

Access to GPs in Wales Continues to Improve

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Good progress is continuing to be made in improving access to GPs for working people in Wales, Health and Social Services Minister Mark Drakeford said as the latest figures were published.

One of the Welsh Government's key commitments in its Programme for Government is to make GP services more accessible to working people.

Statistics published today show that in 2014:

- 80% of GP practices were open for daily core hours (8am to 6.30pm Mondays to Fridays) or within one hour of the daily core hours, Mondays to Fridays. This is an increase from 76% in 2013;
- 97% of practices offered appointments at any time between 5pm and 6.30pm at least two week days, up from 95% in 2013;
- The percentage of practices closed half day on one week day has fallen from 11% in 2012 to 6% in 2014.

The Welsh Government continues to work with GP representatives and health boards to encourage measures to improve access for patients.

In recent months, the Health Minister has announced that more than £40m will be invested in 2015-16 to develop primary care services across Wales, building on the Welsh Government's primary care plan to move more care out of hospitals into local communities and improve access to preventative, integrated community, primary and social care services.

Professor Drakeford said:

"Making it easier for working people to get an appointment at a time convenient to them is a key commitment of the Welsh Government's.

"Figures released today show we are continuing to deliver on this commitment. It is clear that GP surgeries across Wales are working hard to take steps to extend opening hours beyond 5pm and to avoid closing for half a day a week and they are making more appointments available to everyone.

"But further improvements can be made. In particular, where there is an assessed need for working people to see a GP during working hours, we are working with GPC Wales – the group which represents GPs in Wales – and health boards to encourage ways in which access can be improved."

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