

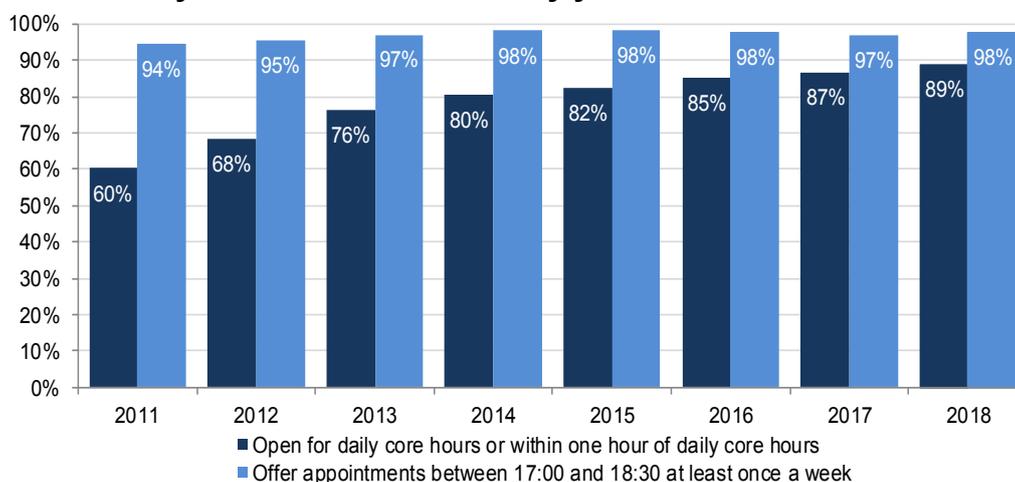
27 March 2019  
SFR 19/2019

## GP Access in Wales, 2018

The purpose of this report is to provide statistics on the opening hours and availability of GP appointment times at GP practices across Wales. The statistics are intended to inform the public and to inform Welsh Government policy.

Due to variations in the way services are provided, this release does not include any data relating to branch surgeries. Throughout this report, 'a practice' refers to a GP practice main surgery.

**Chart 1: Key GP Access statistics by year**



### Key results

- There were 421 GP practices in Wales, 15 fewer than in 2017.
- Just over half (52%) of GP practices were open for all of daily core hours in 2018, one percentage point higher than in 2017.
- 89% of GP practices in Wales were open for all of core hours or within one hour of core hours, two percentage points higher than in 2017.
- Nearly all (98%) of practices in Wales offer appointments at some point between 17:00 and 18:30, at least one day a week.
- The majority (77%) of practices do not offer appointments before 08:30 and this has changed very little over the last three years.
- 42% of people found it difficult to make a convenient GP appointment; this proportion has increased over time, from 33% in 2012-13.

### About this release

This annual Statistical First Release provides information on GP opening hours and appointment times of every GP practice (main surgery) for each of the seven health boards in Wales. Data collection forms were returned to Welsh Government in January 2019 and generally refer to December 2018.

This report gives an overview of practice opening hours and appointment times, enhancing the evidence base in relation to access to GPs. It presents information which will aid further policy development, as well as enabling monitoring of access to GP practices across health board and Wales as a whole.

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## What does the data show?

The trend of fewer GP practices in Wales has continued in 2018 where there were 421 GP practices in total, 15 fewer than in 2017.

Just over half of GP practices were open for all of daily core hours in 2018, a marginal increase (one percentage point) since 2017. As in previous years this varied greatly between health boards.

In total around nine out of ten GP practices in Wales were open for all of core hours or within one hour of core hours. The vast majority of practices in Powys, Aneurin Bevan and Abertawe Bro Morgannwg were open for this duration, but one in five practices in Hywel Dda and Betsi Cadwaladr were not.

When considering core hours as an overall number of service hours per week, just over half (53%) of practices were open for 100% or more of core hours (i.e. at least 52 hours and 30 minutes). This is a slight increase (one percentage point) on the previous year.

Very few (2%) practices in Wales now close for half a day. There are four health board areas which have no practices with half day closures.

Just over three quarters (77%) of practices do not offer appointments before 08:30 and this has changed very little over the last three years.

Nearly all (98%) of practices in Wales offer appointments at some point between 17:00 and 18:30, at least one day a week. However, there is much variation between health boards in later appointments offered with nearly half of practices in Cwm Taf offering appointments every week day for the whole half hour period between 18:00 and 18:30, whereas over 90% of practices in Betsi Cadwaladr and Cardiff and Vale do not offer appoints for the whole half hour period on any day.

In 2017-18 a higher proportion of people found it easy to book a convenient appointment with the GP than those who found it difficult; however, the proportion who found it difficult is higher compared with five years ago.

Since 2013-14 the proportion of those finding it very difficult to make a convenient appointment has increased across all age groups.

The most common reasons given for those finding it difficult to make an appointment were the long wait for an appointment; not being able to get through by phone; and needing to make an early morning phone call.

Of those who were unable to get a GP appointment at a convenient time, nearly half (48%) said that an appointment after 6pm would have been more convenient.

## Introduction

Data collection forms were issued to health boards in December 2018 and data was returned in January 2019. The total number of practices may differ to the number included in the [General Medical Practitioners report](#) as data was collected at a slightly different point in time.

At December 2018 there were 421 GP practices in Wales, 15 fewer than in 2017, continuing the recent downward trend in the number of GP practices across Wales.

