



Grŵp Strategaeth Meddyginiaethau Cymru Gyfan
All Wales Medicines Strategy Group



Annual Report: 2023-2024

*Improving the health and well-being of people
in Wales by enabling patients to get the best
outcomes from their medicines*



*This document is available in Welsh
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg*

About us	3	Prescribing monitoring and analysis	21
Chair's welcome	3	National Prescribing Indicators	21
Profile of AWMSG	5	National Prescribing Indicators 2022–2025	21
2023–2024 in numbers	5	National Prescribing Indicator monitoring	21
AWMSG's five-year strategy: 2024–2029	6	Medicines access	22
Working in partnership	7	Horizon scanning	22
Our partners and how they get involved	7	Routes of access	23
What we have achieved together	9	Commercial Medicines Access Team	25
Engagement	11	Review of our medicine access routes	26
News	14	Research and publications	27
Getting the best outcomes from medicines	14	Membership	28
Enabling access to medicines	15	AWMSG	28
Medicines-related safety	16	AWPAG	29
Optimising value	17	NMG	31
Medicines optimisation	18	OWMAG	32
Prescribing guidance and resources	18		
Strategies and acknowledgements	20		

About us

Chair's welcome



Our goals are both ambitious and aspirational, but by engaging with key stakeholders and working closely with national organisations we will achieve our goals.



As the clinical, financial and societal demands on the NHS in Wales continue, the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) must ensure we adapt to support the increasing needs of patients, their families and healthcare professionals. This year we have collaborated with our key partners to enable access to safe and effective medicines, improving outcomes whilst ensuring the best value to everyone in Wales. This year's annual report provides an overview of the key events and collaborative work which has taken place during 2023–2024. It also highlights the

guidance and resources produced to support healthcare professionals in their discussions and decisions about medicines. As we strive to support prescribers to deliver the right medicines to the right people at the right time, I am very proud of the work that AWMSG have delivered this year.

Firstly, I would like to thank the All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre team for their role in developing the AWMSG Strategy for 2024-2029. This gives AWMSG a solid base to respond to the changing medicines landscape, and address many of the new challenges we face in ensuring better outcomes from medicines for people in Wales. With the increasing complexity over the delivery of novel medicines it is essential AWMSG are in a position to collaborate with key organisations and respond accordingly. Accurate horizon scanning is essential for the delivery and financial planning of new medicines. Science, research and data innovations will continue to support AWMSG in their robust, evidence-based decision making and increased availability of real-world data will enhance the evaluation of medicines and healthcare in Wales. It is timely that

partner organisations align their work plans as we work together to ensure everyone in Wales are able to get the best outcomes from their medicines.



...we endeavour to put the needs of the people at the heart of our mission...



This year AWMSG have hosted a number of meetings which have provided the team with the opportunity to engage with key stakeholders. These include the quarterly Patient and Public Interest Group meetings, the Learning at Lunch training sessions, the Best Practice Day and the Industry open day. All provide valuable platforms for sharing and discussing AWMSG guidance, resources and updates to AWMSG processes for medicines optimisation and medicine assessments. These events are pivotal to maintaining transparent and collaborative working and essential as we look forward to delivering the AWMSG Strategy over the next five years.



Professor Iolo Doull, AWMSG Chair



“
...we strive to support prescribers to deliver the right medicines to the right people at the right time...
”

As we endeavour to put the needs of the people at the heart of our mission I am delighted to share the work we have done in partnership with Learning Disability Wales in developing easy-read leaflets to support some of our resources (see [page 14](#)). It is a pleasure to report AWMSG are supporting the national sustainability agenda and have endorsed the national strategy to reduce the carbon footprint of inhalers. I look forward to monitoring the progress of this work via the inhaler decarbonisation dashboard as we support the NHS in Wales to reduce their carbon footprint, work more sustainably and make Wales a better place to live for current and future generations (see [page 17](#)).

This year we have worked closely with the respiratory network who have updated the All Wales adult asthma management prescribing guidelines, and AWMSG have endorsed the All Wales paediatric asthma management prescribing guideline ([see page 18-19](#)). These have been very well received by prescribers. With the advent of the NHS Wales Executive, I am enthusiastic about building relationships with the national clinical networks so that AWMSG continue to produce guidance and

resources where they are needed most. I am also passionate about ensuring AWMSG provide robust, evidence-based guidance and that the AWMSG work plan is prioritised to meet the needs of all people in Wales.

Our goals are both ambitious and aspirational, but I believe that by engaging with key stakeholders and working closely with national organisations we will achieve our goals. I believe we are in a good position to make this happen. There is broad geographical and professional representation on both AWMSG and its sub-committees. AWMSG is made up of NHS consultants, GPs, nurses, pharmacists, health economists, pharmaceutical industry representatives and crucially lay members who combine their expertise and experience to agree on the best use of medicines.

Finally, I would like to thank our dedicated members on all our groups, who have enabled us to deliver these exciting and valuable work streams. As we embark on the first year of delivering the new AWMSG Strategy I am confident that by working together with all our stakeholders we will ensure that AWMSG continue to provide advice, guidance and resources where they are most needed.

Our vision for Wales – “To improve the health and well-being of people in Wales by enabling patients to get the best outcomes from their medicines”

Name:

All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG)

Chair:

Professor Iolo Doull

Established:

2002

Role:

To advise Welsh Government on strategic developments in prescribing as outlined in the [AWMSG Strategy for Wales: 2024-2029](#).

Accreditation:

AWMSG’s health technology assessment process is accredited by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

Subgroups:

The New Medicines Group (NMG), the All Wales Prescribing Advisory Group (AWPAG), and the One Wales Medicines Assessment Group (OWMAG).

Members:

Includes doctors, nurses, pharmacists,

academics, health economists, a pharmaceutical industry representative, a professional allied to medicine, lay members and a Director of Finance. See [Membership](#) for individual members.

Organisational:

The AWMSG Steering Committee oversees and guides strategic initiatives, and the All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre (AWTTC) provides clinical, scientific, analytical and administrative support.

Meetings:

8 meetings were held in 2023–2024. Meetings are open to the public. The [minutes of previous meetings and dates of future ones](#) are on the AWTTC website.

More information:

awttc.nhs.wales (English website)
cttcg.gig.cymru (Welsh website)
[@AWTTCcomms](#) (English X account)
[@AWTTCcymraeg](#) (Welsh X account)
[LinkedIn](#) (English and Welsh)

2023–2024 in numbers



8 meetings held



2 One Wales recommendations



69 medicines on the New Treatment Fund



8 medicines optimisation publications



1 medicine appraised and recommended



14 National Prescribing Indicators monitored

We worked throughout 2023–2024 to develop our next five-year strategy, with support from AWTTTC. After extensive discussions among our members, followed by consultation with a wide range of partner organisations in October 2023, we endorsed our new medicines strategy for Wales at the February 2024 meeting.

Creating a new strategy

Early development sessions focused on reviewing the vision, mission, and principles underlying all of our work, followed by defining the four broad ambitions that members wanted our strategy to focus on:

1. Help people in Wales get the best **outcomes** from medicines.
2. Enable **access** to the right medicines at the right time for people in Wales.
3. Minimise medicines-related harm and improve medicines-related **safety** for people in Wales.
4. Optimise the **value** that NHS Wales achieves from its investment in medicines.

We've used these four ambitions throughout this annual report to categorise some notable news stories of the past year.

We also used our four ambitions to agree a series of eight goals for the new five-year strategy. These eight goals are:

1. Advice, resources and guidance reflect the priorities and needs of people and health and social care professionals in Wales.
2. AWMSG's advice, resources and guidance are disseminated, widely promoted and routinely implemented.
3. Data and technology are used to improve value, patient outcomes and safety.
4. Medicines assessment processes are rigorous, timely and deliver value.
5. Health and social care professionals receive high-quality training in the safe and effective use of medicines.
6. People in Wales take their medicines in a way that maximises their health outcomes.
7. Waste associated with medicines use is reduced and sustainability is improved.
8. The benefits of genetic-informed precision medicines are realised in Wales.

All of these goals are supported in our strategy, with a range of objectives for us to deliver by working with our partners. The strategy also includes some indicators that may be used to measure success and progress made over the next five years.

