Population challenges: Estimating the number of GPs

Overview
The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) has produced a league table that estimates the number of general practitioners (GPs) that a Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) needs to have in 2020 due to population changes.

Methodology
In order to calculate the percentage increase in GPs for a CCG, the following steps were followed:

1. **Estimate the 2013 coverage of GPs per 100,000 population.** GP full time equivalent data was taken from HSCIC and CCG population sizes from ONS.

2. **Estimate a 2020 national coverage level.** The RCGP is calling for 8,000 more GPs in 2020. This means that the GP workforce would increase from its 2013 baseline of 32,075 to 40,075 in 2020. This value of 40,075 GPs was then used to estimate a suggested GP coverage level using the ONS population projections.

3. **Calculate the number of GPs needed in 2020 for each CCG.** Using the ONS CCG-level population projections and the suggested coverage from step 2, the number of GPs needed in 2020 for each CCG was calculated. Where a CCG had a 2013 coverage above the suggested 2020 national coverage, the 2013 coverage level was maintained.

4. **Calculate the percentage change from 2013 to 2020 for each CCG.**

Notes and limitations
There are numerous factors needed to estimate how many GPs an area needs. These include population demographics, recruitment, retention of GPs, retirement rates, workforce demographics etc. These factors are not taken into account for the purpose of this press release and as such the true value of GPs needed in each area could be larger than those stated.

In addition, these estimates do not supply a cumulative estimate of how many GPs will be needed to be trained between now and 2020. They state how many GPs will be needed in 2020 in each CCG.

Notes:
(1) HSCIC full time equivalent GPs excluding retainers and returners