**Table 1: Number of GP practices, by health board and year**

Local health board	Number of practices							
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Betsi Cadwaladr	119	119	115	114	112	109	109	109
Powys	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	16
Hywel Dda	55	55	56	54	54	53	51	51
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	77	77	76	75	73	73	73	65
Cwm Taf	48	48	48	46	46	42	41	39
Aneurin Bevan	92	90	87	87	85	81	79	79
Cardiff and Vale	68	67	67	66	66	66	66	62
<b>Wales</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>421</b>

*Source: Welsh Government*

The [General Medical Services contract](#) provides the framework between general practices and primary care organisations for delivering primary care services to local communities. Under the General Medical Services contract, GP practice core hours are Monday to Friday between 08:00 and 18:30, except Good Friday, Christmas Day and Bank Holidays, and for the purpose of this report a 'week' refers to Monday to Friday. GP practices are responsible for providing essential and additional services within core hours at times which are appropriate to meet the reasonable needs of its patients.

This is management information and the data was reported and verified by health boards and Welsh Government statisticians. The data presented is taken at a point in time and may not reflect the current opening hours or appointment times of GP practices.

There remain significant differences in the way GPs organise their practices in relation to opening hours and appointment times and users should be cautious when interpreting the results. See the [Key Quality Information](#) section for more information.

Caution should be taken when comparing percentage year on year at local health board level as the number of practices in some areas is small.

## Opening hours

“Opening hours” are defined as the times when the main surgery doors are physically open and a patient can have face to face contact with a receptionist. Therefore it does not include any hours where a telephone service is provided prior to doors opening, which is offered in some GP practices. Health boards were asked to provide the following information about their practices:

- the times the practice physically opens and closes every day
- the times of lunchtime opening and closing
- details of any half day closures
- details of extended hours Direct Enhanced Services (DES) – any extra hours commissioned

The methodology used to aggregate the GP opening hours was the same one used in the first GP Access release published in February 2013.

### Daily opening hours

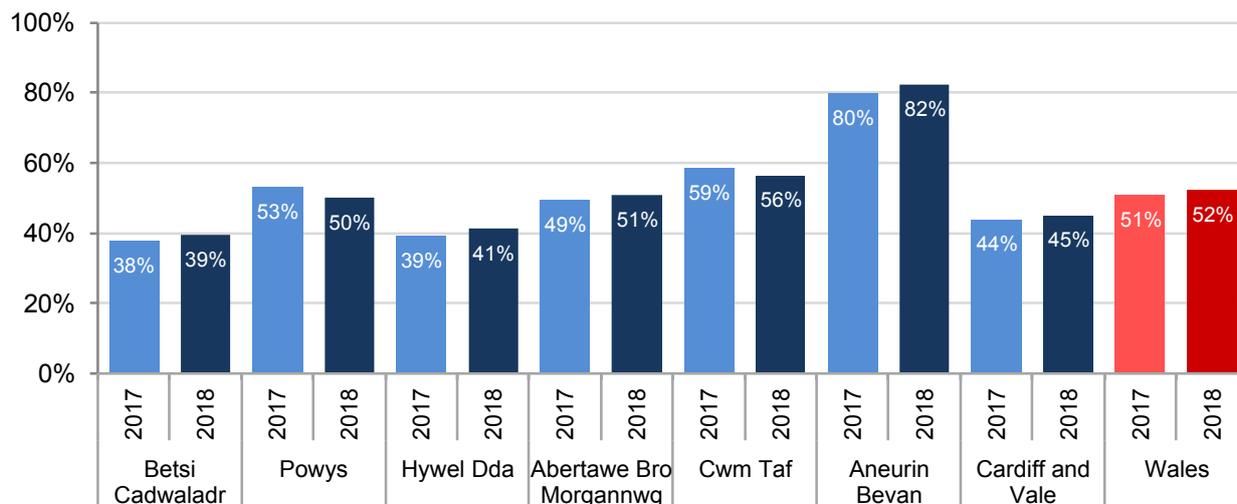
**Opened for daily core hours** is defined as:

- practices which were open Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:30 each day, with no lunch time closure (as set under the General Medical Services contract)

**Opened within one hour of daily core hours** is defined as:

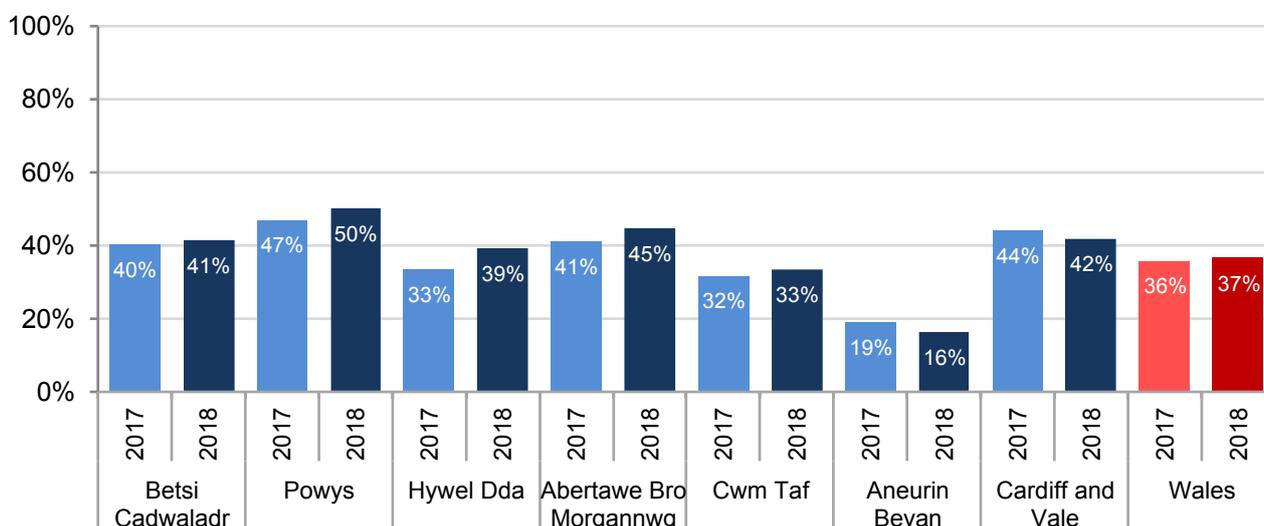
- practices which were open Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:30 each day, but closed for one hour or less for lunch on one or more days, or
- practices which opened between 08:00 to 08:30 and closed between 18:00 to 18:30 with no lunch time closure