Next steps

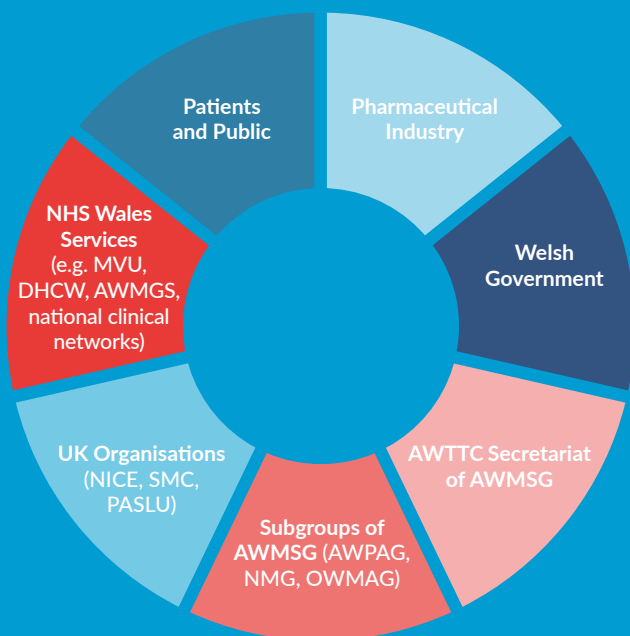
We want to see significant progress made across all of our goals. We will achieve this through a concerted effort from our members to drive and promote our work, and also through closer collaboration with our key partner organisations named throughout the strategy.

Collaboration with our partners will be central to delivering the ambitions of our strategy, and that collaboration will need to benefit all parties. We ask all partner organisations to help us achieve our ambitions, and to also consider how we can help them to deliver their vision of what NHS Wales should provide for patients and the public.

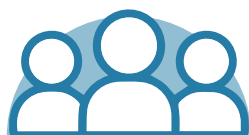
We encourage everyone to read our [full strategy document](#) for more information, and to get in touch through AWTTTC@wales.nhs.uk if you have any questions.

Our partners and how they get involved

We work with patients and the public, healthcare professionals and representatives of the pharmaceutical industry, as well as Welsh Government and relevant UK organisations, to issue recommendations on new medicines and guidance on optimising medicines use.



Our three key partners are: patients and the public; healthcare professionals; and the pharmaceutical industry. They are embedded into all aspects of our work and play a vital role in achieving our shared goals. There are many ways in which they can get involved in our work. Here are some examples.



Patients and the public

- During our assessment of new medicines, [we ask patients and the public for their views](#) about what it's like to live with their health condition and about any medicines they are, or were, taking for it. We consider these views when we make our recommendation to Welsh Government. [Medicine assessments currently in progress](#) are listed on the AWTTTC website.
- We produce resources to support the safe and best use of medicines in NHS Wales. We ask patients and the public to

[comment on every medicines resource](#) produced. We consider and address every response before the resource is finalised, endorsed and published. Current [open consultations](#) are listed on the AWTTTC website.

- [Our lay members](#) are members of the general public and are full voting members. They give an independent view and highlight what matters to patients, and their families and carers, to help inform decisions about new medicines and medicines resources.
- [Patient and Public Interest Group \(PAPIG\) meetings](#) are held four times a year and are an opportunity for patients and the public to hear about our work, and find out how they can [get involved](#).



Healthcare professionals

- Most of our committee members work in a range of healthcare professions

in all areas of Wales. We encourage healthcare professionals to [contact us](#) if they are interested in [becoming a committee member](#).

- Healthcare professionals working in Wales can [propose a medicines optimisation project](#) to be considered through our [endorsement process](#), which includes consultation with key stakeholders.
- Any healthcare professional working with patients could have a significant role in [providing expert advice](#) to us. For example, we ask healthcare professionals to comment on the prescribing guidance and medicines optimisation resources we produce. Current [open consultations](#) are listed on the AWTTTC website.
- AWTTTC host [Best Practice Days](#) to give healthcare professionals a chance to share local medicines-related initiatives that had positive outcomes for people. AWTTTC also host [Learning at Lunch](#) – a series of one-hour training sessions around therapeutic areas, national prescribing news and changes in clinical practice.



Pharmaceutical industry

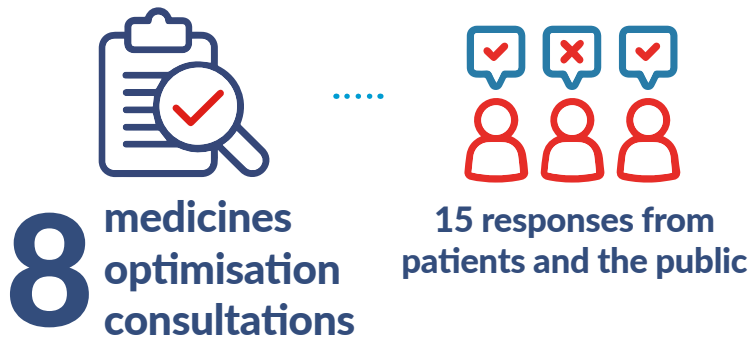
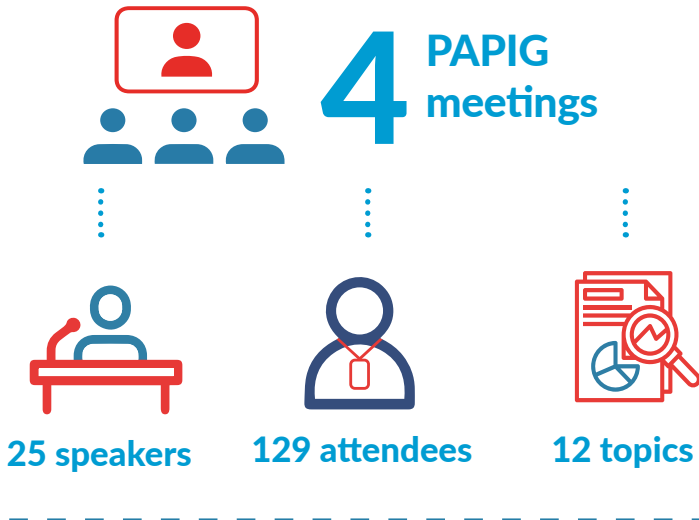
- [AWTTTC's Industry Forum](#) gives an opportunity for representatives from the pharmaceutical industry to meet regularly with AWTTTC to talk about issues relating to medicines access in Wales.
- AWTTTC's [horizon scanning](#) team gathers information on new medicines, indications (the conditions they treat) and new formulations in the pharmaceutical pipeline. [UK PharmaScan](#) is the team's primary source of information and we encourage all companies to engage with UK PharmaScan.
- The [Commercial Medicines Access Team](#) support and monitor the implementation of medicines recommended by us or the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) when the

medicine is associated with a commercial arrangement with NHS Wales. Early engagement from pharmaceutical industry enables the team to make sure that patients have timely access to medicines and that NHS Wales gets value for money.

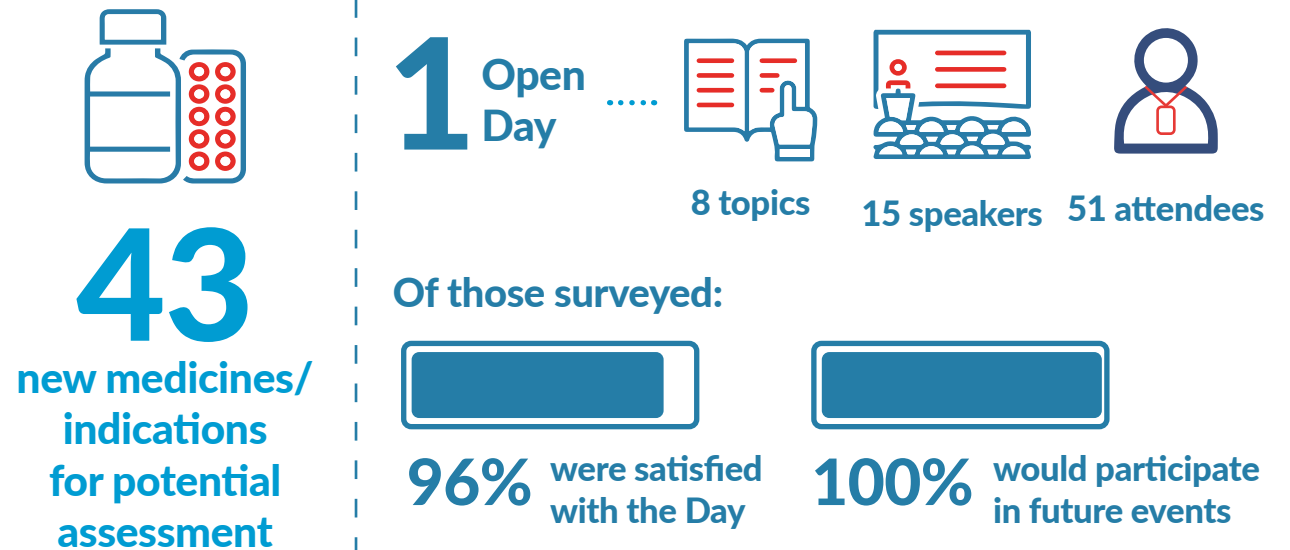
- Companies are encouraged to [submit a medicine for us to assess](#). AWTTTC are currently reviewing the processes that support medicines access in Wales.
- Pharmaceutical companies can take part in consultations about any resources for medicines optimisation. Every response is considered and addressed before the resource is finalised, endorsed and published. Current [open consultations](#) are listed on the AWTTTC website.
- [Industry Open Days](#) give the pharmaceutical industry the opportunity to meet representatives from AWMSG and AWTTTC and to learn more about our work.

