The survey was sent electronically to 1,694 Welsh consultants. It was launched on 17 January 2018 and closed on 2 February. 297 responses were received, representing a response rate of 17.5%. 84.8% of respondents identified as working full-time, with 13.1% saying they worked part-time. 65.9% of respondents identified as male, and 32.4% identified as female.

1. Respondents told us they worked an average of 7.86 direct clinical care sessions a week, whilst receiving an average of 2.38 sessions for supporting professional activities (SPA). Those who told us they work full-time said they worked an average of 8.18 direct clinical care sessions a week, whilst receiving an average of 2.47 sessions for supporting professional activities (SPA).

2. 3.1% of respondents reported that their SPA allocation in their job plan had decreased in the last year, with 12.1% saying it had increased and 84.8% reporting no change.

3. 70.8% of respondents said they regularly worked hours in excess of their job plan.

4. Of those who regularly work excess hours, 10.7% said they worked between 0 and 2 excess hours a week on average; 33.2% worked an excess of between 2 and 4 hours; 29.8% worked an excess of between 4 and 6 hours; 12.2% worked an excess of between 6 and 8 hours; and 14.1% said they worked an excess of more than 8 hours.

5. When respondents were asked if they had ever had training to help them agree an effective job plan, 79.4% said they hadn’t. Of those who hadn’t received such training, 78.1% said they would be interested in receiving it.

6. 34.4% of respondents said their employer had switched them to using electronic software such as Allocate for developing their job plan, but 82.8% of those who said they had been switched reported that they had not received any training in using the software.

7. 27.2% of respondents did not feel they were able to positively influence the quality of care they provide to patients.

8. 23.2% of respondents did not feel they were able to positively influence the work of their team or department.

9. 49.8% of respondents said they disagreed with the statement that their opinion is asked before decisions are taken that affect their work or the work of their team.

10. 39.3% of respondents said they disagreed with the statement that they are involved in discussions or decisions on changes introduced in their work, their team or their department.

11. 53.6% of respondents said they were not aware that their employer has an action plan designed to improve medical engagement, and 54.0% said they were not aware their employer is currently undertaking any actions to improve medical engagement.

12. 44.8% of those who responded said they planned to retire early (i.e. before their normal retirement age as defined in their NHS pension scheme) with 39.9% of all respondents saying they planned to retire at 60. The most common reason cited for wanting to retire early was ‘pressures of work’ (24.0%), followed by ‘reduced job satisfaction’ (17.8%), ‘to have increased time for leisure/other interests’ (14%) and ‘not worthwhile still working once I reach the lifetime allowance for my pension’ (11.6%).

13. 46.5% of respondents reported that they were aware of at least one consultant vacancy in their department, whilst 56.7% said they were aware of at least one junior doctor vacancy in their department.

14. Amongst those who reported consultant vacancies in their department, 79.6% said at least one such vacancy had not been filled for more than six months. Amongst those who reported junior doctor vacancies in their department, 75.8% said at least one such vacancy had not been filled for more than six months.

15. 31.3% of respondents were not previously aware of their entitlement contained in the consultant contract for Wales to seek a paid sabbatical for a period of up to three months.

16. Only 7.9% of respondents said they had ever applied for a sabbatical whilst working as a consultant in Wales, with 30.4% of those who said they had applied reporting that their application had been unsuccessful.