**Chart 2: Percentage of practices open for all of daily core hours, 5 days a week, by health board**



**Summary:** Just over half (52%) of GP practices were open for all of daily core hours in 2018, a one percentage point increase since 2017. As in previous years this varied greatly between health boards with 82% of practices open for all of daily core hours in Aneurin Bevan compared to 39% in Betsi Cadwaladr.

**Chart 3: Percentage of practices not open for all of daily core hours, but open within one hour of daily core hours, 5 days a week by health board**



**Summary:** Just over a third (37%) of GP practices were not open for all of daily core hours but were open within one hour of core hours, a one percentage point increase since 2017.

In total 89% of GP practices in Wales were open for all of core hours or within one hour of core hours, two percentage points higher than in 2017. The vast majority of practices in Powys, Aneurin Bevan and Abertawe Bro Morgannwg were open for this duration, but one in five practices in Hywel Dda and Betsi Cadwaladr were not.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of how many practices were open for core hours by the number of days of the week they were offered.

**Table 2: Number and percentages of practices open for core hours, by health board and days per week (a)**

Local health board	0 week days			1-4 week days			5 week days		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
<b>Numbers</b>									
Betsi Cadwaladr	64	58	58	8	10	8	37	41	43
Powys	8	8	8	0	0	0	9	9	8
Hywel Dda	23	28	27	7	3	3	23	20	21
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	42	37	32	1	0	0	30	36	33
Cwm Taf	12	15	15	2	2	2	28	24	22
Aneurin Bevan	16	15	13	1	1	1	64	63	65
Cardiff and Vale	36	36	34	1	1	0	29	29	28
<b>Wales</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>Percentages</b>									
Betsi Cadwaladr	59	53	53	7	9	7	34	38	39
Powys	47	47	50	0	0	0	53	53	50
Hywel Dda	43	55	53	13	6	6	43	39	41
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	58	51	49	1	0	0	41	49	51
Cwm Taf	29	37	38	5	5	5	67	59	56
Aneurin Bevan	20	19	16	1	1	1	79	80	82
Cardiff and Vale	55	55	55	2	2	0	44	44	45
<b>Wales</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>52</b>

Source: Welsh Government

(a) Note that percentages in this table are rounded to the nearest whole number.

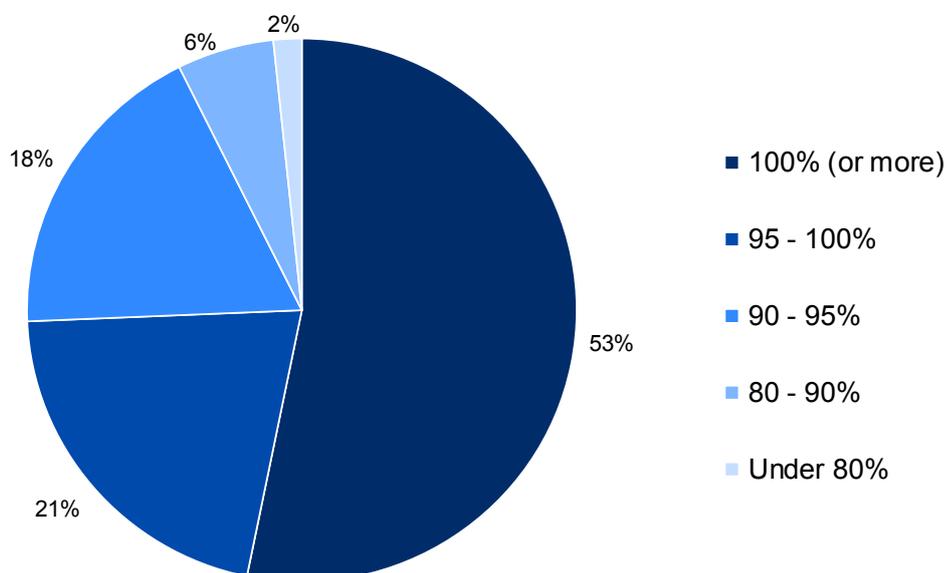
**Summary:** The majority of practices either offer appointments during core hours every day of the week, or no days of the week. Over the past three years, across Wales there has been a slight increase in the percentage of practices open for core hours (two percentage point increase) and a slight decrease in the percentage not open for core hours any day of the week (one percentage point). This pattern has varied between different health boards.

