



Members of the Senedd

7 July 2021

Dear Members of the Senedd

General Medical Services (GMS) In Hours Access Standards

In Plenary on 9 June 2021, I committed to sharing the achievement rates of GP practices on the GMS In-Hours Access Standards. The overwhelming majority of people in Wales are very satisfied with the care they receive, however access to in-hours GMS has always been a significant matter attracting high levels of media and public attention. Improving access is one of my key priorities.

The Access Standards introduced in March 2019 were aimed at providing the clarity needed around what should be expected for both patients and professionals. The standards are as follows;

- People receive a prompt response to their contact with a GP practice via telephone.
- Practices have the appropriate telephony systems in place to support the needs of people avoiding the need to call back multiple times and will check that they are handling calls in this way.
- People receive bilingual information on local and emergency services when contacting a practice.
- People are able to access information on how to get help and advice.
- People receive the right care at the right times in a joined up way which is based on their needs.
- People can use a range of options to contact their GP practice.
- People are able to email a practice to request a non-urgent consultation or a call back.
- Practices understand the needs of people within their practice and use this information to anticipate the demand on its services.

Across Wales, 76% of practices have achieved all the access standards, and increase of 11% compared to last year where 65% of practices achieved all the standards. This will see investment of around £22,375 per average practice. Annex A shows a breakdown of the achievement data by each Health Board area.

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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.

The Primary Care Model for Wales is key to ensuring patients receive the care they need in line with the principles of prudent healthcare to achieve the aims of A Healthier Wales. Prior to the pandemic GP practices had started to adopt the model along with clinical triage as a key tool to ensure patients receive the right care at the right time from the right person. Through the pandemic GP Practices have, through our investment in digital technology, been able to use clinical triage more widely and are continuing to use in dealing with an increase in workload. Our Plan for Primary Care in Wales emphasises that the GP is not the only first point of contact and we have invested in developing new models of care that embrace a wider group of professionals, including practice nurses, physiotherapists and pharmacists.

Learning from the last 15 months, it is important that we do not lose the innovative ways of accessing primary care services, digital technology has played a key role and should do so going forward. A joint letter will be issued shortly from NHS Wales, Welsh Government and GPCW to GPs to set out our expectation around face to face consultations; ensuring clarity for practices and patients. Face to face appointments will be offered when there is a clinical need, initial contact will be via telephone or other digital options. The system is mindful that not all patients can access through these means, for instance those with hearing impairment or perhaps no internet or telephone access, and GP practices and Health Boards must ensure that there are alternatives for these individuals.

Officials are working on communications to help inform the public of what they can expect when contacting their GP practice. I will share this material with you in the near future for you to share with your constituents.

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

Annex A

Practices achieving all standards, and therefore receiving bonus payment (£22,375 per average practice)

	Number of Practices achieved all standards	Total Practices	% Achieved
Aneurin Bevan University Local Health Board	57	74	77.0%
Betsi Cadwaladr University Local Health Board	58	97	59.8%
Cardiff and Vale University Local Health Board	57	60	95.0%
Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Local Health Board	43	50	86.0%
Hywel Dda University Local Health Board	41	48	85.4%
Powys Teaching Local Health Board	15	16	93.8%
Swansea Bay University Local Health Board	28	49	57.1%
Total	299	394	75.9%

Achievement of each standard broken down by Health Board area

	Yes	No	Achieved	Not Achieved	Number of Practices
Aneurin Bevan University Local Health Board					
Standard 1 - Phone System	70	4	95%	5%	74
Standard 2 - Calls Answered	61	13	82%	18%	74
Standard 3 - Bilingual Message	67	7	91%	9%	74
Standard 4 - My Health Online	73	1	99%	1%	74
Standard 5 - Email	68	6	92%	8%	74
Standard 6 - Informing Patients	74		100%	0%	74
Standard 7 - Appointments	74		100%	0%	74
Betsi Cadwaladr University Local Health Board					
Standard 1 - Phone System	80	17	82%	18%	97
Standard 2 - Calls Answered	66	31	68%	32%	97
Standard 3 - Bilingual Message	89	8	92%	8%	97
Standard 4 - My Health Online	93	4	96%	4%	97
Standard 5 - Email	88	9	91%	9%	97
Standard 6 - Informing Patients	92	5	95%	5%	97
Standard 7 - Appointments	94	3	97%	3%	97
Cardiff and Vale University Local Health Board					
Standard 1 - Phone System	59	1	98%	2%	60
Standard 2 - Calls Answered	59	1	98%	2%	60
Standard 3 - Bilingual Message	58	2	97%	3%	60

Standard 4 - My Health Online	60		100%	0%	60
Standard 5 - Email	59	1	98%	2%	60
Standard 6 - Informing Patients	60		100%	0%	60
Standard 7 - Appointments	60		100%	0%	60
Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Local Health Board	Yes	No	Achieved	Not Achieved	Number of Practices
Standard 1 - Phone System	49	1	98%	2%	50
Standard 2 - Calls Answered	48	2	96%	4%	50
Standard 3 - Bilingual Message	46	4	92%	8%	50
Standard 4 - My Health Online	49	1	98%	2%	50
Standard 5 - Email	49	1	98%	2%	50
Standard 6 - Informing Patients	50		100%	0%	50
Standard 7 - Appointments	50		100%	0%	50
Hywel Dda University Local Health Board	Yes	No	Achieved	Not Achieved	Number of Practices
Standard 1 - Phone System	45	3	94%	6%	48
Standard 2 - Calls Answered	47	1	98%	2%	48
Standard 3 - Bilingual Message	47	1	98%	2%	48
Standard 4 - My Health Online	48		100%	0%	48
Standard 5 - Email	44	4	92%	8%	48
Standard 6 - Informing Patients	48		100%	0%	48
Standard 7 - Appointments	48		100%	0%	48
Powys Teaching Local Health Board	Yes	No	Achieved	Not Achieved	Number of Practices
Standard 1 - Phone System	16		100%	0%	16
Standard 2 - Calls Answered	16		100%	0%	16
Standard 3 - Bilingual Message	16		100%	0%	16
Standard 4 - My Health Online	16		100%	0%	16
Standard 5 - Email	15	1	94%	6%	16
Standard 6 - Informing Patients	16		100%	0%	16
Standard 7 - Appointments	16		100%	0%	16
Swansea Bay University Local Health Board	Yes	No	Achieved	Not Achieved	Number of Practices
Standard 1 - Phone System	47	2	96%	4%	49
Standard 2 - Calls Answered	41	8	84%	16%	49
Standard 3 - Bilingual Message	44	5	90%	10%	49
Standard 4 - My Health Online	43	6	88%	12%	49
Standard 5 - Email	40	9	82%	18%	49
Standard 6 - Informing Patients	40	9	82%	18%	49
Standard 7 - Appointments	45	4	92%	8%	49