What we have achieved together

Patients and the public



Pharmaceutical industry



What we have achieved together



Healthcare professionals

Healthcare professionals on our committees

11

AWMSG

11

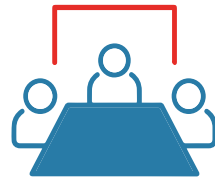
NMG

17

AWPAG

21

OWMAG

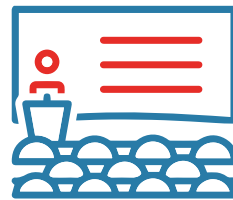


8

medicines optimisation consultations

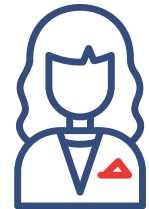
.....

87 responses from healthcare professionals

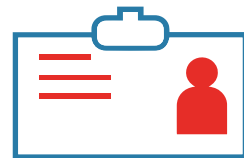


3

clinical experts involved in health technology assessments



1 Best Practice Day



92 attendees



2

Learning at Lunch sessions

157 attendees



+



14

clinical experts

9

expert groups

involved in developing medicines optimisation resources

The [AWTTC website](#) and social media are important ways we communicate with our partners; spreading the word about what we do.



207k separate website visits



52k different website users



294k page views



74,553 tweet impressions



175 LinkedIn followers

On our behalf, AWTTC organise and take part in key events to educate, exchange ideas, hear about personal experiences, network and spread awareness about what we do. Some events from the past year are listed below.



Events from April 2023 to March 2024

April 2023

- The [Patient and Public Interest Group \(PAPIG\)](#) meeting [focused on polypharmacy](#). Senior pharmacists from AWTTC, patients and carers, and clinical and consultant pharmacists gave presentations or led open discussions on the challenges, management, and side effects, of taking multiple medications.
- [AWTTC staff attended the British Toxicology Society Annual Congress](#) in Birmingham, presenting a symposium, keynote speech and two conference posters.

May 2023

- [AWTTC went to the Eisteddfod yr Urdd](#) in Llandovery to manage a stand on 'Help make medicines safer'. Visitors to the stand were keen to hear about our work to support the best and safe use of medicines in NHS Wales, and how members of the public and healthcare professionals can get involved.

 All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology @AWTTC · 31 May 2023 · Promote · ...
Thank you to the deputy leader of @Plaid_Cymru Rhun ap Iorweth MS and Cefin Campbell MS for visiting our stand and learning about our work in NHS Wales @EisteddfodUrdd #Urdd



Rhun ap Iorweth and Cefin Campbell AS/MS
7 8 1.3K

- AWTTC's [Learning at Lunch](#) training session for healthcare professionals included presentations from clinical pharmacists about chronic disease

management in general practice, and primary care antimicrobial guidelines and audits.

- [AWTTC staff attended the 43rd International Congress of the European Association of Poisons Centres and Clinical Toxicologists](#) in Spain, and gave two oral presentations and presented four posters.

June 2023

- [AWTTC staff attended the MediWales Connects conference](#) in Cardiff where senior pharmacists presented some of the work done by AWTTC and AWMSG, and shared ideas for collaborating with the health and care communities.



- AWTTC and Yellow Card Centre (YCC) Wales jointly held the [Medicine Safety](#)

[Day](#) to celebrate the 40th anniversary of YCC Wales. The programme included a poster competition, information stands, and a variety of presentations: what happens to your Yellow Card; the future of pharmacovigilance; and medical devices.



July 2023

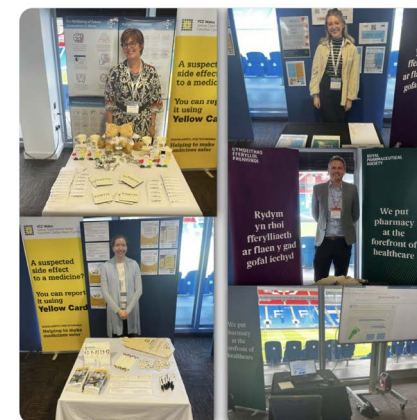
- AWTTC held their [Best Practice Day](#) in July. The programme covered a variety of topics and included five presentations during the morning, and breakout sessions in the afternoon hosted by each of the Welsh health boards.
- The [July meeting of PAPIG](#) included talks on how to stop antidepressants safely, a medicines helpline for patients, and making patient information accessible and inclusive. AWTTC also highlighted

our easy-read leaflet on tramadol and gave an update on inhaler prescribing.

August 2023

- [AWTTC staff attended the 10th International Venoms and Toxinology Meeting](#) in Oxford, and presented four posters to a diverse audience from around the world. The meeting provided an opportunity to network with the international toxinology community.

 **All Wales Therapeutics and To...** · 13/07/2023 ...
We were joined by @YCCWales @WalesTox and @RPS_Wales along with our Research and Data colleagues for the #BestPracticeDay2023 some great conversations continued during the break and lunch.



5 13 581

September 2023

- AWTTTC showcased its work at the [2023 Bevan Commission Conference](#) in Newport. The conference was titled 'The tipping point: where next for health and care?' Staff highlighted our work and discussed the collaborations between AWTTTC and industry with internationally renowned speakers.



November 2023

- AWTTTC hosted an [Open Day](#) for pharmaceutical industry stakeholders, with the Medicines Value Unit (MVU) as guest speakers. [The program for the day](#) included talks about the effective engagement between stakeholders, the changing medicines access landscape in Wales, the value of industry involvement to our work, and an overview of how the MVU aim to support NHS Wales deliver optimal value and outcomes from medicines.



in adults, including an outline of [our prescribing guidance](#), and antimicrobial resistance data from two national reports. Senior pharmacists also shared general practice tips on prescribing for urinary tract infections.

- The [February meeting](#) of [PAPIG](#) focused on type 2 diabetes with talks from experts in the field about the management, treatment, prevention and remission of type 2 diabetes. The Chair of the Cardiff and Vale Diabetes UK group gave their perspective as someone living with diabetes.



All Wales Therapeutics and T... · 29/01/2024

Have you registered for our free virtual Patient and Public Interest Group ([PAPIG](#)) meeting on 27 February?

The focus of the meeting is type 2 diabetes & include talks from [@CathWashbrook](#) [@drsarahjdavies](#) [@roblee_cardiff](#) Come and join us forms.office.com/pages/response...

October 2023

- [PAPIG](#) met in October with [presentations and open discussions](#) about *Clostridioides difficile* (*C. difficile*) infections in Wales, the safety of herbal medicines, and our new five-year strategy.

February 2024

- The first [Learning at Lunch](#) training session of 2024 saw presentations from leading experts on endocrine management of gender incongruence

Patient and Public Interest Group (PAPIG) Meeting Register online now

Tuesday 27 February 2024 10:00 - 12:00 via Zoom

The focus for this meeting is **Type 2 diabetes** and will include talks on:

- Prevention and remission of type 2 diabetes in Wales
- A holistic approach to managing type 2 diabetes
- The National Strategic Clinical Network for Diabetes
- Involving patients in strategies for addressing diabetes in Wales

Diabetes Support Group Wales and 9 others



Getting the best outcomes from medicines



One of our ambitions is to help people in Wales have the best opportunity to realise the intended benefits of the medicines they are prescribed, and the patient and their prescriber should be supported in making that a reality. Where appropriate, this should include de-prescribing of medication when risk outweighs the benefit. Over the past year, we have worked with AW TTC and our partners on a range of projects that have helped to realise this ambition.