## Weekly opening hours

A small number of GP practices were close to meeting the full duration of the daily core hours but fell slightly short of the criteria set out in the Daily Opening Hours section. For example, if a practice was open between 08:00 and 18:30 with no lunch break for four days but closed at 17:00 on the other day, then it fails the criteria but would be very close to the daily core hours.

To take these practices into account, the number of hours GP practices across Wales were open for during a week is shown in Chart 4 and Table 2. GP practice opening times have been considered against a weekly total of 52 hours and 30 minutes (10 hours and 30 minutes per day). The number of hours a practice provides for Direct Enhanced Services (DES) are counted in addition to regular working hours here.

**Chart 4: Percentage of practices open for different percentage intervals of weekly total hours**



**Table 2: Number and percentages of practices open for core hours, by health board and days per week (a)**

Local health board	Percentage														
	Under 80% (<42.00)			80% to under 90% (42.00 - 47.15)			90% to under 95% (47.15 - 49.53)			95% to under 100% (49.53 - 52.30)			100% or more (>52.30)		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Betsi Cadwaladr	6	6	5	12	10	7	28	29	28	20	17	19	34	38	40
Powys	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	12	19	35	35	31	53	53	50
Hywel Dda	4	2	0	13	16	12	15	16	18	25	25	29	43	41	41
ABMU	1	1	2	12	7	3	30	26	26	15	16	18	41	49	51
Cwm Taf	2	2	3	2	2	3	10	10	10	19	27	28	67	59	56
Aneurin Bevan	0	0	0	1	1	1	5	4	5	11	11	8	83	84	86
Cardiff and Vale	0	0	0	9	9	10	17	17	15	30	30	31	44	44	45
<b>Wales</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>53</b>

Source: Welsh Government

(a) time shown in column titles as hh.mm (for example 80% of total core hours is the equivalent to 42 hours)

**Summary:** Just over half (53%) of practices were open for 100% or more of core hours (i.e. at least 52 hours and 30 minutes). This is a slight increase (one percentage point) on the previous year. This is higher than the percentage of practices open for core hours because some practices are not open for core hours every day but offer Direct Enhances Services (DES) which when added to the weekly total number of hours, sum to greater than or equal to 52 hours and 30 minutes. Only a small number of practices (7%) were not open for 90% of core hours or more (i.e. 49 hours and 53 minutes).

There is much variation between health boards with 86% of practices open for 100% or more of core hours in Aneurin Bevan, while less than half of practices in Cardiff and Vale, Hywel Dda and Betsi Cadwaladr were open for 100% or more of core hours. All practices in Powys were open for 90% or more of core hours.

### Half day closures

A half day closure is defined as a practice which closes before 14:00 on one or more days a week. Table 3 show the percentage of practices that were open for daily core hours or within one hour of daily core hours on four days of the week with one half day closure on the other day.

**Table 3: Number and percentage of practices with half day closure, by health board**

Local health board	Number of practices			Percentage of practices		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Betsi Cadwaladr	7	8	6	6	7	6
Powys	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hywel Dda	3	2	0	6	4	0
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	4	1	1	5	1	2
Cwm Taf	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aneurin Bevan	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cardiff and Vale	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Wales</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

*Source: Welsh Government*

**Summary:** Very few (2%) practices in Wales now close for half a day. There are four health board areas which have no practices with half day closures, while Betsi Cadwaladr has the most with six.

## Appointment times

'Appointment times' are defined to be the times when the practice regularly offers planned consultation sessions with a GP to patients. Health boards were asked to provide the following information about their practices:

- the first appointment time offered in the morning, where a patient can have a face-to-face contact with a GP, Monday to Friday
- the appointment times offered in the morning and the afternoon sessions
- the finish time of the last appointment offered in the evening, where a patient can have a face-to-face contact with a GP, Monday to Friday

This report only considers appointment times offered to patients and where a patient can have a face-to face contact with a GP, and does not account for any other the other range of contacts offered at general practices.

Analyses by half hour periods are included to provide more detail of evening appointments offered between 17:00 and 18:30.

The methodology used to aggregate the GP appointment times was the same one used in the first GP Access release published in February 2013.

**Table 4: Percentage of practices offering appointments before 08:30, by number of week days and health board**

Local health board	Percentage								
	no week days			1-4 days			every week day		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Betsi Cadwaladr	86	85	87	7	6	5	6	9	8
Powys	88	88	81	0	0	0	12	12	19
Hywel Dda	60	65	65	25	20	22	15	16	14
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	84	85	83	4	4	3	12	11	14
Cwm Taf	86	88	87	2	0	0	12	12	13
Aneurin Bevan	67	63	62	16	19	22	17	18	16
Cardiff and Vale	74	74	74	5	6	6	21	20	19
<b>Wales</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>

Source: Welsh Government

**Summary:** The majority (77%) of practices do not offer appointments before 08:30 and this has changed very little over the last three years.

