



*"...excluding locums"*

## ***Introduction***

No one seems to know how many GP locums there are in the UK. All data pertaining to the number of GPs in the UK states "excluding locums".

Adding up the figures for fully qualified GPs working in the UK (i.e. excluding GP registrars, who are not yet qualified) we arrive at a figure of 43,440 (see appendix 1).

The GMC publishes the total number of GPs registered on their database and arrives at a figure of approximately 60,630 (changes daily). The difference between the two suggests the total number of locum GPs, and this figure is approximately 17,190.

This 17,190 registered GPs represent 28% of the UK's GP workforce, yet this does not appear anywhere on any official government statistics (in 2008, when we first produced this survey, we estimated 15,500 locums out of a total of 57,000 – 28%).

A total figure for all Sessional GPs i.e. non-partner GPs (salaried, retainers and locums) is 22,500 – that's **40% of all GPs**.

This raises many questions, including:

1. How does the profession represent these GPs?
2. Will this have an effect on the resources allocated for revalidation?
3. Assuming the Department of Health does not know about these GPs, then how can it make plans for future manpower resources and training?
4. If 28% of all GPs practise outwith traditional salaried posts or partnerships, what is the profession and Department of Health doing to engage these 17,000 GPs into the clinical governance systems of the NHS?

28% of all GPs work outside a managed organisation; the government and profession needs to ensure that its resources are allocated equitably, and reassurance given to patients that the quality and professional welfare of its locum GPs is not being ignored.

## **Areas for Action**

1. The NHS Information Centre must oversee the accurate collection of GP numbers across the UK.
2. Establishing easily accessible frameworks within which locum GPs can work within managed environments, such as the NASGP's [Chambers](#) and [affiliate Freelance GP Scheme](#).
3. All GP locums should be issued with prescribing numbers, to both allow them to collect personal prescribing information, and to prevent the continuing corruption of the current 'personal data' of conventional GP partners and salaried GPs on whose behalf locums are currently prescribing.
4. Specific training for GP trainees on how to work as a Freelance GP.

## Appendix 1 :: summary of current data

Source	Date	Country	Salaried	Total	notes
NHS IC <sup>1</sup>	2012	England	9,219 <sup>2</sup>	35,839 <sup>3</sup>	<i>Excludes registrars and locums</i>
Welsh Assembly <sup>4</sup>	2013	Wales	n/a <sup>5</sup>	2,026	<i>Excludes registrars<sup>6</sup> and locums</i>
Scotland <sup>7</sup>	2013	Scotland		4,465	<i>Excludes registrars and locums<sup>8</sup></i>
NI CSA <sup>9</sup>	2006	NI	n/a	1,110	<i>Unrestricted principals or equivalent</i>
<b>Total</b>		<b>UK</b>		<b>43,440</b>	
<b>GMC<sup>10</sup></b>	2014	UK licensed GPs on specialist register		60,630	<i>Excludes registrars; includes locums</i>
				<b>17,190</b>	<b><i>Total UK GPs excluding principals, salaried, retainers and registrars</i></b>

- All figures are headcounts.
- All figures have to be taken at face value, and do include estimates and assumptions at source.
- We fully acknowledge that it is possible double-counting could have taken place at source.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB09536/nhs-staf-2002-2012-over-rep.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Includes 321 retainers

<sup>3</sup> Total GP headcount 40,265 minus number of registrars.

<sup>4</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2014/140325-general-medical-practitioners-2003-2013b-en.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> "other" = 158

<sup>6</sup> Registrars 165; number of retainers included in total = 73

<sup>7</sup>

<https://isdscotland.scot.nhs.uk/Health-Topics/General-Practice/Publications/2013-09-24/2013-09-24-PCWS-Report.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Although 740 locums contributing to superannuation scheme; estimated 290 WTE

<sup>9</sup> Unable to find reliable data since 2008

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/register/search\\_stats.asp](http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/register/search_stats.asp)