

Health and Social Services Committee

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Date: 8th March 2006

Venue: Committee Room 3, Senedd, National Assembly For Wales

Title: GP recruitment and retention In Wales

1. Introduction

A conference was held in Cardiff on 10th November 2005 to publicise the findings of the Report on Research into GP Recruitment and Retention in Wales. The overall findings were:

- Initiatives to improve recruitment and retention are more likely to be successful if they are devised and implemented locally;
- GPs value a flexible career structure with opportunities to develop new interests;
- Doctors require accessible and appropriate education and training;
- Doctors need support with childcare and occupational health;
- Capacity in primary care needs to be maximised by enhanced use of skill mix, new roles and new ways of working.

2. Actions

2.1 Recruitment and Retention Plans

Local Health Boards have been requested to develop robust recruitment and retention plans that take account both of the particular local circumstances and the findings of the recruitment and retention report. Any costs associated with the development of these plans will be met from existing Local Health Board resources. Officials have requested sight of those plans by the end of March 2006.

It is important that the recruitment and retention plan addresses the needs of the Local health Board. However by monitoring the plans across Wales officials will be able to:

- assess the recruitment and retention situation across Wales as a whole
- identify innovative practice that could be shared
- consider future policy development in the light of those plans.

2.2 Designed for Work – the Workforce Strategy to deliver "Designed for Life"

The draft workforce strategy to support "Designed for Life" includes actions to address a number of the issues identified as important to GP Recruitment and Retention in the aforementioned report. For example:

- "the development of effective, supportive childcare/dependents policies/facilities"
- "adoption of Occupational health standards"
- "develop a strategic approach to the recruitment and retention of general practitioners ... "

2.3 General Practitioner Special Interest Services

The research found that GPs preferred a career structure where they had opportunity for personal development perhaps to pursue a special clinical interest. Welsh Health Circular (2005) 047 gave guidance to local health Boards on the development and commissioning of General Practitioner with Special Interest Services. Officials are currently working on new guidance that will promote minimum standards in terms of the education and training of GPs with a special interest and the evaluation of such services.

2.4 Physician Assistants

A steering group has been established under the auspices of the acting Chief Medical Officer to develop a pilot project to evaluate the contribution that American trained Physician Assistants might make to primary care in Wales.