

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol](#) ar [dyfodol ymarfer cyffredinol yng Nghymru](#)

This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care Committee](#) consultation on [the future of general practice in Wales](#)

GP02 : Ymateb gan: | Response from: Dr Gareth Lucuq



Good afternoon,

I have had the privilege of serving as the Practice Manager at Whitchurch Road Surgery since September 2019. Over the course of my tenure, I have closely observed the growing challenges faced by primary care providers. Considering this, I have shared below my thoughts on the current crisis in primary care, highlighting the very real pressures we are facing as a sector. I can confirm that I am over the age of 18.

Challenges and Sustainability of General Practice

1. The Funding Model for General Practice and Financial Pressures

The Carr Hill formula, which was designed to allocate funding to general practices based on various factors such as patient demographics, has proven ineffective in addressing the current financial pressures on general practice. The formula does not adequately reflect the increasing demand for services and the growing complexity of patient needs. As a result, many general practices, especially in more deprived areas, are financially penalized. For ourselves, the adjustment of 0.75 to the Carr Hill formula has exacerbated financial difficulties, leaving our practice underfunded and unable to invest in necessary resources.

This financial constraint has devastating consequences for the ability of general practices to maintain high standards of care, invest in technology, and recruit additional staff. Without an equitable and sustainable funding model, general practice faces a challenging future with limited capacity to meet patient needs.

Recommendation:

- Reform the Carr Hill formula to reflect the complexity and demand more accurately for services in general practice. This could include revisiting how patient demographics and local needs are weighted.
- Consider a levelling out period, so that the gap between those positively and negatively affected does not get any larger. See attached Carr Hill list.
- Welsh Government needs to be more aware and take accountability for the affect hat the Carr Hill has had on General Practice. See attached Freedom of Information Act

2. Workforce Challenges: Recruitment, Retention, and Wellbeing

The general practice workforce is under significant strain due to rising patient numbers and increasing administrative burdens. There are clear difficulties in recruiting new staff, especially in rural and underserved areas. The retention of experienced clinicians is also a growing concern, with many GPs experiencing burnout due to heavy workloads, long hours, and insufficient support. These pressures are exacerbated by a lack of investment in training and professional development.

The multidisciplinary team model, which has been identified as an important strategy for alleviating pressure on GPs, is not yet universally implemented or sufficiently supported in all areas. While a more diverse team can improve patient care and reduce individual workload, it requires investment in training, recruitment, and infrastructure.

Recommendation:

- Invest in workforce planning to ensure adequate recruitment and retention strategies are in place. This should include targeted recruitment initiatives for underrepresented areas and specialties.
- Improve support and wellbeing initiatives for existing staff, focusing on reducing burnout and providing adequate professional development opportunities.
- Promote the growth of multidisciplinary teams with a focus on training, support, and integrating new roles effectively within practices.

3. General Practice Estates and Access to Digital Technology

The suitability and maintenance of general practice estates are increasingly under scrutiny. Many practices are operating in outdated or inadequate premises, which impacts the quality of care they can deliver. Moreover, access to and integration of digital technology remains inconsistent across general practices. While digital solutions such as electronic health records and telemedicine hold great potential to enhance patient care, many practices lack the resources or infrastructure to implement these solutions effectively.

Recommendation:

- Provide funding and support for the refurbishment and upgrading of general practice estates to meet modern standards for both patient care and staff working conditions.
- Facilitate broader access to digital technologies, ensuring practices can adopt and integrate these tools without financial burden.

4. Patient Experience and Access to Care

The patient experience is influenced by factors such as wait times, availability of appointments, and the quality of care received. Access to general practice services remains a significant challenge, with growing patient demand outpacing supply. This situation leads to longer wait times, reduced availability of appointments, and, in some cases, diminished quality of care. Additionally, public trust in the system is at risk due to increasing patient dissatisfaction.

Recommendation:

- Explore innovative models of care that improve patient access, digital consultations, and community-based clinics.
- Prioritize a holistic approach to managing patient demand, focusing on prevention and early intervention to reduce pressure on practices.

5. Opportunities to Improve General Practice for the Future

Looking forward, there are opportunities to make general practice fit for the future by adopting a more preventative approach to care. By focusing on early intervention, disease prevention, and the promotion of healthier lifestyles, general practices can help reduce long-term health costs

and improve patient outcomes. A preventative approach also helps reduce the burden on hospitals and other parts of the healthcare system, ensuring better long-term sustainability.

Recommendation:

- Encourage practices to adopt more preventative care models, focusing on community health initiatives, patient education, and early detection of chronic conditions.
- Provide financial and strategic support for practices to shift towards a more preventative care model, including training for staff on new approaches to patient care.

Kind Regards



Gareth Lucocq

Practice Manager

Whitchurch Road Surgery

[Redacted]

[Redacted]