

ALL WALES PRESCRIBING ADVISORY GROUP (AWPAG)

Minutes of meeting held on

16th March 2022 commencing at 9.30 am via Zoom

Chair – Dr Laurence Gray Consultant Clinical Pharmacologist, Cardiff & Vale UHB

Voting members

Mr David Barnard	Lay member
Dr Richard Brown	General Practitioner – Hywel Dda UHB
Mr Adrian Byrne	Prescribing Advisor – Powys Teaching HB
Dr Phil Cox	General Practitioner – Swansea Bay UHB
Ms Helen Davies	Prescribing Advisor – Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB
Ms Sarah Davies	Advanced Nurse Practitioner – Hywel Dda UHB
Ms Sian Evans	Consultant in Public Health - Public Health Wales
Ms Hazel Hopkins	Prescribing Advisor – Hywel Dda UHB
Mr Hywel Jones	Locality Prescribing Advisor and Lead Pharmacist for Aneurin Bevan UHB Prisons
Miss Karen May	Prescribing Advisor – Cardiff & Vale UHB
Mr Alan Meudell	Lay member
Mrs Sue Knights	ABPI representative
Mr Darren Smith	Pharmacist – Swansea Bay UHB
Mr Sudhir Sehrawat	Community Pharmacist – Cardiff & Vale UHB
Mrs Bethan Tranter	Chief Pharmacist – Velindre NHS Trust
Mr Ben Woodhouse	Alternate Pharmacist member – Betsi Cadwaladr UHB

In attendance (non-voting)

Mr Michael Clarke	BGMA (deputising for Mr Paul Fleming)
Mr Richard Boldero	AWTTC
Dr Rob Bracchi	AWTTC
Dr Katherine Chaplin	AWTTC
Dr Thomas Curran	AWTTC
Dr Paul Deslandes	AWTTC
Mr Steven Griffiths	AWTTC
Ms Kath Haines	AWTTC
Mrs Ruth Lang	AWTTC
Mrs Claire Thomas	AWTTC

Presenting

Dr Efthymia Mantzourani	Item 7 Unlicensed medicines
Mr Lloyd Hambridge	Item 8.1 Prescribing Intervals
Mr Emyr Jones	Item 8.1 Care Homes Medicines Optimisation Toolkit and Item 8.3 Polypharmacy
Ms Sheridan Court	Item 8.3 Polypharmacy

Key of abbreviations

ABPI	Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry
AWMSG	All Wales Medicines Strategy Group
AWTTC	All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre
DHCW	Digital Health and Care Wales
HEIW	Health Educations and Improvement Wales
MHRA	Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency
NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
NPIs	National Prescribing Indicators
PHW	Public Health Wales
QAIF	Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework

1.0 Welcome and introduction

The Chair welcomed all members and introduced Mr Adrian Byrne, attending his first meeting as the deputy pharmacist member for Powys and Mr Michael Clarke, BGMA (deputising for Mr Paul Fleming).

Miss Karen May attended for Mrs Clare Clement and members were informed that this would be Karen's last meeting as she will be retiring from the group at the end of March. The Chair thanked Miss May for her contribution to the group.

The Chair informed members that the AWPAG Constitution had now been reviewed and agreed by the AWMSG Steering Committee. The Chair welcomed Mr Alan Meudell who was attending his first meeting as a main lay member. (The Constitution has now increased the number of lay members on the group to two) and Ms Sian Evans who is attending as a returning member and acting as the alternate member for Public Health Wales.

Members were directed to the revised AWPAG Constitution on the AWTTTC website.

2.0 Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Ms Rosemary Allgeier	Primary Care Senior Manager – Public Health Wales
Mrs Clare Clement	Prescribing Advisor – Cardiff and Vale
Mr Paul Fleming	Chairman BGMA
Dr Rick Greville	ABPI
Dr Lynette James	All Wales Consultant Pharmacist – Acute Care & Medication Safety
Dr Becky McGee	General Practitioner – Aneurin Bevan
Ms Amy Williams	Other healthcare professional eligible to prescribe
Mrs Karen Samuels	AWTTTC

3.0 Declarations of Interest and Confidentiality Agreement

The Chair asked members to declare any interests relevant to the meeting.

