

### Consultation on proposed changes to Welsh Government statistics outputs

It would be a retrograde step to reduce the frequency of publication of general practice workforce data. Quarterly publication in Wales is already less frequent than the monthly data provided in England. Regularly updated, robust data are essential to support effective workforce planning and to enable the rapid identification of trends that could impact patient services.

The premise for this consultation is disappointing and contrary to good governance. The Welsh Government should be seeking to make more data publicly available rather than seeking to reduce data provision in the name of cutting costs. It is already the case that statistics in the health sector in England are more extensive than those provided in Wales. In part, this is probably because there is a more developed eco-system of think tanks, investigative journalists and academics seeking to harness the data to produce interesting outcomes. It would be in the interests of good policy making to encourage such an ecosystem to develop in Wales so that there are a wider range of organisations feeding in policy improvement ideas. Our feeling is that the Welsh Government should adopt an open data by default approach in which statistics are shared publicly unless there is a compelling case (e.g. individual confidentiality or commercial sensitivity). Our primary interest is in the statistics related to general practice, but this approach could allow a flourishing of policy initiatives across many sectors.

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