The reduction in the number of active general practice (main sites) has resulted in the average patient list size increasing by just less than 2% since 2018. Over the same time period, the number of GPs has increased slightly (1%), the number of GP registrars has more than doubled (117%) and there are over 400 additional non-GP practice staff, an increase of 6%. Data from September 2022 shows that there 50 fully qualified GPs (Full-time equivalent) in Wales per 100,000 population, compared to 49 in England.

Additionally, please note that the available data does not differentiate between practice closures and mergers and we do not hold this data; only Health Boards possess such specific information.

In Wales, we are seeing a shift towards fewer, larger sized GP practices, with a wider skill mix of health professionals, providing a greater range of health

care locally. This gradual reduction in the number of GP practices over the past 10 years through a combination of closures and mergers is a trend across all countries of the UK.

The majority of the information that you are requesting can be found online at the following link <https://www.gov.wales/general-practice-workforce>.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,