Mrs Sue Knights declared an interest for item 8.4 - Value based prescribing and 9.2 - Cost of prescribing of drugs for diabetes in Wales and relationship to metabolic control. David Barnard declared an interest for item 8.4 – Value based prescribing. The Chair confirmed that Mrs Knights and Mr Barnard would need to leave the meeting for these items. Members were reminded that Declarations of Interest forms should be returned to AWTTTC prior to the meeting.

4.0 Chair's report

Membership

Members were informed of the following:

Resignations

Miss Karen May – Alternate Pharmacist member, Cardiff & Vale UHB (following the March meeting)
Ms Sabrina Owen – Deputy Nurse Member
Mr Dylan Jones – Community Pharmacist/Powys

New Appointments

Mr Adrian Byrne – Alternate Pharmacist member, Powys THB
Mr Alan Meudell – 2nd lay main member
Ms Amy Williams – Other healthcare professional eligible to prescribe
Ms Sian Evans – Alternate member, Public Health Wales.

The Chair reminded members that there are currently vacancies for doctor members for Betsi Cadwaladr and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Boards and Powys Teaching Health Board, along with a doctor member from Velindre NHS Trust. Members were asked to forward nominations to AWTTTC.

5.0 Minutes of previous AWPAG meeting – 1st December 2022

Minutes of the previous meeting were checked for accuracy and agreed.

The actions from the last meeting were considered.

6.0 Feedback from AWMSG – 8th December 2021, 9th February 2022 and 8th March 2022

Kath Haines gave feedback on the following:

- Antimicrobial Wound Dressings (AWDs) Statement, Recommendations and Guidance – for acknowledgement
This document was acknowledged as a resource at the AWMSG meeting in December 2021.
- National Prescribing Indicator Quarterly Report to June 2021 – for information
Members were informed that a comment had been raised in relation to the opioid NPI in relation to anaesthesia in hospitals and if there could be some correlation to increased operation waiting times. Links in relation to this can be found on the AWTTTC website.
- Heart Failure in Wales in 2021- A Parallel Approach – for acknowledgement
This document was acknowledged as a resource at the AWMSG meeting in December 2021. Kath Haines informed members that the related Heart Failure NPI was not approved by AWMSG due to lack of data and evidence of cost effectiveness. AWTTTC will be keeping in touch with Dr John Goodfellow and his team for any evidence that comes through so that this can be reviewed at the next NPI Review meeting.

The following were supported for AWMSG endorsement at the February 2022 meeting of AWMSG and will shortly be available on the AWTTTC website:

- Primary care antimicrobial guidelines
- Management of *Clostridioides difficile* infection in Wales
- Management of recurrent symptomatic UTI in adult women

- All Wales advice on oral anticoagulation in non-valvular atrial fibrillation (2021/22 update)
This document was recommended by AWMSG at the February 2022 meeting subject to clarification wording of DOAC trough level measurement availability being a locality decision. This has now been completed and is available on the AWTTTC website.
- NPIs 2022-23 Supporting information for prescribers and healthcare professionals
This document was endorsed by AWMSG at the February 2022 meeting and has been published on the AWTTTC website.

- National Prescribing Indicator Quarterly Report to September 2021 – for information
This document was sent to AWMSG for information to the March 2022 meeting and is available on the AWTTTC website.

- Inhaler Decarbonisation Report
This document was discussed and noted at the March 2022 meeting.

Dr Efi Mantzourani joined the meeting.

7.0 Understanding Unlicensed Medicines

The Chair welcomed Dr Efi Mantzourani who presented her work on unlicensed medicines. Members were asked to help with this huge and complicated topic. It was noted that secondary care and primary care healthcare professionals are confused by unlicensed medicines. It was suggested that a stakeholder group be formed from AWPAG members to assist with this project. Paul Deslandes agreed to help with the stakeholder group and the Chair offered to help with input from a secondary care perspective.

Action: Paul Deslandes to set up stakeholder group.

Dr Efi Mantzourani left the meeting.