How we support equality, diversity and inclusion

AW TTC have worked with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board's Equity and Inclusion team to develop AW TTC's own equality and health impact assessments for every resource that we are asked to endorse. This will help us make sure that we are considering the needs and outcomes of all the people of Wales. In 2023, AW TTC established an Equality Group with the aim of [supporting equality, diversity and inclusion within the organisation](#).

Easy-read versions of our patient information leaflets

In partnership with Learning Disability Wales, AW TTC developed an easy-read leaflet on tramadol for pain management to accompany our [tramadol educational resources](#). Easy-read formats provide a more accessible version of a technical document, and help people to better understand how best to use the medicine they have been given.



Latest All Wales Common Ailments Service Formulary published

The [Common Ailments Service Formulary](#) aims to improve patient access to consistent, evidence-based advice for the management of common ailments from acne to warts and verrucae. The latest version was published in August 2023.

Best practice in managing asthma

First published in 2020, the [All Wales adult asthma management and prescribing guideline](#) aims to reduce variation in the prescribing of inhalers to manage asthma in adults. In 2024 the document was updated to include a new 'preferred regimen' for mild asthma, and added an option to use some asthma medicines in an unlicensed way.

The [All Wales paediatric asthma management and prescribing guideline](#) provides a national, standardised, safer and sustainable approach to asthma care in children. It sets out the patient pathway for Wales, clearly stating management options for each healthcare setting, referral thresholds, and national medication choices.



We have an ambition to enable access to the right medicines at the right time for people in Wales. Medicines that are clinically and cost-effective are required to be made available as an option to every person who needs treatment. Decisions on the availability of medicines should be made on a 'once for Wales' basis, whenever appropriate, to avoid duplication of effort across the service. During 2023–2024, we worked with AWTTTC on a range of projects to help achieve this ambition.

Review of processes to support medicines access in Wales

AWTTTC are currently reviewing [our processes to support medicines access](#) in NHS Wales. As the medicines access landscape across the UK changes, we are adapting our processes to ensure routes of access to medicines in Wales meet the needs of patients, healthcare professionals and NHS Wales. See [Medicines access](#) for more details.

Updates to health technology assessment (HTA) methods and processes

We have made key [changes to our HTA methods and processes](#) after a review in 2022 to ensure alignment with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) methodology, and to enable equitable access to medicines in Wales. We also introduced a new policy for appraising medicines for severe conditions, and made changes to the policy for appraising medicines developed specifically to treat very rare diseases.

Changes to the appraisal process for paediatric licence extensions (PLEs)

Following a review of the PLE appraisal process, it was agreed that [AWMSG would no longer be required to routinely appraise a medicine with a PLE](#) where there is equivalent HTA advice in the adult population. Instead, there would be an expectation that health boards will routinely add them to their formularies. This approach was welcomed by the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (Wales) and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

International HTA collaboration

AWTTTC continue to be part of an expanding

[international HTA collaboration](#). AWTTTC collaborate with colleagues from HTA agencies in the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada to share and develop new approaches to HTA.

NHS Wales is first to approve routine access to dostarlimab for rectal cancer

Patients in NHS Wales with a particular type of rectal cancer can now access a medicine that might prevent the need for invasive and life-changing surgery. We endorsed a [One Wales Medicines decision to approve access to dostarlimab \(Jemperli®\)](#) to treat locally advanced rectal cancers with a specific genetic mutation. Welsh Government ratified this decision in August 2023.

Horizon scanning team strengthen links with key organisations

AWTTTC's horizon scanning team provide resources to help with service and financial planning. In 2023, the team worked with key partners to develop their processes to support horizon scanning of anti-cancer medicines. Through collaboration with key organisations AWTTTC will endeavour to establish a co-ordinated 'All-Wales' approach to [horizon scanning](#). You can read more about horizon scanning in this report.

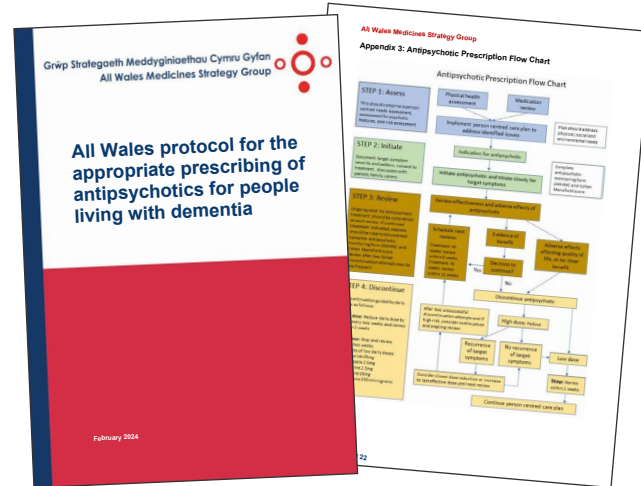
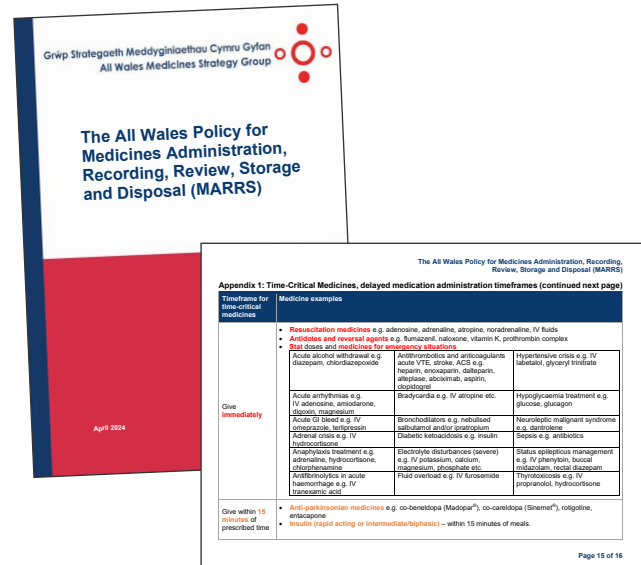


Another of our ambitions is to minimise medicines-related harm and improve medicines-related safety for people in Wales. Reduction of avoidable medicines-related harm aims to minimise the risk associated with prescribing, supplying, monitoring and taking medication. When an adverse event does occur, robust systems should be in place for reporting. We have worked with AWTTTC on a range of projects that have helped to realise this ambition.

Supporting the safe use of medicines

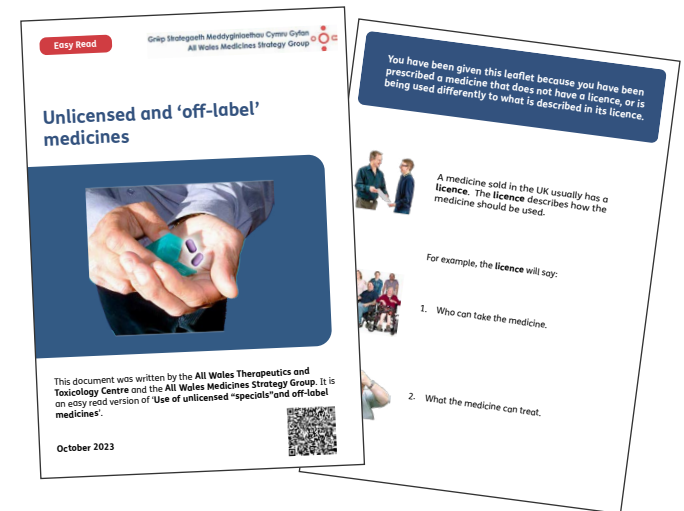
Every year we support the development and endorsement of a range of medicines optimisation resources, and many of these resources contribute to improving the safe use of medicines.

You can read more about the resources that were published in 2023–2024 [in this report](#), including the [‘All Wales Policy for Medicines Administration, Recording, Review, Storage and Disposal \(MARRS\)’](#) and the [‘All Wales protocol for the appropriate prescribing of antipsychotics for people living with dementia’](#).



Easy-read versions of patient information leaflets

In addition to the easy-read leaflet on tramadol, an easy-read leaflet on [understanding unlicensed medicines](#) was published in 2023. The resource provides guidance for improving the management and safe use of unlicensed ‘specials’ and off-label medicines in all sectors of healthcare in NHS Wales. The easy-read format gives people with learning disabilities a more accessible version of the technical document.





