

**ALL WALES PRESCRIBING ADVISORY GROUP (AWPAG)**

**Minutes of meeting held on**

**17<sup>th</sup> September 2025 commencing at 9.30 am**

**Held at the All Nations Centre, Cardiff and via Teams**

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

**Voting members**

Mrs Dianne Burnett	Director Welsh Medicines Advice Service
Ms Helen Davies	Principal Pharmacist for Medicines Optimisation in Primary Care, Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB
Ms Cassandra Edgar	Clinical Effectiveness Lead Pharmacist, Primary Care, Betsi Cadwaladr UHB
Dr Jennifer Ellis	General Practitioner, Betsi Cadwaladr UHB
Mrs Sian Evans	Consultant in Public Health, Public Health Wales
Ms Hazel Hopkins	Prescribing Support Pharmacist, Hywel Dda UHB
Dr Lynette James	All Wales Consultant Pharmacist, Acute Care & Medication Safety
Mrs Rachel Jenkins	ABPI representative
Mr Malcolm Latham	Lay member
Mr Samuel MacDonald	Principal Pharmacist, Velindre NHS Trust
Mrs Eryl Smeethe	Lead Prescribing Advisor, Aneurin Bevan UHB
Mr Emyr Stephens	Lead Pharmacist for Primary, Community and Intermediate Care, Cardiff & Vale UHB
Dr Evan Sun	General Practitioner, Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB
Ms Bethan Thain	Primary Care Pharmacist, Medicines Management, Swansea Bay UHB
Mr Owain Williams	Director of Pharmacy, Hywel Dda
Mrs Fiona Woods	Lay member

**In attendance (non-voting)**

Ms Joe Castle	ABPI
Mrs Claire Thomas	AWTTC Head of WAPSU and Medicines Optimisation
Mr Richard Boldero	AWTTC WAPSU Pharmacist
Dr Paul Deslandes	AWTTC WAPSU Pharmacist
Mrs Karen Jones	AWTTC Senior Pharmacist
Ms Shaila Ahmed	AWTTC Senior Pharmacist
Mrs Sabrina Rind	AWTTC Senior Pharmacist
Dr Katherine Chaplin	AWTTC Scientist
Mrs Sian Harbon	AWTTC Medical Writer

**Observing**

Mrs Ruth Lang	AWTTC Head of Administration and Liaison Manager
Ms Jessica Morgan	AWTTC Communications

## External presenters

NAME	ITEM	TITLE
<b>Jane Hoidn</b> Pharmacy Manager GUH/Principal Pharmacist Patient Services AB UHB <b>Emyr Jones</b> Consultant Pharmacist, National Lead for Wales: Community Healthcare C&V UHB <b>Rafia Jamil</b> Deputy Head of Pharmacy YCR and YCC and Principal Pharmacist CTM UHB	7.1	All Wales Self-administration of medicines (SAM) framework
<b>Emyr Jones</b>	7.2	All Wales Guidance to support integrated medicines management in community settings
<b>Mike George</b> National GOSW Clinical Lead NWSSP-PCS	7.3	Wales General Ophthalmic Services – Signed Orders Formulary
<b>Alya Al-Affan</b> Advanced Medicines Advice Pharmacist C&V UHB <b>Nia Sainsbury</b> Advanced Pharmacist Medicines Advice CTM UHB <b>Carys James</b> Community Pharmacy Facilitator CTM UHB	7.5	All Wales Common Ailments Service formulary – Minor updates
<b>Mared Owen</b> Specialist HIV Pharmacist BCU UHB <b>Jonathan Underwood</b> Consultant Physician – Internal Medicine C&V UHB <b>Sarah Hulse</b> Consultant Blood Borne Virus Pharmacist BCU UHB	7.7	HIV-1 antiretroviral prescribing guidelines

## Key of abbreviations

ADSS	The Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru
AWMSG	All Wales Medicines Strategy Group
AWTTC	All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre
CAS	Common Ailments Service
DPI	Dry power inhaler
NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
PHW	Public Health Wales
SCW	Social Care Wales
SMI	Soft Mist Inhalers
SPIRA	Server for Prescribing Information Reporting and Analysis
UHB	University Health Board
WAPSU	Welsh Analytical Prescribing Support Unit

## **1.0 Welcome and introduction**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed members.

## **2.0 Apologies**

The Chair informed members that apologies had been received from:

Mrs Clare Clement - Lead Pharmacist, Primary Community and Intermediate Care Clinical Board

Mr Usman Malik – Principal Pharmacist Clinical Services, Velindre

Mr Jonathan Smith – Community Pharmacist

Ms Sue Knights – ABPI Wales

Ms Sarah Davies – Senior Lecturer Advanced Clinical Practice, Swansea University

Ms Jacqueline Price – Alternate nurse member

Dr Andrew Champion – AWTTTC Programme Director

## **3.0 Declarations of Interest and Confidentiality Agreement**

The Chair asked members to declare any interests relevant to the agenda. One declaration of interest was received but was not deemed relevant to the agenda.