Lloyd Hambridge joined the meeting.

8.0 Documents for discussion

8.1 All Wales Guidance for Prescribing Intervals (2022 review)

8.1.1 All Wales Guidance for Prescribing Intervals – EqHIA form

Lloyd Hambridge gave the background to the All Wales Guidance for Prescribing Intervals review document. Members were reminded that the original document was endorsed by AWMSG in 2013 and stated that a 28-day prescribing interval was broadly recommended for repeat prescribing. The 28-day prescribing interval was based on a consensus view rather than robust evidence and in 2019 Welsh Government commissioned a review of dispensing volumes in community pharmacies across Wales. The review concluded that there would be a benefit to pharmacies, GPs and patients if dispensing intervals were extended. Thus Welsh Government has directed that the 2013 document be updated.

The document was well received by members. The issue of multi-compartment compliance aids was raised and noted that this could be added to the document as an area unsuitable for an extended prescribing interval; the equality assessment form will need to be updated as it is not currently included on the form. Discussion followed regarding practices moving to use longer prescriptions during the COVID pandemic. The issue of batch prescriptions was raised but it was felt that general practitioners do not favour the batch system as it is onerous. It was queried as to whether the recommendation for extended prescribing was to be left to the discretion of the prescriber, and it was confirmed that this was the case in conjunction with the patient and ideally as part of a patient's medication review. It was noted that a move to longer prescribing intervals would release community pharmacist time to undertake more clinical work in line with the new community pharmacy contract.

Action: AWTTTC to incorporate AWPAG comments into the document and then proceed to consultation.

Lloyd Hambridge left the meeting

Emyr Jones joined the meeting

8.2 Care Homes Medicines Optimisation Toolkit

Emyr Jones presented the Care Homes Medicines Optimisation Toolkit document which brings together a suite of resources for care homes. Members were reminded that Emyr Jones was representing John Dicomidis, who had developed the resources. This document was presented at the last meeting of AWPAG and members were

asked to consider the subsequent consultation comments. It was noted that the majority of comments from the consultation were positive, with several comments suggesting extending the scope from nursing homes to include residential settings also. A number of comments suggested additional resources that could be included; members agreed that this would be of benefit for putting through the same process when ready.

The Chair confirmed that members were all supportive of the document and complemented the authors on this piece of work.

Action: Document to proceed to AWMSG for endorsement.

Ms Sheridan Court joined the meeting

Mr Michael Clarke left the meeting

8.3 Polypharmacy – Guidance for prescribing (2022 review

8.3.1 Polypharmacy – Supplementary guidance – BNF sections

Sheridan Court presented the *Polypharmacy document: a practical guide to stopping medication in the elderly*, which members were reminded is an update to the Polypharmacy – Guidance for prescribing (2014).

The intention of the revision is to put more of an elderly care emphasis within the document, rather than try to cover all patient age groups, and in doing so to concentrate on the groups of medicines seen in practice that require review in the elderly population. Members were asked to comment on whether they agreed with this change of emphasis and therefore supported the proposed updates to be made.

Discussion followed regarding whether it would be worth exploring what work Northern Ireland and Scotland were undertaking as it was noted that the Chief Pharmacists were joining forces in looking at policy. Emyr Jones agreed to look into this.

Further discussion followed on whether the BNF sections should be removed from the document and whether an app should be made available. It was agreed that an app should be considered once the document was finalised.

The Chair confirmed that members were supportive of the update to this practical user-friendly guide which will help with guiding practitioners forward.

Action: Emyr Jones to investigate the work of Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Action: Sheridan Court and Emyr Jones to look into App development.

Action: Document to proceed to consultation.

Sheridan Court and Emyr Jones left the meeting.

8.4 Value based prescribing

Richard Boldero gave the background to the Value Based Prescribing document which had recently been out for consultation. Members were asked to review the suggested responses to the consultation comments and particularly consider the comments around whether omalizumab should be added into the basket of biological medicines being considered within the paper.

Members had no further comments on this paper and no issues were raised with the inclusion of omalizumab.