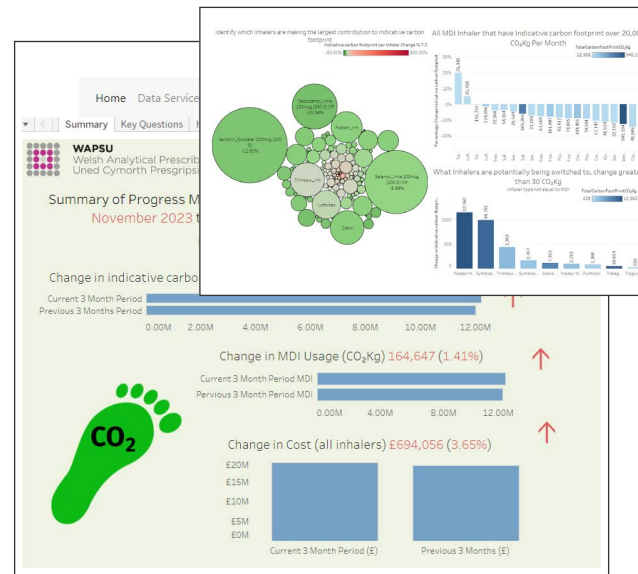
An ambition of ours is to optimise the value that NHS Wales achieves from its investments in medicines.

Given the limited resources of NHS Wales, all decisions, advice and guidance that we publish should have value considerations at their core. Welsh Government's 'A Healthier Wales' defines higher value as 'achieving better outcomes and a better experience for people at reduced cost.' We have worked with AWTTTC on a variety of projects to help achieve this ambition.

A commitment to sustainability

As well as delivering better outcomes at reduced cost, optimising value considers sustainability and how a medicine impacts our environment. We are committed to a [sustainability pledge](#) and have taken local and national actions to help reduce the NHS Wales carbon footprint, to work more sustainably, and to make Wales a better place to live for current and future generations. In 2023, we endorsed a [national strategy to reduce the carbon footprint of inhalers in Wales](#), which outlines key actions for the NHS to follow.

A [decarbonisation dashboard](#) has also been developed to show the carbon footprint from the use of inhalers issued in primary care in Wales.



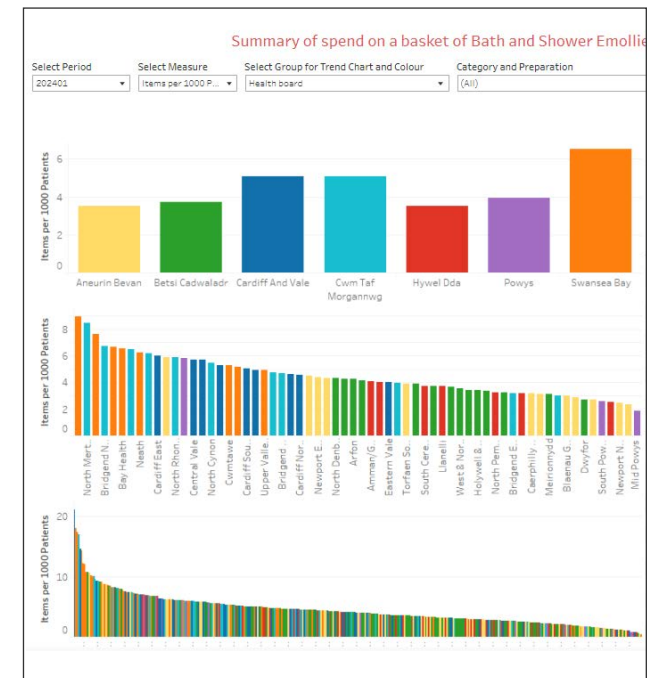
Withdrawal of national desflurane contract in Wales

Desflurane is an anaesthetic gas that has a high carbon footprint, is harmful to the environment, and lacks clinical benefit when compared to alternatives. We endorsed the [withdrawal of desflurane](#) in Welsh hospitals, helping NHS Wales to achieve its target of net zero by 2030 and in line with the NHS

Wales Decarbonisation Strategic Delivery Plan.

Dashboards on efficiencies

This year a series of new data monitoring dashboards have been added to the [Server for Prescribing Information Reporting and Analysis \(SPIRA\)](#) to help support health boards and NHS Trusts in making efficiency improvements in the use of medicines.



Medicines optimisation

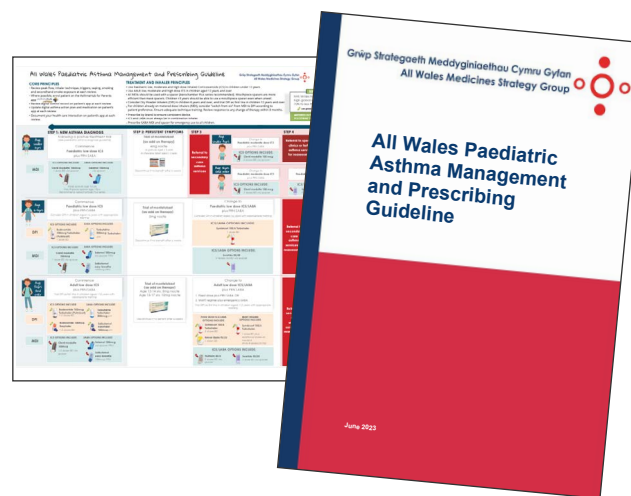
Prescribing guidance and resources

Medicines optimisation focuses on patients and outcomes rather than processes and systems. It aims to support healthcare professionals in advising patients how to get the best outcomes from the medicines they are taking. This may involve stopping some medicines or starting others, to make sure a patient is taking the safest medicine that treats their condition. Healthcare professionals will also advise patients how to keep on taking a treatment. To help patients and prescribers get the best outcomes from medicines, we publish prescribing guidance and resources, as well as reports on prescribing performance.

We published a range of prescribing guidance and resources between April 2023 and March 2024.

Understanding unlicensed medicines

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for improving the management of unlicensed 'specials' and off-label medicines in all sectors of healthcare in NHS Wales. This guidance encompasses primary care (general practice and community pharmacy), secondary care, and patients and carers.



All Wales paediatric asthma management and prescribing guideline

This guideline provides a national, standardised, safer and sustainable approach to asthma care in children. It sets out the patient pathway for Wales, clearly stating management options for each healthcare setting, referral thresholds, and national medication choices.

All Wales Common Ailments Service Formulary

The Common Ailments Service aims to improve patient access to consistent, evidence-based advice for the management of common ailments. This document includes monographs for the 26 ailments covered by the service.

All Wales protocol for the appropriate prescribing of antipsychotics for people living with dementia

The aim of this document is to guide best practice in the initiation, monitoring, review,

tapering and stopping of antipsychotics when they are prescribed for people living with dementia who express distress. It also advises generalists and specialists on the management of long-term prescribing of antipsychotics where indicated.

All Wales adult asthma management and prescribing guideline



First published in 2020, this guideline aims to reduce variation in the prescribing of inhalers to manage asthma in adults. It was updated in 2021 to encourage consideration of the decarbonisation agenda of NHS Wales. In 2024 the

document was updated to include a new 'preferred regimen' for mild asthma, and added an option to use some asthma medicines in an unlicensed way.

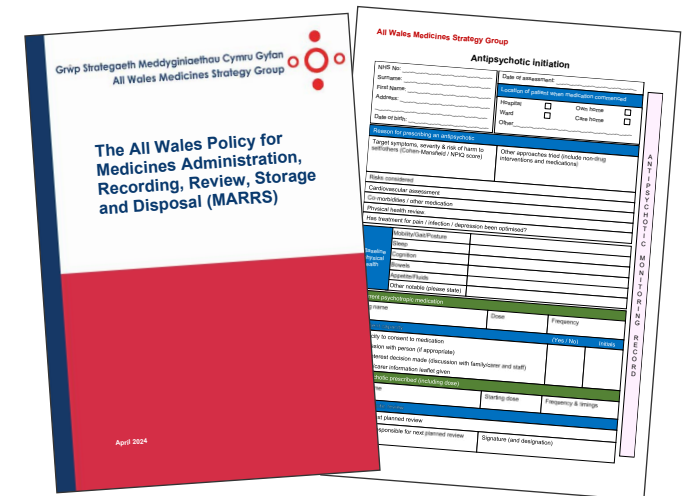
All Wales Policy for Medicines Administration, Recording, Review, Storage and Disposal (MARRS)

The MARRS policy sets out the minimum standards of practice that must be adopted by all healthcare staff involved in the administration, recording, review, storage and disposal of medicines in healthcare organisations across Wales. Implementing these standards will support the delivery of high-quality care and safeguard patient safety by ensuring consistency in the practice of medicines management across all healthcare sectors in Wales.

Updates to resources

Minor updates were made to the resources below between April 2023 and March 2024.