## **4.0 Chair's report**

### **Membership**

#### **Appointments**

The Chair was pleased to announce the appointments of Dr Evan Sun, GP, Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB and Mr Samuel MacDonald, alternate pharmacist representative, Velindre NHS Trust. The Chair informed members that Sue Beach had recently tendered her resignation as alternate pharmacist member, Hywel Dda UHB. The Chair thanked Sue for her contribution over the years and wished her well for the future.

The Chair reminded members that there are currently vacancies for doctor members from Swansea Bay, Hywel Dda, Aneurin Bevan, and Powys health boards, in addition to Velindre NHS Trust.

## **5.0 Minutes of previous AWPAG meeting – 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

The minutes of the previous meeting were checked and agreed.

## **6.0 Feedback from AWMSG – 15<sup>th</sup> July and 10<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

Members were provided with feedback from the most recent meetings of AWMSG:

### **For endorsement**

- Primary Care Antimicrobial Guidelines – COVID-19 antivirals monograph
- All Wales Shared Care Framework
- Common Ailments Service Formulary – Monograph for back pain

### **For information**

- Strategies to reduce gabapentinoid prescribing in NHS Wales – Evidence report
- Common Ailments Service Formulary – Minor updates (Sore throat)
- Primary Care Antimicrobial Guidelines – Minor updates
- National Prescribing Indicators 2024–2025: Analysis of prescribing data to March 2025
- NHS Wales inhaler carbon footprint report – May 2025
- Retirement of AWMSG-endorsed medicines optimisation resources – Update for members

## **7.0 Documents for discussion**

### **7.1 Self-administration of medicines (SAM) framework**

Jane Hoidn, Emyr Jones and Rafia Jamil provided members with an overview and background to the development of the framework.

The purpose of the document is to provide a single national approach for the self-administration of medicines by patients during admission to secondary care with the aim of providing clear, standardised guidance to ensure that patients who self-administer their medicines at home can do so safely during hospital admission. It will also align with efforts to reduce hospital-acquired deconditioning and enhance patient autonomy as part of the Safe Care Collaborative.

This framework will change the current default position whereby most patients don't self-administer, to the majority of patients self-administering, unless there is a specific reason for them not to. Members agreed that implementation will be vital and engagement with health boards and patients is ongoing. This framework will be piloted across health boards, specialities and different ward settings to understand better the different patient cohorts.

Members requested that the flow chart in the appendix was moved into the main document, closer to the start for users to follow. Members requested that the risk assessment form was reviewed, and questions added from the perspective of harm reduction and to enable a robust audit trail. Members discussed whether this document was suitable for patients in A&E settings and members agreed that it would be but should come down to local implementation.

Members were supportive of the document and that, overall, the assumption would be that patients would be responsible for taking their own medication whilst in hospital.

**Action: Document to be updated followed by consultation**

### **7.2 Guidance to support integrated medicines management in community settings**

Emyr Jones provided an overview of the guidance and the process to date. The document has been through a wide range of consultations, including more focussed follow-up consultations with key stakeholders, in order to optimise successful implementation across health and social care. The document will be helpful as a strategic driver to help change current practices. It was noted that the original consultation comments suggested a need for guidance regarding compliance aids. A separate piece of work is now underway, and this has been highlighted within the document. Similarly, a need for more detailed All-Wales guidance for training and education in medicines management across health and social care was also identified and work with HEIW has now begun.

It was highlighted that 'co-badging' this work with key stakeholders such as Care Inspectorate Wales, ADSS and SCW would be important in raising awareness with social care who may not be familiar with AWMSG.

There was discussion around whether this document needed further consultation or whether members were happy for it to proceed to AWMSG. Members agreed that the document should proceed to AWMSG.