It was noted that this is a long term programme for AWTTTC/AWMSG and it is important to ensure we are working collaboratively with other organisations, particularly the Value Based

Healthcare Team led by Dr Sally Lewis.

Brief discussion followed regarding connecting to the decarbonisation group in Welsh Government for the “Optimal prescribing for environmental benefit” domain.

The Chair confirmed that members were happy for Omalizumab be added to the basket and the document to progress to AWMSG.

Action: Add Omalizumab to basket and document to progress to AWMSG.

8.5 Low Value for Prescribing – paper 1 and paper 3 update

Richard Boldero presented the Low Value for Prescribing paper 1 and paper 3 updates. For paper 1 members were asked to consider and comment on the continuing inclusion of tadalafil items. Following discussion, members agreed for tadalafil to remain within the paper and be reviewed with all of the included ‘low value’ medicines.

For Paper 3 members were asked to consider and comment on changes to the wording for chloral hydrate to reflect the updated MHRA guidance issued in October 2021. Discussion followed and members agreed for the wording to be updated.

Action: Paper 3 to be updated with MHRA wording and progress to AWMSG for information.

Dr Richard Brown left the meeting

8.6 Inhaler decarbonisation report

Richard Boldero presented the inhaler decarbonisation report and highlighted that these reports will be produced monthly and made available on the AWTTTC website. Richard Boldero thanked those members who volunteered to user test the decarbonisation dashboard following the December meeting of AWPAG.

The report was well received by members. It was queried as to where community pharmacy sits with this and community pharmacy education for patients. Sian Evans informed that this is something that PHW are proactively investigating.

Members were notified of the RCGP inhaler decarbonisation webinar to be held on the 28th April 2022, 7-9 pm (<https://rcgpportal.force.com/s/lt-event?id=a1U1i000009jxWDEAY&site=a0d1i00000aKQbhAAG>). It was suggested that primary care education teams be invited to this event and the Chair agreed to share the link with his secondary care nurse colleagues.

Several members informed the group that this area was being proactively worked on within health boards as part of the QAIF primary care projects.

Alan Meudell left the meeting

9.0 Verbal updates

9.1 Resource reallocation (previously Disinvestment)

Richard Boldero thanked those members who volunteered for the expert panel to support this project following the request made at the December 2021 meeting. Members were informed that discussion with the Swansea Centre for Health Economics (SCHE) is ongoing and further updates will be presented at the AWPAG meeting in June.

9.2 Cost of prescribing of drugs for diabetes in Wales and relationship to metabolic control

Kath Haines updated on the progress of the work with SCHE and Professor Dayan

and Dr Peter Taylor on diabetic treatment outcomes in primary care. SCHE is currently developing a research protocol to support this work.

9.3 Potential future workstreams: Review of AWMSG's Guidance for Partnership Working

Kath Haines informed members that the review of the partnership working document is ongoing. The ABPI have fed into the review and the document is currently being updated by AWTTC and will return to AWPAG for discussion later in the year.

9.4 Impact of prescribing intervals on NPI reporting

Claire Thomas highlighted to members that further to the paper presented earlier by Lloyd Hambridge on the move towards a longer prescribing interval, this will have an impact on reporting for some of the NPIs. Members were reminded that these areas currently reported quarterly and compared with the same quarter from the previous year but going forward this may not be appropriate for some indicators. Members were asked to forward to AWTTC any comments regarding this, and it was noted that AWTTC are in discussion with shared services regarding this issue. There were no further comments.

Action: Members to forward any comments to AWTTC.

9.5 Prescribing decision support software update

Claire Thomas informed members that work had been undertaken with OptimiseRX and ScriptSwitch in respect of developing messages. With Optimise Rx the messages were centred around the prescribing safety indicators and would be available to those practices in Powys and BCU health boards who use OptimiseRx.

Messages for ScriptSwitch had been developed to support the NPI for decarbonisation of inhalers. Members were asked if they were happy with the proposed messages; if so they would be added to the portal for health boards to download to their own profiles.

A short discussion followed regarding links to patient leaflets and to the app developed by RHIG. Kath Haines agreed to speak with Simon Barry regarding the app.