- [Primary care antimicrobial guidelines](#)
- [Endocrine management of gender incongruence in adults: prescribing guidance for non-specialist practitioners](#)
- [All Wales chronic obstructive pulmonary disease \(COPD\) management and prescribing guideline](#)



Strategies

In the past year, we endorsed some strategic documents with a focus on reducing the environmental impact of medicines in Wales. These included:

Decarbonisation: inhaler prescribing, use and disposal 2023–2030. A national strategy for Wales

This document sets out a national strategy to reduce the carbon footprint of inhalers in Wales, and outlines the key actions for the NHS and its partners in Wales to: reduce over-reliance on reliever inhalers; reduce the use of inhalers with a high global warming potential; and ensure the responsible disposal of inhalers.

Withdrawal of national desflurane contract in Wales

This strategy aims to stop all use of the anaesthetic gas desflurane in hospitals in Wales because of its excessive environmental impact, high cost, and lack of clinical benefit when compared to more recently available alternatives.



Acknowledged resources

Our acknowledgement process aims to highlight resources, initiatives or campaigns that are already recognised or endorsed by a national body or institute and have been implemented or accepted as good practice in Wales. Between April 2023 and March 2024, we acknowledged the following:

- Guideline for management of hydration during systemic anti-cancer therapy containing cisplatin (National Strategic Clinical Network for Cancer)
- Adverse Drug Reaction (ADRe) Profile (Swansea University)

All of the [acknowledged resources](#) can be found on the AWTTTC website.

Prescribing monitoring and analysis

National Prescribing Indicators

We monitor and analyse prescribing data to benchmark performance and drive improvements in NHS Wales.

National Prescribing Indicators

[National Prescribing Indicators \(NPIs\)](#) are used to highlight therapeutic priorities for NHS Wales and compare the ways in which different prescribers and organisations use particular medicines or groups of medicines. NPIs are evidence-based, clear, easily understood and allow health boards, primary care clusters, GP practices and prescribers to compare current practice against an agreed standard of quality.

National Prescribing Indicators 2022–2025

The 14 [NPIs for 2022–2025](#), endorsed by us, focus on four priority areas supported by safety and efficiency domains.

Priority areas

- Analgesics
- Anticoagulants in atrial fibrillation
- Antimicrobial stewardship
- Decarbonisation of inhalers

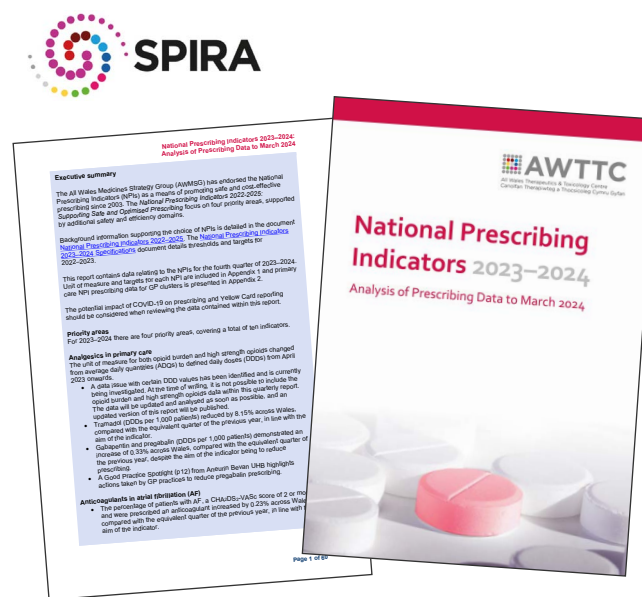
Supporting domains

Safety	Efficiency
Prescribing safety indicators	Best value biological medicines
Hypnotics and anxiolytics	Low value for prescribing
Yellow Cards	

National Prescribing Indicator monitoring

AWTTC publish a [quarterly report](#) analysing the performance of each health board against the current set of NPIs.

The [Server for Prescribing Information Reporting and Analysis \(SPIRA\)](#) is updated quarterly with NPI data for health boards, clusters and individual GP practices in Wales, giving a more detailed view of local prescribing. These interactive dashboards for comparative analysis of prescribing data can be accessed by users on the NHS Wales Network. SPIRA also includes additional data, such as AWTTTC's inhaler decarbonisation dashboard and a range of 'Efficiencies' dashboards.



Medicines access

Horizon scanning

AWTTC's horizon scanning team gathers information about medicines and advanced therapy medicinal products (ATMPs) in development in order to support the planning and implementation needed to be undertaken for these medicines by health boards/trusts in Wales. A key part of this work is to monitor medicines on the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) work programme. A new and important area that the team is now also monitoring is medicines in development with the potential to be associated with a companion diagnostic test.

Key partners for the horizon scanning team include the All Wales Genomics Oncology Group (AWGOG), All Wales Medicines Genomics Service (AWMGS), Joint Commissioning Committee (JCC), National Pathology Programme, National Pharmacogenomic Group, Welsh Blood Service, Advanced Therapies Wales and the Wales Cancer Network Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapies Group. Outside of Wales, the team is involved in a number of UK-wide horizon scanning initiatives. Through these established links and ongoing

collaborative work AWTTC is in a good position to further develop their role as an All Wales centre for horizon scanning.



2 ATMP reports



4 meetings with cancer network



1 companion biomarker test report



7 horizon scanning updates



Welsh Government aims to make sure patients in Wales have quick and fair access to medicines. The main routes of medicines access in Wales are:

- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) or AWMMSG health technology assessment (HTA);
- One Wales Medicines process (previously known as the One Wales Interim Commissioning process);
- Individual Patient Funding Request (IPFR); and
- individual health board applications.

Health technology assessment

[HTA](#) is the gold standard for evaluating the clinical effectiveness and cost effectiveness of a medicine. New medicines are assessed to consider:

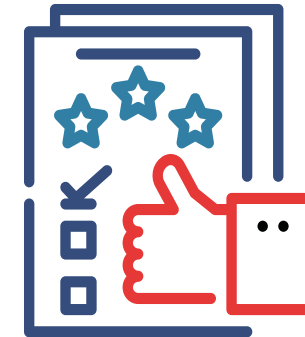
- how well they work in the real world (clinical effectiveness);
- how cost-effective they are; and
- which patients they would benefit the most.

NICE HTA guidance applies in England and Wales. Since 2002, we have assessed medicines not included in the NICE work programme. Our recommendations

are ratified by Welsh Government and published as 'AWMSG advice'.

The New Treatment Fund, launched by Welsh Government in January 2017, ensures patients across Wales have faster access to new medicines. Health boards are expected to make medicines available for prescribing to patients within 60 days of NICE publishing a Final Appraisal Determination (or Final Draft Guidance or Final Evaluation Determination) or within 60 days of Welsh Government's ratification of our advice.

To monitor compliance with the New Treatment Fund, health boards regularly report to Welsh Government about how quickly they put the new medicines onto their prescribing lists. AWTTTC compile annual reports on the formulary status of medicines that we, or NICE, recommended for use within NHS Wales.



1 medicine appraised by AWMMSG



69 medicines on the New Treatment Fund

One Wales Medicines process

The [One Wales Medicines process](#), an alternative route of access to medicines for clearly defined and specific groups of patients in the absence of HTA, was introduced in 2015. It enables one decision for all of NHS Wales about access to a medicine that is not routinely available. Currently, One Wales can be used for medicines when:

- the medicine's licence holder commits to a future HTA of a licensed medicine;
- the MHRA have not licensed a medicine;
- the MHRA have licensed a medicine only to treat a different condition(s); or
- a medicine isn't included in current treatment guidelines and no other suitable medicine is licensed to treat the condition.