**Action: Proceed to AWMSG for endorsement.**

### **7.3 Wales General Ophthalmic Services – Signed orders formulary**

Mike George gave an overview of changes to the document following consultation and noted that Welsh Government colleagues were very pleased by the engagement received during consultation. It was highlighted that any responses that were not within the scope of the document have been noted and may be addressed by future service changes. Some consultation responses suggested treatments outside of the regulations that permit signed orders, but it was noted that a UK government consultation is currently ongoing into optometrist signed orders, therefore this document may need updating in light of those findings. Some comments regarding the inclusion of brand names were noted, however it was agreed that this may cause issues when certain brands are not available. It was highlighted that part of the scope of the wider work is to review data in a few years' time to demonstrate the impact of the service, and Welsh Government are part of that work.

**Action: Proceed to AWMSG for endorsement.**

### **7.4 All Wales COPD management and prescribing guideline – Minor update**

Richard Boldero informed members that Dr Ramsey Sabit, primary author, was unable to attend the meeting and therefore would update members on his behalf. Richard Boldero highlighted that the proposed update to the existing algorithm was to change the carbon footprint colour of the Trixeo Aerosphere® inhaler, from red to green, to reflect the imminent change from high global warming potential to low global potential. Members agreed this constituted a minor update and agreed this was a precedent for how to deal with similar future updates, in light of low global warming potential metered dose inhalers, where these specific inhalers are already in the asthma or COPD treatment pathways.

There was extensive discussion around the data measurement of these inhalers, and the potential impact this would have on the National Prescribing Indicators (NPIs). Members agreed that the current basket of DPI/SMIs would be continued as the numerator, and that AWTTTC would pull a second set of data for 12 months that would include the additional next generation metered dose inhaler(s) within the numerator. It was noted that the NPI Specification document would be amended to reflect this.

**Action: Publish updated guideline on the AWTTTC website, followed by presentation to AWMSG for information.**

**Action: NPI specification to be amended.**

**Action: Review data in 12 months.**

### **7.5 All Wales Common Ailments Service formulary – Acne vulgaris, Haemorrhoids, Oral thrush, Vulvovaginal thrush – minor updates**

Shaila Ahmed and Dianne Burnett provided an overview of proposed updates to the document, asking members to decide whether these should be considered minor or

major updates. The updates related to the acne, haemorrhoids, oral thrush, and vulvovaginal thrush monographs.

For the acne monograph, members were asked to consider whether the number of consultations per episode should be increased to allow for an alternative preparation if the initial treatment is not tolerated. Members agreed that a second consultation would be appropriate in cases where patients experience an adverse reaction such as irritation and that providing a replacement treatment in these situations would be reasonable. Members also discussed whether photosensitivity associated with the two new preparations should be included in the monograph, as well as whether the advantages and disadvantages of each preparation should be outlined. They were advised that photosensitivity would be addressed in the patient group direction (PGD) and agreed it should also be noted in the topical treatment considerations column, along with wording about patient preference and making decisions based on the pros and cons of each treatment. Members were advised that the requirement for effective contraception when using topical retinoids would be covered in the PGD. The PGD would also determine whether the medicine is suitable for the patient, and a patient information leaflet would be available. Finally, there was discussion about acne rosacea; although it is not included in the common ailments service formulary, members considered including it as a referral criterion.

**Action: Minor updates to the Acne vulgaris monograph to be published after the agreed amendments have been made, followed by a presentation to AWMSG for information.**

Members were informed that the haemorrhoids monograph had been updated to include non-pregnant individuals aged 16 years and older, lowering the previous minimum age from 18. Members were also informed that Anodesyn® ointment and suppositories are no longer listed as treatment options due to low usage, with suitable alternatives already available via CAS. Members requested that tenesmus - the feeling of incomplete bowel emptying be added to the monograph, with advice to refer individuals for same day GP assessment.

**Action: Minor updates to the Haemorrhoids monograph to be published after the agreed amendments have been made, followed by a presentation to AWMSG for information.**

Members were informed that the oral thrush monograph had been updated to align with the AWMSG primary care antimicrobial guidelines. They were also advised that miconazole oral gel remains included as a treatment option, as it is considered first-line. However, all 80g pack sizes have been discontinued, and the 15g pack is currently out of stock due to a long-term supply issue. It is hoped that supply will return in the future, and the monograph will be updated if a different pack size becomes available.

