

Dear

## **ATISN 22034 – NHS Recorded Messages**

Thank you for your request to the Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 20 October 2024. You referred to the GP recorded messages and the NHS Wales as follows:

### **GP Recorded Message**

This lasts nearly two minutes and after it ends it may take another 5 minutes or more to speak to a receptionist. It tells callers to put down the phone and ring 999 if they have symptoms of a heart attack or a stroke are breathless or are vomiting blood.

You have requested the following:

1. Has an audit been performed to see the outcome of the advice given in the recorded message?
2. Are there more or fewer deaths, or avoidable complications, since the recorded message has been in use?
3. How much has been paid to the GPs to use this message?

### **The NHS Wales App**

This replaced the My Health Online App in April of this year. It is complicated to download and beyond the capabilities of the small number of older people who have smart phones or tablets. There are difficulties in downloading the app successfully. The app eventually registered you, but cannot order repeat prescriptions, make an appointment, see your medical records or test results.

You have requested the following:

1. How much did Welsh Government pay the developer for this faulty software?
2. How much does Welsh Government pay GP practices to use it? Does the Health Minister know the app is faulty? If so, why is it paying GPs to tell their patients to use it?

## **Our Response**

### GP Recorded Messages

1. The Welsh Government is not aware of an audit of GP practice recorded messages.
2. The Welsh Government does not hold this information aren't aware if this is stored anywhere.
3. The General Medical Services Access Standards introduced in 2019 promoted a standardised approach to the use of automated telephone answering systems that were used by GP practices. To assist practices a suggested script was made available to

practices by Health Boards. The Access Standards required practices to have a message that complied with Welsh Language Standards and was no longer than 2 minutes long. Practices did not receive payment for individual elements of the standards; therefore, practices were not paid specifically for using a recorded message.

Detailed guidance on the Access Standards is in the public domain:

[access-to-in-hours-gms-services-standards\\_1.pdf](#)  
[supplementary-guidance-for-the-gms-contract-wales.pdf](#)

Since 2023, the original Access Standards have been a contractual requirement of GP practices.

### NHS Wales App

1. The NHS Wales App is being developed by Digital Health and Care Wales as part of the Digital Services for Patients and the Public Programme (DSPP). The DSPP programme is funded by the Welsh Government Digital Priorities Investment Fund (DPIF). The DPIF fund has provided £24.7 million pounds towards the DSPP programme over the last 5 years.
2. Welsh Government does not currently pay GP Practices to use the NHS Wales App. Welsh Ministers support the use of the NHS Wales App which was launched as a public beta in 2023 – further information about the App is provided in the link: [Written Statement: The new NHS Wales App \(17 April 2023\) | GOV.WALES](#). This allows the rollout to citizens in Wales in testing phase to collect feedback and inform work on additional features. All GP practices have been onboarded however each practice has to enable the services available through the App for patients.

The NHS Wales App is a digital solution for citizens and complementary to GP Services which are already available. It is not intended to replace citizens' ability to telephone or visit GP Practices to book appointments and order repeat prescriptions.

### **Next Steps**

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ  
or Email: [Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales)

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,