**Table 5: Percentage of practices offering appointments at any time between 17:00 and 18:30, by number of week days and health board**

Local health board	Percentage								
	no week days			1-4 days			every week day		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Betsi Cadwaladr	3	4	5	28	28	28	69	69	67
Powys	0	0	13	0	0	0	100	100	88
Hywel Dda	2	2	0	23	18	10	75	80	90
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	4	7	2	16	15	11	79	78	88
Cwm Taf	0	0	0	5	5	5	95	95	95
Aneurin Bevan	0	1	0	1	1	1	99	97	99
Cardiff and Vale	5	5	3	3	3	3	92	92	94
<b>Wales</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>86</b>

Source: Welsh Government

**Summary:** Nearly all (98%) of practices in Wales offer appointments at some point between 17:00 and 18:30, at least once a week. The percentage offering appointments within this time range every week day has increased by two percentage points over the last three years.

**Table 6: Percentage of practices offering appointments during the whole half hour between 17:00 and 17:30, by number of week days and health board**

Local health board	Percentage								
	no week days			1-4 days			every week day		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Betsi Cadwaladr	11	12	12	29	27	28	60	61	60
Powys	0	0	13	0	0	0	100	100	88
Hywel Dda	8	10	8	23	22	18	70	69	75
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	11	8	2	19	16	12	70	75	86
Cwm Taf	0	0	0	5	5	5	95	95	95
Aneurin Bevan	1	3	1	1	1	1	98	96	97
Cardiff and Vale	6	6	5	2	2	2	92	92	94
<b>Wales</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>82</b>

Source: Welsh Government

**Summary:** 94% of practices offer appoints for the whole half hour between 17:00 and 17:30 at least once a week. The percentage offering appointments every week day within this time range has increase by three percentage points in the last 3 years.

**Table 7: Percentage of practices offering appointments during the whole half hour between 17:30 and 18:00, by number of week days and health board**

Local health board	Percentage								
	no week days			1-4 Days			every week day		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Betsi Cadwaladr	61	61	61	14	12	12	25	27	28
Powys	29	29	31	6	6	0	65	65	69
Hywel Dda	28	29	29	26	22	20	45	49	51
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	49	42	42	10	11	9	41	47	49
Cwm Taf	0	0	3	10	10	10	90	90	87
Aneurin Bevan	4	4	3	6	5	5	90	91	92
Cardiff and Vale	39	39	40	8	8	8	53	53	52
<b>Wales</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>57</b>

Source: Welsh Government

**Summary:** A third (33%) of practices do not offer appointments during the whole half hour between 17:30 and 18:00. There is significant variation between health boards with 61% of practices not offering appointments for the whole of this time range in Betsi Cadwaladr compared to 3% in both Cwm Taf and Aneurin Bevan.

**Table 8: Percentage of practices offering appointments during the whole half hour between 18:00 and 18:30, by number of week days and health board**

Local health board	Percentage								
	no week days			1-4 Days			every week day		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Betsi Cadwaladr	94	94	94	2	2	2	4	4	5
Powys	88	88	81	0	0	0	12	12	19
Hywel Dda	74	78	78	8	8	6	19	14	16
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	89	89	89	0	0	0	11	11	11
Cwm Taf	38	41	44	10	10	10	52	49	46
Aneurin Bevan	64	67	63	28	25	28	7	8	9
Cardiff and Vale	92	92	92	0	0	0	8	8	8
<b>Wales</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>

Source: Welsh Government

**Summary:** Four out of five practices (81%) in Wales do not offer appointments for the whole half hour period between 18:00 and 18:30 on any week day. There is variation between health board areas with nearly half of practices (46%) in Cwm Taf offering appointments every week day for the whole half hour period, whereas over 90% of practices in Betsi Cadwaladr and Cardiff and Vale do not offer appointments for the whole half hour period on any day.

## Extended opening hours

In 2008-09, four new clinical [Directed Enhanced Services](#) (DES) and the Extended Opening Hours were introduced. Directed Enhanced Services are an enhanced level of service or activity provided by some GP practices that have been negotiated nationally. Where health boards were satisfied that GP practices were meeting the reasonable need of its patients within core hours (08:00 to 18:30, Monday to Friday), GP practices were encouraged to participate in the Extended Opening Hours DES and open for additional hours outside of their core hours to meet the needs of patients in their local area. The extended hours included appointments offered before 8:00 and after 18:30.

Health boards undertook an updated review of extended access arrangements after 18:30 on week nights in 2014, which resulted in two health boards decommissioning their extended opening hours.

Table 9 displays the percentage of practices open for extended hours at least one week day, and the percentage of practices offering appointments after 18:30 at least one week day.

**Table 9: Percentage of practices with extended opening hours and offering appointments after 18:30 at least one week day**

Local health board	Percentage									
	Open for Extended Hours at least one week day (a)					Offer appointments after 18:30 at least one week day				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Betsi Cadwaladr	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
Powys	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Hywel Dda	6	7	8	8	8	7	13	11	10	10
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Cwm Taf	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aneurin Bevan	33	34	44	42	46	33	34	43	41	43
Cardiff and Vale	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Wales</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>

Source: Welsh Government

(a) Extended hours include appointments offered before 8am and after 18:30.

Note: Abertawe Bro Morgannwg and Cwm Taf University health boards decommissioned this service in 2014.

**Summary:** One in ten (or 42 practices) were open for extended hours at least one day a week; the vast majority of these were in Aneurin Bevan. Similarly, Aneurin Bevan provided the most number of practices which offered appointments after 18:30 at least one day a week.

### Weekend Appointments

The only practice in Wales that offer appointments on Saturdays is in Aneurin Bevan health board area.