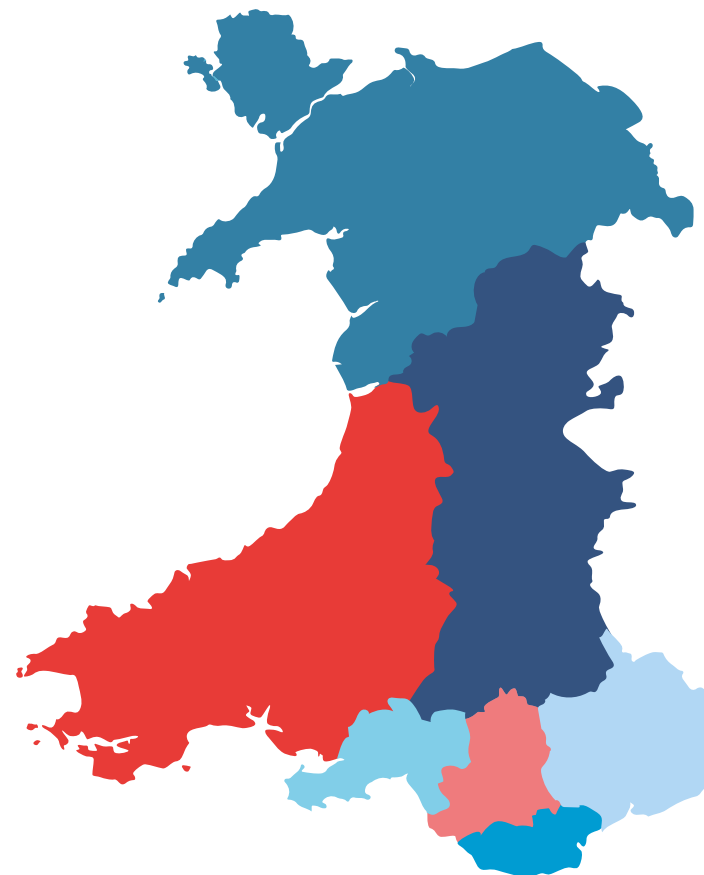
2 One Wales recommendations



11 One Wales reviews



The One Wales team have developed tools to allow clinicians to securely submit outcome data through NHS SharePoint. Outcome data is used to inform reviews of One Wales recommendations as well as being important for the wider evidence base for these treatments.



Commercial Medicines Access Team

The Commercial Medicines Access Team (CMAT) is a collaborative multi-organisational team composed of colleagues from AWTTTC, NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) and the National Procurement Lead Pharmacist for Wales.

The role and responsibility of CMAT is to support and monitor the implementation of AWMSG- and NICE recommended medicines associated with a commercial arrangement within NHS Wales. A commercial arrangement improves the cost effectiveness of a medicine; it can be a Patient Access Scheme (PAS) or a Commercial Access Agreement (CAA). This underpins the essence of [A Healthier Wales](#), allowing patients to have timely access to medicines, while also ensuring that NHS Wales obtains the maximum possible value for money where medicines are concerned.



54

commercial arrangements implemented by CMAT: of these



52

recommended by NICE



1

recommended by AWMSG



1

recommended by One Wales

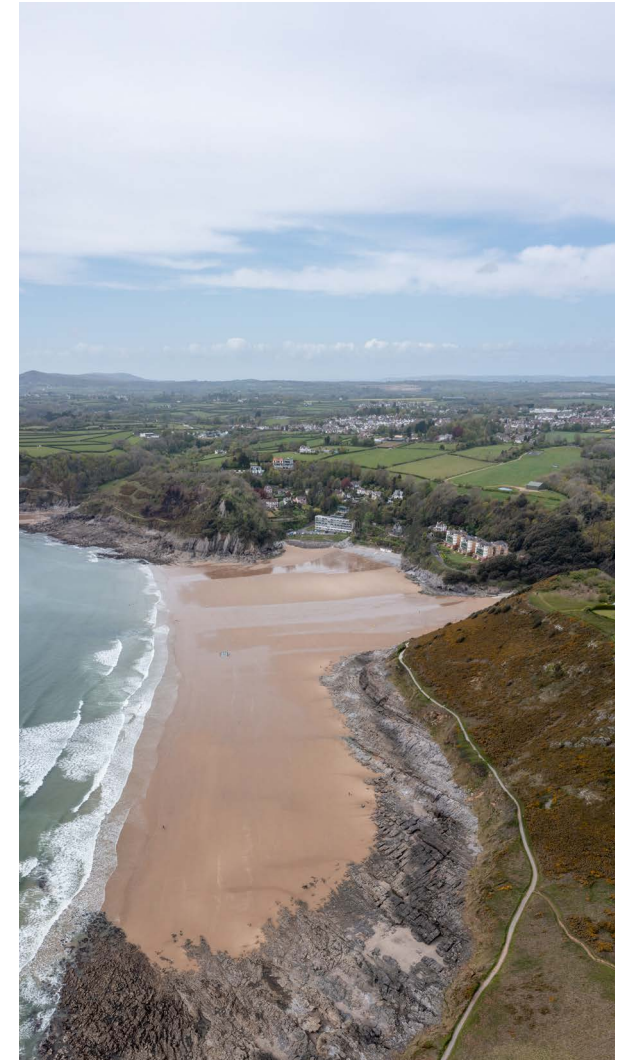


As the medicines landscape evolves, NICE have moved towards a proportionate approach to health technology assessment (HTA), simplifying and reconfiguring parts of the NICE appraisal process to allow faster approaches to simpler, low-risk treatments. This has allowed NICE to increase their capacity and produce rapid guidance for some topics, resulting in a decreased number of medicines that require our assessment.

Although HTA remains the preferred assessment process, a medicine with a service benefit or patient need may fall outside the established scope for HTA, or assessment through the One Wales Medicines process. This may include medicines that are routinely available elsewhere in the UK through routes of access that do not apply in Wales, such as national commissioning or NICE clinical guidelines. A new 'All Wales' route is needed for advising NHS Wales on medicines when no assessment process for this category of medicines currently exists.

AWTTC have reviewed the processes that support our HTA and have made some suggestions to ensure we continue to provide timely advice on medicines that are of most value to NHS Wales. For example, the process for appraising paediatric licence extensions (PLEs) was reviewed and as a result it was agreed that [AWMSG would no longer be required to routinely appraise a medicine with a PLE](#) where there is equivalent HTA advice in the adult population. Instead, there would be an expectation that health boards will routinely add them to their formularies.

A review of our processes has involved collaboration with our key partners including health boards, the formulary network, the Patient and Public Interest Group, pharmaceutical industry and our subgroups (New Medicines Group and All Wales Prescribing Advisory Group). Further updates to our processes will be announced on the [AWTTC website](#).



Research and publications

Activity during 2023-2024

In addition to AW TTC supporting all of the work that goes through AWMSG, AW TTC's [Research Group](#) facilitates high-quality research into the safe and effective use of medicines in Wales. The key research themes include: access to medicines, medicines optimisation and medicines safety.

A video about the work of the AW TTC Research Group can be viewed on the [Our Research page](#) of the AW TTC website.

Peer-reviewed articles

- [Medication errors involving intravenous paracetamol in children: experience from enquiries to the National Poisons Information Service \(NPIS\)](#)
- [Improving the spontaneous reporting of suspected adverse drug reactions: An overview of systematic reviews](#)
- [Metformin-associated lactic acidosis reported to the UK NPIS between 2010 and 2019: a ten-year retrospective analysis](#)
- [Antidepressant prescribing patterns and adverse events following introduction of a National Prescribing Indicator to monitor dosulepin usage in Wales](#)

[Two posters](#), a symposium, and one keynote speech were presented at the British Toxicology Society Annual Congress. The posters looked at intentional paracetamol ingestions in children, and methylene blue as an adjunctive treatment of shock secondary to severe metformin poisoning. The symposium and keynote speech looked at the relationship between pharmacology and toxicology.

[Four posters](#) and two oral presentations were given at the 43rd International Congress of the European Association of Poisons Centres and Clinical Toxicologists. The posters covered a range of topics, including accidental poisoning in children during COVID-19 and therapeutic errors involving prednisolone. The talks focused on electronic cigarette liquids inadvertently being administered to the eyes and an emerging public health concern related to sodium nitrite.

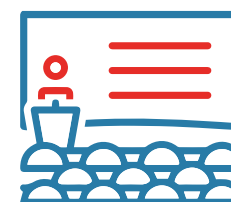
[Four posters](#) were presented at the 10th International Toxicology Meeting. Topics included delayed toxicity after jellyfish stings, and cases of ibogaine toxicity in the UK.



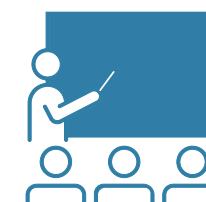
4 peer-reviewed articles published



10 conference posters



3 conference talks



1 symposium

Future generations

AW TTC work collaboratively with the Schools of Pharmacy at Cardiff and Swansea universities to support undergraduate MPharm student projects. The projects give future pharmacists insight into the work of AW TTC and current medicines optimisation topics in Wales. Projects from 2023–2024 included an investigation into contra indicated medicine combinations.