**Action: Minor updates to the Oral Thrush monograph to be published, followed by a presentation to AWMSG for information.**

During the discussion of the vulvovaginal thrush monograph, members agreed that the referral criteria should be reviewed. It was agreed to remove the word “otherwise” from the sentence “Individuals who are otherwise systemically unwell.” Members also

discussed recurrent thrush and the importance of ruling out undiagnosed diabetes and agreed that this should be added to the monograph.

**Action: Vulvovaginal thrush monograph to be amended and circulated for electronic sign-off, followed by publication and presentation to AWMSG for information.**

## **7.6 Prescribing dilemmas – Minor update**

Paul Deslandes gave an overview of a recent Welsh Health Circular regarding the licensing of special procedures (e.g. piercing and tattooing) in Wales and noted that GPs can treat requests for second opinions from people who have been declined a procedure as private work. Members were of the view that there was no need to reference this within the document as it was not directly relevant to prescribing. Paul Deslandes informed members that it had been brought to AWTTTC's attention that the erectile dysfunction section still linked to the recently retired AWMSG erectile dysfunction resource. There was extensive discussion around this section, and it was suggested that the section could be removed as it is no longer considered a prescribing dilemma. A vote was held with the majority of members voting for removal of the section.

The final update considered was to Section 14 – Visitors. This followed publication of a recent Welsh Health Circular, which required some minor updates to be made to references within the section. Members were happy with the proposed changes, and for the updated document to be published and presented to AWMSG for information.

**Action: Remove section 12 – Medicines for the treatment of Erectile Dysfunction.**

**Action: Update section 14 –Visitors with new references.**

**Action: Updated document to be published on website and presented to AWMSG for information.**

## **7.7 HIV-1 antiretroviral prescribing guidelines**

Karen Jones introduced the document and gave an overview of the process so far, and introduced Mared Owen, Jonathan Underwood and Sarah Hulse, authors and members of the working group of the All-Wales HIV Pharmacist Group and All Wales Antiretroviral Prescribing Group. Mared Owen and Jonathan Underwood provided an overview of minor changes made to the document since the AWPAG meeting in June. It was noted that the British HIV Association (BHIVA) guidelines are currently under review which may have an impact on the draft document, however more will be known when the BHIVA guidelines are consulted on later in the year.

Jonathan Underwood asked about the potential for monitoring the future impact of the guidelines using prescribing and outcomes data and it was agreed that this could be discussed further with AWTTTC outside the meeting.

AWPAG members agreed the document could proceed to consultation, taking into account the timing of BHIVA consultations.

**Action: Proceed to consultation.**

## **7.8 National Prescribing Indicators 2024–2025: A focus on 4C prescribing**

Katherine Chaplin gave members an overview of the document which had been produced as a supplement to the quarterly report. The report provides a summary

showing trends in 4C (co-amoxiclav, cephalosporins, fluoroquinolones and clindamycin) prescribing at a cluster and practice level. Members discussed the addition of defined daily dose (DDD) as well as item numbers, and how this measure can be used to show the total dose being supplied, rather than just the number of items, which is useful for antibiotic resistance monitoring. Katherine Chaplin informed members that she would be presenting the paper at the Antimicrobial Stewardship Forum in October and would take to the antimicrobial primary care group meeting.

**Action: Paper to be presented to AWMSG for information**

## **8.0 Document Review Process**

### **8.1 AWMSG-endorsed medicines optimisation documents – Consideration of older resources for review**

AWPAG members were requested to consider the decision frameworks prepared for four current medicines optimisation resources.

Shaila Ahmed presented each Shared Care resource, outlining the reasons for the proposal to retire each one, and highlighting superseding guidance and alternative resources that could be signposted to. Members were asked for their thoughts on the resources below.

1. Prescribing of denosumab (Prolia) in Wales with Shared Care Protocol
2. Shared care protocol template – Subcutaneous methotrexate
3. Shared care protocol template – Amiodarone

Members considered these documents and agreed to retire these resources.

**Action: All shared care documents to be retired.**

Richard Boldero presented the Low Value for Prescribing papers. The Directors of Pharmacy Value and Sustainability Delivery Assurance Group had highlighted that some recommendations may require more up-to-date evidence to support implementation. Review and update would present the opportunity to combine the separate papers into a single resource, and possibly group by recommendation type. NHS England and NHS Scotland have recently reviewed and issued similar guidance respectively. Whilst both do not cover all the same medicines as the NHS Wales papers, most medicines/medicine groups are featured in at least one of them.