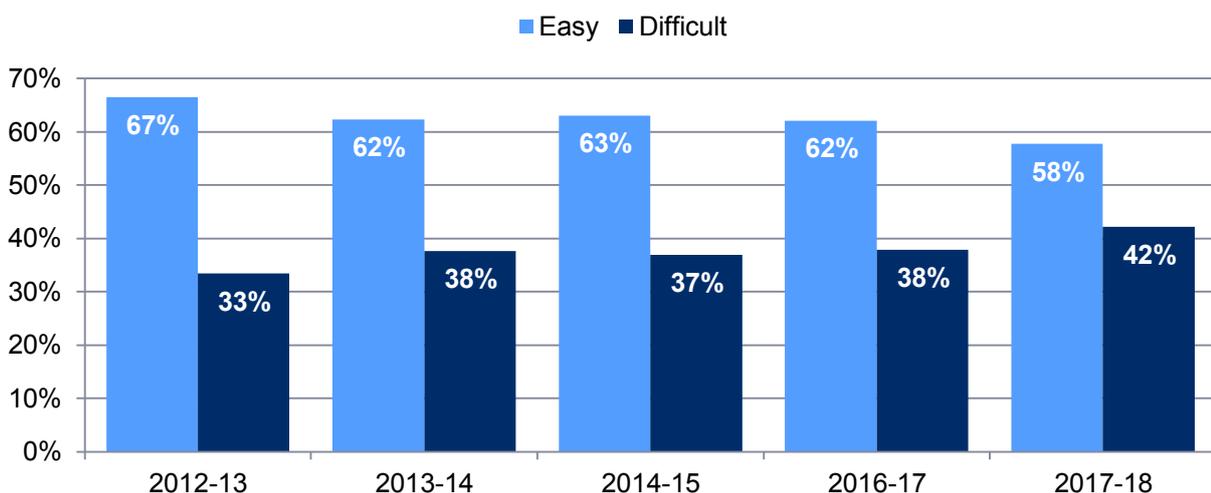
## Satisfaction with GP access

Every year, the [National Survey for Wales](#) includes questions about whether people have seen their GP in the last 12 months, satisfaction with GP care, and ease of getting an appointment. In 2017-18 a question asking about the reasons why it was difficult to get an appointment was included, for the first time since 2013-14.

In 2017-18, 76% of people had seen their GP in the previous 12 months – this proportion has been fairly consistent for all years of the survey. However, the percentage satisfied with the care they received from their GP has fallen, from 90% in 2016-17 to 86% in 2017-18. 6% of people who had not seen their GP in the previous 12 months said they had wanted an appointment but could not get one, no change since 2016-17.

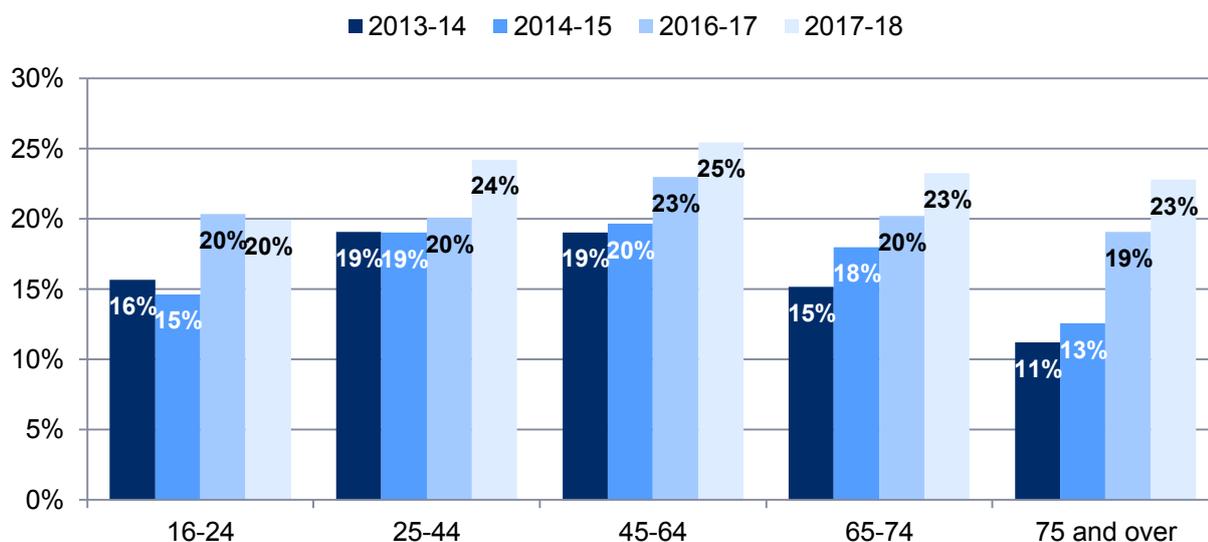
Chart 5 shows that of those who made an appointment, 42% found it difficult to make a convenient appointment; this proportion has increased over time, from 33% in 2012-13.

