

Enclosure No:	<b>1/AWMSG/0526</b>
Agenda Item No:	<b>1 – Minutes of previous meeting</b>
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## **All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG)**

### **Minutes of the AWMSG meeting held at 09:30am on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026 via Teams**

<b>Voting members present:</b>		<b>Did not participate in agenda item:</b>
1. Prof Iolo Doull	Chair	
2. Ms Angharad Lawson	NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee	
3. Prof Dyfrig Hughes	Health Economist	
4. Mr Tommy Price	ABPI (Wales)	<b>9</b>
5. Mrs Pam James	Lay Representative	
6. Ms Julie Wilson-Thomas	Lay Representative	
7. Dr Jim McGuigan	Medical Director	
8. Dr Richard Brown	General Practitioner with an interest in therapeutics	
9. Mr David Fox	Managed Sector Pharmacist – Hospital Pharmacist	
10. Mr James Leaves	Director of Finance	
11. Mrs Katherine White	Senior Nurse	
12. Mrs Cathy Wynne	Other healthcare professions eligible to prescribe not already represented	
13. Dr Alison Thomas	Clinical Pharmacologist	
14. Mr Jonathan Simms	Director of Pharmacy	

**Welsh Government:**

Mr Andrew Evans

**Medicines Values Unit:**

Rhiannon Walters-Davies

**AWTTC staff:**

Mrs Helen Adams, Senior Pharmacist  
Dr Andrew Champion, Programme Director  
Dr Thomas Curran, Principal Scientist  
Dr Katherine Chaplin, Senior Scientist  
Mrs Ruth Lang, Senior Liaison Manager  
Miss Laura Phillips, Administration Manager  
Mr Tony Williams, Head of PAMS

**List of abbreviations:**

ABPI	Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry
AWMSG	All Wales Medicines Strategy Group
AWPAG	All Wales Prescribing Advisory Group
AWTTC	All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre
CAS	All Wales Common Ailments Service
DHCW	Digital Health and Care Wales
GPW	Genomic Partnership Wales
HTA	Health Technology Appraisal
ILAP	Innovative Licensing and Access Pathway
IPFR	Individual Patient Funding Request Process
IR	Independent Review
NWJCC	NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee
LOWMAG	Licensed One Wales Medicines Assessment Group
MHRA	Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency
MVU	Medicines Value Unit
NHS	National Health Service
NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
NMG	New Medicines Group
NPGG	National Pharmacogenomics Group
NPIs	National Prescribing Indicators
OWMAG	One Wales Medicines Assessment Group
PAPIG	Patient & Public Involvement Group
PAMS	Patient Access to Medicines Service
SPIRA	Server for Prescribing Information Reporting and Analysis
VPAG	Voluntary Scheme for Medicines Pricing, Access and Growth
WMAS	Welsh Medicines Advice Service

**1. Welcome and introduction**

The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed members and observers, and explained the meeting protocol. The Chair confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

**2. Apologies:**

Ms Lois Gwyn, Managed Sector Pharmacist – Primary Care  
Ms Rafia Jamil, Managed Sector Pharmacist – Primary Care

Prof Stephen Monaghan, Consultant in Public Health Medicine  
Mr Hywel Pullen, Director of Finance  
Dr Owen Seddon, Hospital Consultant  
Dr Richard Skone, Medical Director

**3. Declarations of interest:**

The Chair invited declarations of interest. Tommy Price declared a personal specific interest in agenda item 9 and it was confirmed that he would not participate in this part of the meeting.

**4. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting**

The draft minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 March were checked for accuracy and approved. The Chair asked for an update on the actions and confirmed that the activity metrics would form part of his Chair's report.

Tony Williams confirmed that AWTTTC will share the One Wales evidence status reports (ESR) with members in advance of future meetings to provide greater clarity and support AWMSG's decision-making. Members were asked to contact AWTTTC with any queries relating to the ESR before the meeting to allow sufficient time for the team to respond. With regards to One Wales reviews, AWTTTC will discuss the process with the Chair outside of this meeting.

Alison Thomas informed members that the higher Yellow Card reporting rate in BCUHB had been influenced by a locally enhanced service which incentivised GP practices to submit reports, alongside an established network of Yellow Card champions. Other factors were discussed, including variability in electronic systems, challenges around automated reporting, and ongoing work with national systems to improve interoperability with the MHRA.