Post	Member	Deputy
Chair	Prof Iolo Doull	Prof Dyfrig Hughes
Consultant in Public Health Medicine	Prof Stephen Monaghan	Awaiting nomination
Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee	Ms Eleri Schiavone	Dr Saja Muwaffak
Health Economist	Prof Dyfrig Hughes	Prof Deborah Fitzsimmons
Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry Wales representative	Ms Kate Parrish Mr Tommy Price Mr Farhan Mughal	Attendance is rotated between the three named individuals
Lay member	Mrs Pam James	Awaiting nomination
Lay member	Ms Claire James	Mrs Julie Wilson-Thomas
Community Pharmacist	Mr Dylan Jones	Awaiting nomination
Medical Director	Dr Richard Skone	Dr Jim McGuigan
GP with prescribing lead role	Dr Jeremy Black	Awaiting nomination
Chief Pharmacist	Mr Jonathan Simms	Mr Chris Brown
Managed Sector Pharmacist	Ms Alison Hughes	Ms Rafia Jamil
Managed Sector Pharmacist	Mr Stuart Rees	Mr David Fox
Director of Finance	Mr Hywel Pullen	Mr James Leaves
Senior Nurse	Mrs Katherine White	Mrs Susan Newport
Other healthcare professions eligible to prescribe not already represented	Mrs Cathy Wynne	Mr Karl Jackson
Clinical Pharmacologist	Dr Alison Thomas	Dr Manjeet Singh
Hospital Consultant	Dr Samantha Cox	Dr Manjeet Singh

Post and discipline	Member	Health board/trust	Alternate
Chair, Consultant Clinical Pharmacologist	Dr Laurence Gray	Cardiff and Vale	Mrs Clare Clement
Doctor from each health board reflecting different roles			
Hospital Consultant/General Practitioner	Dr Gemma Rogers	Aneurin Bevan	
Hospital Consultant/General Practitioner	Dr Jennifer Ellis	Betsi Cadwaladr	
Hospital Consultant/General Practitioner	Awaiting nomination	Cwm Taf Morgannwg	
Hospital Consultant/General Practitioner	Dr Laurence Gray	Cardiff and Vale	
Hospital Consultant/General Practitioner	Dr Richard Brown	Hywel Dda	
Hospital Consultant/General Practitioner	Awaiting nomination	Powys	
Hospital Consultant/General Practitioner	Dr Phil Cox (to Sep 23)	Swansea Bay	
Hospital Consultant/General Practitioner	Awaiting nomination	Velindre	
Pharmacist from each health board/trust reflecting different roles			
Pharmacist	Mrs Eryl Smeethe	Aneurin Bevan	Mrs Elizabeth Hallett
Pharmacist	Ms Vicky Allum	Betsi Cadwaladr	Ms Cassandra Edgard (from Mar 24)
Pharmacist	Mrs Clare Clement	Cardiff and Vale	Mr Emyr Stephens
Pharmacist	Mrs Helen Davies	Cwm Taf Morgannwg	Mrs Avril Tucker
Prescribing Advisor	Mrs Hazel Hopkins	Hywel Dda	Mrs Sue Beach
Chief Pharmacist	Mrs Jacqueline Seaton	Powys	Awaiting nomination
Pharmacist	Mr Darren Smith (to Mar 24)	Swansea Bay	Mr Dafydd Rhys Thomas (from May 23)
Chief Pharmacist	Mrs Bethan Tranter	Velindre	Mrs Sophie Harding
Community Pharmacist	Mr Jonathan Smith (from Dec 23)	All Wales	Mr Daniel Hallett (from Dec 23)
Medicines Safety Pharmacist			
	Dr Lynette James	All Wales	Awaiting nomination

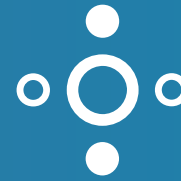
Lay members			
	Mrs Fiona Woods Mr Malcolm Latham		Awaiting nomination
Healthcare professional eligible to prescribe			
	Mrs Amy Williams		Awaiting nomination
Nurse			
	Mrs Sarah Davies		Ms Hayley Saunders (from May 23)
Public Health Wales			
	Mrs Sian Evans		Ms Rachel Andrew (from Oct 23)
Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry Wales			
	Ms Sue Knights		Ms Rachel Jenkins
Non-voting members			
Director, Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry Wales	Dr Rick Greville		Ms Joe Ferris
Director, British Generic Manufacturers Association	Mr Paul Fleming		Ms Carol Blount, Mr Michael Clarke
Welsh Government	To be notified of representation before each meeting		
AWTTC Board member and AWMSG representative	To be notified of representation before each meeting		

Post	Member	Deputy
Chair	Prof James Coulson	
Vice Chair	Dr Emma Mason	
Pharmacist 1	Mr Alan Clatworthy	Ms Eleri Phillips
Pharmacist 2	Mrs Teena Grenier	Awaiting nomination
Pharmacist 3	Awaiting nomination	Awaiting nomination
Doctor 1 - Clinical Pharmacologist	Dr Emma Mason	Awaiting nomination
Doctor 2 - Hospital Consultant	Awaiting nomination	Dr Ian Campbell
Doctor 3 - General Practitioner	Awaiting nomination	Dr Avkash Jain
Professions allied to medicine or eligible to prescribe	Mr Karl Jackson	Awaiting nomination
Public Health/Epidemiologist	Awaiting nomination	Awaiting nomination
Health Technology Wales	Dr Susan Myles	Mr Matthew Prettyjohns
Health Economist	Professor Deborah Fitzsimmons	Dr Catrin Plumpton
Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry member	Mr Sandeep Kiri Olga Ovcinnikova Dhwani Shah	Attendance is rotated between the three named individuals
Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee	Dr Andrew Champion (to Oct 23)	Dr Sian Lewis (to Mar 24)
Lay members	Mr Tony Esmond Mrs Fiona Woods	Mrs Julie Wilson-Thomas (from Jul 23)
Nurse	Mr Andrew Davies	Awaiting nomination

Post	Member	Deputy
Chair	Prof John Watkins	
Vice Chair	Dr Andrew Champion (to Oct 23)	
Individual Patient Funding Request (IPFR) Panel representative – Hywel Dda	Dr Michael Thomas	Mrs Sue Beach
IPFR Panel representative – Aneurin Bevan	Mr Jonathan Simms	Dr Leo Pinto
IPFR Panel representative – Swansea Bay	Mr Alan Clatworthy	Mr Stuart Wyn Evans
IPFR Panel representative – Cardiff and Vale	Mr Timothy Banner (from Jan 24) Prof Richard Hain (to Jan 24)	Ms Lindsay Davies (from Mar 24) Mr Timothy Banner (to Jan 24)
IPFR Panel representative – Powys	Dr William King	Mrs Jayne Price (from Sep 23)
IPFR Panel representative – Betsi Cadwaladr	Mrs Teena Grenier	Dr Eilir Hughes (from Jan 24)
IPFR Panel representative – Cwm Taf	Ms Kathryn Howard	Dr Brian Hawkins
Representative from Specialised Commissioning	Awaiting nomination Dr Andrew Champion (to Oct 23)	Awaiting nomination Dr Sian Lewis (to Mar 24)
Clinical Pharmacologist	Prof James Coulson	Dr Laurence Gray
Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry Wales representative	Ms Joe Ferris	Dr Rick Greville
Health Economist	Awaiting nomination Dr Shaun Harris (to Feb 24)	Dr Will Hardy (from May 23)
Lay member	Mr Malcolm Latham	Mrs Julie Wilson-Thomas
Finance Director	Mr Hywel Pullen	Awaiting nomination
All Wales Prescribing Advisory Group representative	Mrs Bethan Tranter	Awaiting nomination
New Medicines Group representative	Dr Ian Campbell	Prof James Coulson
Velindre Trust IPFR Group representative	Mrs Bethan Tranter	Dr Simon Waters



All Wales Therapeutics & Toxicology Centre
Canolfan Therapiwteg a Thocsicoleg Cymru Gyfan



Grŵp Strategaeth Meddyginiaethau Cymru Gyfan
All Wales Medicines Strategy Group

Published by:

All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre
The Routledge Academic Centre
University Hospital Llandough
Vale of Glamorgan
CF64 2XX

On behalf of the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group

All enquiries should be directed to:

Mrs Ruth Lang
Senior Liaison Manager
Email: awttc@wales.nhs.uk
Telephone: 029 218 26900

Please note information in this document is correct at the time of print but may be subject to change.

For the latest information, please visit:

awttc.nhs.wales (English website)

cttcg.gig.cymru (Welsh website)

[@AWTTCcomms](#) (English X account)

[@AWTTCcymraeg](#) (Welsh X account)

[LinkedIn](#) (English and Welsh)

[Return to beginning of report](#)

