

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](#)

GP57 : Ymateb gan: Cllr Lister, Cllr Thorne and Cllr Abdul-Sattar, Grangetown, Caerdydd
| Response from: Cllr Lister, Cllr Thorne and Cllr Abdul-Sattar, Grangetown, Cardiff.



Dear

We write in response to your call for evidence for the Committee's Inquiry into the future of general practice services in Wales. This response is based on discussions with our residents and a brief digital survey of their experiences and ideas for improvements.

In recent years, Grangetown has seen continuous population growth, with further social and private housing developments in the pipeline. This has led to an increased demand for primary care services. We have also observed changes in the primary care offerings in the area, with some partners handing in their notices and premises being sold and relocated outside the Ward.

Despite significant growth in the southern part of the Ward, particularly around the International Sports Village, primary care provision has not kept pace with housing developments. We have regularly raised concerns about the lack of provision with the local health board but have yet to see firm plans to address the growing population and need.

Positive Experiences

It is important to reflect on the positive experiences reported by our residents regarding general practices in our area. Several practices have been praised for the level of care and attention provided by healthcare professionals. The quality of care is highlighted, with staff and doctors in certain practices being described as knowledgeable and helpful.

Residents have also noted that changes to booking systems in some practices have made it easier to make appointments and access healthcare at a primary care level. These changes include splitting timeslots for urgent same-day appointments and routine appointments, maintaining e-consults, and allowing in-person bookings.

Unfortunately, there are also several areas for improvement raised by residents:

Appointment Booking Issues

Patients in Grangetown face significant challenges when trying to book appointments. Many report long wait times on the phone, often resulting in no available appointments once they finally get through. Routine appointments are difficult to secure, leading to a rush for emergency slots, which exacerbates the problem. Additionally, the appointment system is considered unfit for purpose, with automated phone systems not updated since the COVID-19 pandemic and inflexible time slots for working people. To improve this situation, GP practices should consider implementing a more efficient and user-friendly appointment system. This could include online booking options, extended phone line hours, and a callback system to reduce wait times. Practices should also ensure their automated systems are regularly updated to reflect current procedures and guidelines.

Service Quality

Patients reported poor service quality, including a lack of follow-up care and inefficiency in sorting out prescriptions. Many feel their concerns are not taken seriously, and some have had to fight for necessary referrals and treatments. There are also reports of outdated treatment guidelines being followed, which can undermine patient trust in the care they receive. To address these issues, GP practices should prioritise continuous professional development for their medical staff, ensuring they are up-to-date with the latest treatment guidelines and research. Implementing a more robust follow-up system for patient care and prescriptions could also improve service quality.

Oversubscription

There is a firm belief that surgeries in Grangetown are struggling to cope with the number of patients, especially after the closure of one practice. The growing population and complex issues in the area exacerbate the problem, leading to inadequate levels of service. To mitigate this, additional resources and support from the NHS are essential. Increasing the number of GPs and healthcare professionals in the area could help manage the patient load more effectively. Practices should also explore partnerships with local health organisations to provide additional support and services to patients.

Accessibility Issues

Patients face significant barriers to accessing face-to-face appointments, often having to call at specific times and wait in long queues. This is particularly challenging for working people who cannot be available throughout the day for phone calls. Patients with chronic illnesses and mental health conditions struggle to access necessary care, with reports of inadequate support and long waiting times. To improve accessibility, GP practices should offer more flexible appointment times, including evenings and weekends, to accommodate working patients. Implementing a triage system to prioritise patients with urgent needs could also help ensure those with chronic illnesses and mental health conditions receive timely care. Additionally, practices should consider expanding their use of telemedicine to provide consultations and follow-up care remotely.

Suggested Improvements

To enhance appointment systems, GP practices should implement online booking options and extend phone line hours. Introducing a callback system and allowing routine appointments to be booked further in advance would also help. Offering flexible time slots, including evenings and weekends, would accommodate working individuals and reduce the pressure on the 8 AM rush for appointments.

Increasing accessibility and availability is crucial. Opening new GP surgeries to replace those that have closed and increasing the number of GPs and support staff would help manage the growing patient load. Extending surgery hours to include weekends and evenings would provide more opportunities for patients to access care without having to take time off work.

Improving staff training and attitude is essential. Investing in regular training for reception and administrative staff would ensure they handle patient inquiries with empathy and professionalism. Implementing a feedback system for patient experiences and enhancing patient care service training for reception staff and practice managers would improve the overall patient experience.

Adopting modern treatment approaches is necessary. Clinicians should incorporate modern research into treatment plans and provide timely referrals to secondary care when necessary. Avoiding the overuse of painkillers and dismissive statements would ensure patients receive appropriate and timely care.

Utilising technology and increasing transparency would significantly improve efficiency. Using technology to provide test results and facilitate communication between patients and healthcare providers would streamline processes. Increasing transparency about staff schedules would help patients plan their appointments better. Allocating more resources to primary care and prevention would shift the focus from hospital-based care to early intervention and community health.

Addressing mental health needs is vital. Providing accessible services for mental health support and establishing dedicated mental health clinics within GP practices would ensure timely and appropriate care. Offering specialised training for staff to handle mental health inquiries would help prevent crises and improve overall mental health outcomes.

By addressing these issues and implementing the suggested improvements, GP services in Grangetown can enhance patient experiences and ensure more efficient and effective care delivery. These changes would not only benefit the local community but also contribute to the overall improvement of primary care services in the region.