**Chart 5: Ease of booking a convenient GP appointment, by year, 2012-13 to 2017-18**



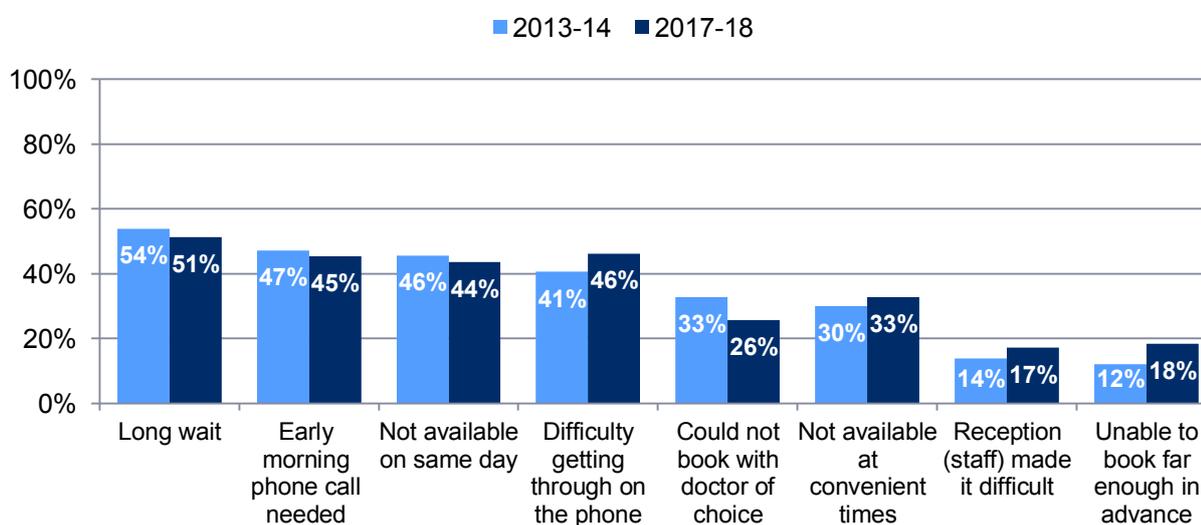
**Summary:** In 2017-18 a higher proportion of people (58%) found it easy to book a convenient appointment with the GP than those who found it difficult (42%). However, the proportion who found it difficult is nine percentage points higher compared with five years ago.

**Chart 6: Very difficult to make a convenient appointment, by age group and year, 2013-14-2017-18**



**Summary:** Since 2013-14 the proportion of those finding it very difficult to make a convenient appointment has increased across all age groups; the largest increase was found for those aged 75 and over.

**Chart 7: Reasons why difficult to get GP appointment at a convenient time, 2013-14 and 2017-18**

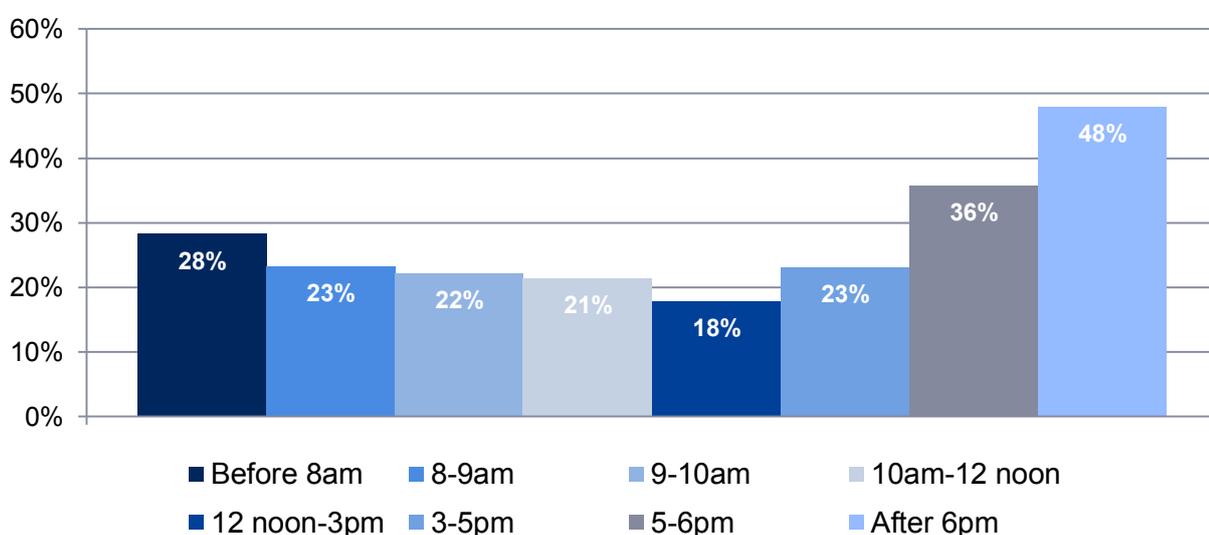


**Summary:** The most common reasons given were the long wait for an appointment (reported by 51% of those not able to book a convenient appointment, or who had found it difficult to do so), not being able to get through by phone (46%), and needing to make an early morning phone call (45%). Since 2013-14 there has been an increase in people finding it difficult to get through on the phone (up from 41%). Over the same period, being able to see a doctor of choice has become less of an issue, with 26% reporting this as a reason for difficulty in getting an appointment (down from 33%).

However it continues to be more of an issue for those in material deprivation (33%) compared with those not in material deprivation (24%).

The proportion finding it difficult to book a convenient appointment far enough in advance has increased from 12% in 2013-14 to 18% in 2017-18. In 2017-18, 17% said that GP reception staff had made it difficult to get an appointment at a convenient time. The main reasons for difficulty tended to be the same for people in more deprived and in less deprived areas. However 23% of those experiencing household material deprivation said that reception staff made it difficult to make a convenient appointment, compared with 16% of those not in household material deprivation.