Members voted for the resource to remain on website unchanged with note flagging revision to follow

**Action: Low Value For Prescribing to be scheduled for an update.**

## **9.0 Verbal updates**

### **9.1 Endocrine management of gender incongruence in adults – Minor update consideration**

Shaila Ahmed advised members that the off-label use of micronised progesterone is still under discussion with the authors. Members agreed that in the meantime the update to the document detailing endometrial screening discussed in June could go ahead.

**Action: Update document with minor change to endometrial screening section and publish on website**

**Action: Presentation to AWMSG for information.**

### **9.2 Prescribing Intervals**

Karen Jones thanked members for the expressions of interest received so far, however noted that additional members are still required to join the short life working group, namely GPs, a practice manager and a prescribing clerk. A meeting date will be set once the final report from the behavioural insights work commissioned by Welsh Government is available.

### **9.3 SPIRA Steering Committee feedback**

Richard Boldero fed back on the committee meeting that occurred on the 16 July 2025. He noted a need for prioritisation of training and that a questionnaire had been sent out with a completion date of October 3. The questionnaire would also be circulated to members. It was also highlighted that SPIRA steering committee members had thanked Helen Adams, data analyst in WAPSU and BCU, for all of her work in contributing to the development of SPIRA and the NPI data which had been fundamental within the department. The Chair echoed these comments and offered his own appreciation to Helen, wishing her a very happy retirement.

### **9.4 Learning at Lunch**

Siân Harbon informed members that a one-off learning at lunch session on the treatment of Covid-19, to support implementation of the Covid-19 monograph within the primary care antimicrobial guidelines, is available on the AWTTTC website. The next learning at lunch session will take place on October 1 with talks from the Greener Primary Care initiative and the National Clinical Lead for the Women's Health Network.

### **9.5 Best Practice Day 2026**

Claire Thomas informed members that the 2026 Best Practice Day will be held on July 9 in the All Nations Centre, with a proposed theme of sustainability. Members are welcome to suggest areas of focus.

### **9.6 Your Medicines, Your Health (YMYH)**

Claire Thomas updated members that the first campaign for YMYH will be Only Order What You Need, building on the work undertaken in Aneurin Bevan. A team from across Wales will attend the Spread and Scale Academy with the aim of learning how to scale the scheme across Wales.

### **9.7 Pre-prescribing for trainees**

Lynette James advised that discussions are ongoing with relevant stakeholders. Aspects considered so far include who could be eligible for pre-prescribing, the prerequisites, and possible supervisors. This document will sit under the patient experience Directors of Pharmacy Delivery Assurance Group but will follow the AWPAG/AWMSG process for endorsement.

### **9.8 Medicines Optimisation Framework Review**

Claire Thomas provided an overview regarding the need for a review of the medicines optimisation framework, and informed members that a draft scope had been developed and would be presented to members in December. Claire Thomas highlighted that AWPAG members are key stakeholders in the process and their input will be vital.

### **9.9 AWPAG Constitution**

Claire Thomas noted that the Chair had written to DHCW for nomination of a clinical rep to join AWPAG. No formal response had been received to date; however, discussions were ongoing. Due to the lack of GP membership on AWPAG from numerous health boards, a review of the constitution was being considered.

### **10.0 Feedback from the All Wales Directors of Pharmacy**

Owain Williams informed members that the Value and Sustainability Delivery Assurance Group had met three times with work progressing at pace. The other Directors of Pharmacy Delivery Assurance Groups are driving forward, and the Enhancing Patient Experience group is pleased that the self-administration of medicines framework is in development. Work is ongoing to try and ensure pharmacy presence in all the clinical networks across Wales. In addition, work progresses to standardise job descriptions for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in secondary care which will lead on to developing job plans for these roles.

### **11.0 Feedback from Health Boards and Velindre NHS Trust**

Members were invited to feedback anything of note, however there was nothing to report.

### **12.0 Feedback from Public Health Wales**

Sian Evans informed members that PHW are continuing to review the QI element of the GMS contract to establish the impact of the QI projects. Members were informed that the NHS Wales Strategic Decarbonisation Delivery Plan is being reviewed with the updated version due out by the end of the year.

### **13.0 Any other business**

Katherine Chaplin advised that a single antimicrobial stewardship resource for Wales is under development. Members were asked to inform AWTTTC of any resources they might have that could be included.

Members were informed that a training day for all AWMSG members and members of its sub committees would be held on January 29, 2026.

**Post meeting note: This event has been cancelled.**

### **14.0 Date of next meeting: Wednesday December 10, 2025**