Members highlighted that the reasons for variation were multifactorial and that incentives, champions, and system usability all played a role as most Yellow Cards are submitted via the website rather than GP electronic systems. Reference was made to broader UK recommendations following the Covid Enquiry on improving medicines surveillance through direct data linkage, noting both technical and cultural challenges. It was noted that Community Pharmacy reporting was also higher within BCUHB.

Members agreed that the BCUHB Yellow Card reporting rates represented good practice and that consideration should be given to highlighting this more widely to other health boards, while recognising differences in local incentive schemes and priorities.

**Action: Chair/AWTTTC to consider this suggestion**

It was confirmed that a report on the course duration of the antibiotic NPIs will be presented later in the meeting.

**5. Chair's report (verbal update)**

The Chair confirmed that OWMAG had reviewed One Wales advice for the off-label use of bendamustine with rituximab for the treatment of indolent lymphomas and for the treatment of mantle cell lymphoma. It was noted that

patient outcomes for eight patients with indolent lymphomas and two patients with mantle cell lymphoma were included in the review reports; all patients benefitted from treatment apart from one treated for indolent lymphoma. Clinicians confirmed there remains a clinical need for continued access to this treatment in Wales.

The Chair asked AWMSG members to note the decision of OWMAG is to continue to support use for both indications.

Members were informed that this treatment will be moved to the static list and the advice will no longer be reviewed by OWMAG. AWTTTC will conduct annual in-house reviews to monitor for any updates which might impact this advice.

Members were informed that All Wales Guidance for Adherence Aids is out for a 4-week consultation closing on Thursday 14 May. A document entitled Medicines Identified as Low Value for Prescribing in NHS Wales will be circulated for consultation later this week. The document provides a review of the current low value for prescribing recommendations, with proposals to retain, retire or refine the current list. The consultation will be open for 4 weeks and will close in late May. Both consultation documents are available on the AWTTTC website. The Chair asked members to review and share the consultations with relevant colleagues.

The Chair confirmed that the AWMSG Scrutiny Panel had been reviewed following a year of operation. Positive feedback had been received on its effectiveness. Nine Scrutiny Panel meetings have been held, and the panel has made 26 decisions on medicines assessments. A high level summary of the review will be presented to AWMSG at a future meeting.

Members were informed of ongoing discussions about holding future meetings at different health boards, preferably in person, to engage with local Medical Directors and Directors of Pharmacy and share best practice. The consensus was that face-to-face meetings would result in more meaningful discussion and help build relationships.

The Chair informed members that there are ongoing discussions with Welsh Government, health boards and Advanced Therapies Wales about funding for advanced/disruptive therapies and the significant add-on costs which are not funded by Welsh Government.

The Chair presented the proposed AWMSG activity metrics to be reported to Welsh Government, and members agreed that these were appropriate and achievable. It was confirmed that reporting will commence later in the year (in November), with a full-year report and interim reporting thereafter.

## **6. AWTTTC Programme Director's report**

Dr Champion presented an update report on recent activity within AWTTTC. He confirmed the AWTTTC work programme for 2025-2028 has been published on their website. It outlines the strategic objectives for medicine access, optimisation, and data use in Wales, aligning with partner priorities

and the AWMSG Strategy.

Members were informed that the most recent quarterly review meeting with Welsh Government was held on 26 March, with positive feedback received on AWTTTC and AWMSG outputs.

It was confirmed the VPAG Investment Programme is progressing well. Quarterly board meetings are held and AWTTTC report on progress against four workstreams – horizon scanning, medicines ecosystem, unlocking data and implementation. Stephanie Francis has replaced Aileen Flynn as the VPAG Programme Manager. The next VPAG Programme Board meeting will be held on 14 May in person, and the project leads will highlight the achievements over the last 12 months.

Members were informed that 3 licensed medicines were assessed at a recent LOWMAG meeting and the recommendations will be considered at the next AWMSG meeting.

A review of the Free of Charge Medicines policy has been completed, with recommendations for changes to be presented to the Directors of Pharmacy at their next meeting.

The Committee was informed that AWTTTC staff attended the recent annual NICE conference in Manchester where discussions focused on balancing quality care with financial constraints, evaluating healthcare technologies, and international collaboration. The chief executives of NICE and MHRA presented plans to introduce a joint pathway, aiming to deliver quicker access to medicines for NHS patients by aligning licensing and value decisions. Progress in this area will be closely monitored.