**Chart 4: Last GP appointment – preferred appointment times for people who had found it difficult to make a convenient appointment, 2017-18**



**Summary:** Those who were unable to get a GP appointment at a convenient time were asked what time or times would have been more convenient. Nearly half (48%) of these people said that an appointment after 6pm would have been more convenient, whilst 36% would have preferred an appointment between 5pm and 6pm. 28% would have preferred an appointment before 8am. A smaller proportion (18%) would have preferred a lunchtime appointment (12-3pm).

The full [National Survey report on hospital and GP services](#) was published on the Welsh Government website on 24 October 2018.

Additional tables relating to GP Access and satisfaction with GP services are available through the [National Survey section of StatsWales](#).

## Key Quality Information

### Data Coverage

1. The [General Medical Services contract](#) is the contract between general practices and primary care organisations for delivering primary care services to local communities. Under the General Medical Services contract, GP practice core hours are Monday to Friday between 08:00 and 18:30, except Good Friday, Christmas Day and Bank Holidays. GP practices are responsible for providing essential and additional services within core hours at times which are appropriate to meet the reasonable needs of its patients.  
In addition, GP practices are required to have arrangements in place for patients to access such services throughout core hours in case of emergency. However, appointments are not necessarily available for the full duration of these opening times, as time also needs to be allocated to deal with referral letters, updating patient notes, domiciliary consultations, telephone consultations etc.
2. For the purpose of this release, GP practice opening hours have been considered against a weekly aggregated total of 52 hours and 30 minutes. It should however be noted that under the General Medical Services contract, GP practice core hours are based on daily opening times and there is no weekly requirement for GP practices.
3. In 2008-09, four new clinical [Directed Enhanced Services](#) (DEs) and the Extended Opening Hours DES were introduced. Directed Enhanced Services are an enhanced level of service or activity provided by some GP practices that have been negotiated nationally. Where health boards were satisfied that GP practices were meeting the reasonable need of its patients within core hours (08:00 to 18:30, Monday to Friday), GP practices were encouraged to participate in the Extended Opening Hours DES and open for additional hours outside of their core hours to meet the needs of patients in their local area. This could be before 08:00 or after 18:30.  
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg and Cwm Taf University decommissioned this service in 2014.
4. Where practices operate on a fortnightly timetable the week with the most hours has been used.
5. Note that for appointment times, if a practice appointment finish time was on the hour (i.e. 17:00 or 18:00) or past the half hour (i.e. 18:30) then the assumption was that the last appointment offered will be before this time.
6. In relation to access to GP services, NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS) has developed [My Health Online \(MHOL\)](#) , a service which enables patients to make GP appointments, order repeat prescriptions and update personal details online.  
In addition, GPs are now using [My Health Text](#) with the aim of delivering a number of benefits such as a reduction in DNA (did not attend) rates and improved patient experience.

## **Relevance**

### **What are the potential uses of these statistics?**

These statistics will be used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- advice to Ministers
- to inform debate in the National Assembly for Wales and beyond
- to make publically available data on GP access in Wales

### **Who are the key potential users of this data?**

These statistics will be useful both within and outside the Welsh Government. Some of the key potential users are:

- ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales
- local health boards
- local authorities
- GP practices
- Department for Health and Social Services in the Welsh Government
- other areas of the Welsh Government
- National Health Service (including Workforce, Education & Development Services (WEDS))
- Public Health Wales
- the research community
- students, academics and universities
- individual citizens and private companies

The statistics may also be useful for other UK governments and devolved administrations:

- Northern Ireland Executive's Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
- Scottish Government
- Department of Health in England

## **Accuracy**

This information was collected by the Knowledge and Analytical Services within the Welsh Government, to give a better idea of the opening hours and appointment times of GP practices across Wales.

Each year the seven health boards are contacted directly and asked to provide opening hours and appointment times of their GP main surgeries. The data are captured on a spreadsheet that has

guidance which is updated each year. Since 2015, in order to reduce the burden on the NHS, the data from the previous year has been provided to health boards and they are asked to amend the records and add any new practices. Once the forms have been submitted, statisticians within the Welsh Government review the data and query any anomalies with local health boards to ensure accuracy of the data received, and before tables are published. The latest data was received by Welsh Government in January 2019 and collected by health boards in December 2018. Any revisions to the data supplied by health boards after this date will not be included in this report, but will be revised in future editions.

Due to the variable natures of the services offered by a branch surgery, the information within the release is requested for main surgeries only. As a result, this report does not include any data for branch surgeries. In some instances the main surgery may offer a “full” service spread across several “branch surgeries”; this data, however, will only include the appointment times.

### **Timeliness and punctuality**

Data was collected during December and January. This release was published in March meeting the planned date of publication.

### **Accessibility and clarity**

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the [Statistics and Research section of the Welsh Government website](#).

### **Comparability and coherence**

This statistical report provides figures at a health board level so comparisons can be made across these areas.

The total number of GP practices may differ slightly to the number included in the [General Practitioners statistical report](#) due to data being collected at slightly different points in time.

### **Revisions**

There are no revised figures in this report. If there are in future, they will be marked with an “r”, in the relevant tables, charts and in the related text throughout.

## **Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)**

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals,

and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

## **Further details**

The document is available at: <https://gov.wales/gp-access-2018>

## **We want your feedback**

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to [stats.healthinfo@gov.wales](mailto:stats.healthinfo@gov.wales).

## **Next update**

March 2020 (provisional)

## **Open Government Licence**

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