Members confirmed they were happy for the messages to be added to the ScriptSwitch portal.

Action: Kath Haines to speak with Simon Barry regarding the app.

Action: Claire Thomas to add messages to ScriptSwitch portal.

9.6 All Wales Chronic Pain Resources

Paul Deslandes informed members that an updated document had been forwarded by the authors. There had been some extensive changes following the consultation comments and the document will be presented at AWPAG in June.

9.7 Tramadol Patient Information Leaflet

Paul Deslandes thanked members for the feedback regarding the Tramadol Patient Information leaflet. Members were informed that a concern had been raised regarding the Welsh translation of the leaflet. This had now been addressed and feedback on the updated version of the Welsh version was awaited.

10.0 Best Practice Day – 19th July 2022

Kath Haines informed members that the next Best Practice Day was planned for the 19th July 2022 (date to be confirmed). It was suggested that a themed topic of decarbonisation/sustainability in relation to medicines would be good to showcase initiatives, to which members agreed. Members were also asked regarding the Best Practice Day being held in person, hybrid or remaining as a virtual event; it was unanimously felt that the day should remain virtual.

11.0 Chief Pharmacists

Bethan Tranter gave feedback on three key items from the Chief Pharmacists.

TRAMS - Transforming Access to Medicines Service

This work involves the consolidation of 16 aseptic units in district general hospitals into three regional hubs, the first one due to go live circa May 2024. Currently job descriptions are being developed, which are due out to advert soon and staff engagement is anticipated to commence in quarter 1 of 2022-23. The first round of stakeholder meetings has recently been concluded. The group have secured funding for a science manufacturing technician course in aseptic services and the first cohort of students are due to commence in the next couple of months.

Workforce planning

Members were informed that pharmacists are on the occupation shortage list. In conjunction with HEIW, workforce planning workstreams have been arranged to ensure that all those working in pharmacy are working to the top of their license in order for pharmacy to deliver a healthier Wales.

Pharmacogenetics

In anticipation of the huge influx of pharmacogenetic medicines coming to Wales, in partnership with the All Wales Medicines Genetics Service and following discussions with AWTTTC, it was noted that Betsi Cadwaladr UHB are hosting an interim consultant pharmacist post in pharmacogenetics. There are currently two post holders in Wales, Sophie Harding, Velindre and Geraldine McCaffrey, Betsi Cadwaladr. They will be undertaking horizon scanning to see what is further needed within Wales. Sophie is also on secondment with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society to undertake a piece of work looking at pharmacy's role in relation to pharmacogenomics. It was suggested that Sophie and Geraldine come to talk to AWPAG at some point in the near future.

Action: Invite Sophie Harding and Geraldine McCaffrey to AWPAG to discuss their roles.

Sudhir Sehwat left the meeting

12.0 Feedback from Health Boards and Velindre NHS Trust

Betsi Cadwaladr – The medicines management enhanced service had been signed off and is going out to primary care, large parts of which are related to decarbonisation.

Hywel Dda – There was nothing to feedback from Hywel Dda UHB.

Swansea Bay – Looking at their prescribing management scheme, keeping an NPI focus.

Powys – Decarbonisation agenda work has been constant for the last two months.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg – Awaiting final sign off on their prescribing management scheme; looking at pain and hypnotic usage. As is currently being undertaken in Scotland, it was queried as to whether public pain awareness sessions could be arranged? Kath Haines suggested that this could be discussed when the chronic pain document returns to AWPAG in June.

Cardiff & Vale – The incentive scheme has been approved and gone out to practices. Decarbonisation - encouraging patients to have the right inhaler. NPI performance has

gone well for Cardiff and Vale this year. Quality improvement audits underway.
Aneurin Bevan – Different from other health boards as medicines management and primary care pharmacist teams have been redeployed to the vaccine programme. Staff are now slowly getting released back into their core roles which will give more support for the medicines management agenda going forward. The incentive scheme is in the process of being finalised.

13.0 Any other business

There was no further business.

14.0 Date of next meeting: 29th June 2022

Members were informed that this meeting may be a hybrid meeting.