AWTTTC hosted a Learning at Lunch session on 21 April. There were presentations on the Wales General Ophthalmic Services Signed Orders Formulary presented by Mike George, updates on the Common Ailments Service and Pharmacist Independent Prescribing Service by Kayleigh Williams, and the session concluded with a rapid therapeutic update from Dr Tessa Lewis.

Members were informed the AWTTTC Best Practice Day will be held on Thursday, 9 July and will focus on medicines optimisation for a sustainable future. The Deputy Future Generations Commissioner and Director for Health has agreed to open the meeting and over 100 delegates have already registered.

AWTTTC is looking to establish national governance and infrastructure to prepare the system for complex and disruptive medicines. A follow-up paper will propose an oversight model (potentially via AWMSG), plus a horizon scanning delivery group. Welsh Government support and AWMSG approval will be sought.

Dr Champion confirmed the transition of the Welsh Medicines Advice Service (WMAS) to AWTTTC on 1 April. This transition aims to strengthen national service delivery and create new opportunities for both WMAS and AWTTTC.

Members were informed that Dr Sophie Harding (Consultant Pharmacist for Genomics & Pharmacogenomics) has joined AWTTTC as a member of staff. Dr Harding has led the development of the Pharmacogenomics Delivery Plan for Wales 2026–2029, which has now been endorsed by relevant national groups and approved by the NHS P&I Strategic Planned Care Programme Board. Work is ongoing to establish governance arrangements, with a National Pharmacogenomics Oversight Committee to provide strategic oversight and reporting.

The AWTTTC team will be meeting with industry representatives at an AWTTTC Industry Forum meeting on 23 April. AWTTTC will be hosting an Industry Engagement event on Friday 30 April to promote information sharing, collaboration, and encourage early dialogue and engagement with the aim of improving timely access to medicines for NHS Wales. The event will feature presentation and discussion on key areas, including, horizon scanning, medicines assessment, unlocking data, medicines implementation and commercial arrangements; the afternoon will comprise of networking sessions. Approximately 50 delegates from the pharmaceutical industry are expected to attend.

#### **7. National Prescribing Indicators 2025-2026: A focus on antibiotic course duration for RTI**

Katherine Chaplin presented a detailed report on antibiotic course duration for respiratory tract infections. It was confirmed that prescribing of five-day courses had increased across Wales, although variation remained between practices and clusters. Comparative data, trends over time, and analysis of defined daily doses were discussed.

The report demonstrated an overall downward trend in antibiotic use and suggested financial savings associated with shorter courses, while acknowledging that outcomes varied by medicine and were influenced by price fluctuations. Members welcomed the depth of analysis and discussed potential drivers of variation, including local policy influences and patient complexity. The wider benefits of reduced resistance and environmental impact were noted, even where these were difficult to quantify.

#### **8. Implementation of the Blueteq High Cost Drugs System – Phase II update**

Helen Adams provided an update on implementation of the Blueteq High Cost Drugs System Phase II. Teena Grenier, Chair of the Blueteq High Cost Drugs Steering Group, which includes representatives from all health boards, was also in attendance and provided input into discussions.

Progress to date was outlined, including completion of information governance requirements, establishment of implementation capacity, and development of forms across multiple disease areas.

It was confirmed that cancer remained a priority due to volume and associated commercial access agreements, and significant progress has

been made in drafting and deploying forms. Uptake across health boards and Velindre was discussed, with recognition of progress alongside acknowledgement of the scale of work remaining. The importance of Blueteq for financial governance, equitable access, and data capture was emphasised.

Members discussed incentives and accountability mechanisms to support compliance, noting that system use was increasingly linked to national reporting and assurance processes. The discussion also covered integration with other digital systems, recognising current constraints and competing priorities, while confirming continued engagement on future interoperability.

**9. Primary care antimicrobial guidelines – updates**

Thomas Curran provided a brief update on a minor amendment to the primary care antimicrobial guidelines, confirming the removal of a COVID-19 antiviral treatment which is no longer available. Members were advised that no further changes are required at this stage.

**10. Any other business**

There was no other business.

The Chair confirmed the date of the next meeting - Wednesday, 20 May at the All Nations Centre, Sachville Avenue, Cardiff, CF14 3NY