



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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**WRITTEN QUESTION  
FOR ANSWER BY THE HEALTH MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL  
SERVICES  
ON 11 JUNE 2021**

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**Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central):**

What discussions has the Minister had with GP and patient representatives, as well as other governments in the UK, to agree a set of nationwide principles on balancing digital triage and face-to-face GP consultations once social distancing is lifted? (WQ82573)

What discussions has the Minister had with GP representatives regarding patient choice on face-to-face appointments in the future? (WQ82574)

What discussions has the Minister had with GP representatives over the resumption of face to face appointments and what timetables have been agreed? (WQ82575)

Will the Minister provide a breakdown of GP surgeries in Wales which are fully open for face to face appointments as of 4 June 2021, by each Health Board? (WQ82576)

**Eluned Morgan:** GP practices are open and responding to patients' needs.

I remain committed to the primary care model for Wales – everyone should have access to the right clinician at the right time (not always a GP), in the most appropriate way. The model was developed by Public Health Wales through engagement with stakeholders, including patient groups. Prior to the pandemic, GP practices had already started to adopt the model and clinical triage as a key tool.

While the risk of Covid-19 remains, there will continue to be restrictions on the number of people who can be inside a practice at any one time, to minimise risk. These measures are in place to protect staff and patients. Patients are encouraged to contact their practice by telephone or by digital means; a clinician will assess the patient and offer an appropriate consultation with a health professional, including a face-to-face consultation if clinically appropriate.

Digital consultations are now a feature of how people are treated and provide access to timely and convenient appointments without people having to leave the house.

Appointments are not necessarily with the GP but provided by a range of practice staff who can support people's needs, such as physiotherapists, pharmacists and practice nurses. GP practices continue to play their part in the Covid vaccination programme at a time when practice workload is extremely high.

Health boards continue to engage locally with patient groups and my officials are having discussions with the Board of Community Health Councils, to ensure the public and patients are considered as part of primary care recovery planning.

My officials and health boards have regular discussions with BMA Wales and RCGP Wales to improve the delivery of services. Our collaborative approach has been welcomed by the profession. BMA Wales has produced information for the profession about how a blended approach to service delivery, including clinically appropriate face-to-face appointments can help practices meet patient need, which has been communicated to all Senedd Members.

I will be meeting BMA Wales within the coming week to discuss a number of matters relating to doctors working across Wales.

My officials have regular meetings with officials throughout the UK to discuss policy development and good practice.

**Number of GP practices by health board, as of 3 February 2021**

7A1	Betsi Cadwaladr ULHB	99
7A2	Hywel Dda ULHB	48
7A3	Swansea Bay ULHB	49
7A4	Cardiff & Vale ULHB	60
7A5	Cwm Taf Morgannwg ULHB	51
7A6	Aneurin Bevan ULHB	74
7A7	Powys Teaching LHB	16
	<b>Wales</b>	<b>397</b>

Source: Welsh Reference Data Service, Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW)

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