

Developing an All Wales New Treatment Fund Monitoring System to demonstrate the rapid and comprehensive uptake of medicines deemed clinically-effective and cost-effective by NICE or AWMMSG

Background

The Welsh Government launched the New Treatment Fund in January 2017. It provides an additional £16 million annually for each health board and one healthcare providing trust to support the faster introduction of new medicines recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) or the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG)¹. The New Treatment Fund requires recommended medicines to be available to the people of Wales “as soon as is reasonably practicable” and certainly within 60 days of the publication of any positive recommendation. The project goal was to develop a system to enable effective monitoring of health board and trust adherence to the New Treatment Fund requirements; thereby capturing how the New Treatment Fund has improved access to medicines for people in Wales.

Aim

To develop a monitoring system for the formulary addition of medicines within the New Treatment Fund.

Methods

The agreed monitoring process was developed via a series of task and finish group meetings with relevant stakeholders. These included representatives from the health boards and trust in Wales, Welsh Government, the All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre (AWTTC), and the NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS). Through a collaborative expert approach and using a nominal group technique, the data requirements and the criteria to be monitored within the New Treatment Fund were agreed². The essential minimum dataset was to be the medicine’s current formulary status and the time to formulary addition. AWTTC sourced a secure, password-controlled, cloud-based solution which is accessible to all stakeholders, where they can input their latest formulary information, and receive updates in real-time. This platform has been utilised by AWTTC to provide bespoke analytics pertinent to the New Treatment Fund data and to support the health boards and trust in meeting the monitoring requirements stipulated by Welsh Government. Pre-New Treatment Fund medicines data was available for a six-month period (n=59).

Results

This monitoring system provides data on formulary status and time to addition for all medicines within the New Treatment Fund for health boards and trust, within a variety of formats appropriate to the recipient’s needs. Data submitted by the health boards and trust are also summarised on a monthly basis for their review and validation. The examples shown in Figures 1 and 2 below are for medicines added to the New Treatment Fund between January 2017 and December 2019 (n=225). As the healthcare providing trust that is included in the New Treatment Fund monitoring only provides services to treat certain types of cancer, there is a limited number of medicines that are relevant to it. Therefore, the data for this trust is not presented in the figures below.

The monitoring system enables publicly accessible reports to be produced on the formulary status of medicines across Wales⁴. These reports have been utilised in raising public awareness of the New Treatment Fund and the benefits it is bringing in the speedier access to medicines for people in Wales³. After three years of the New Treatment Fund being active, the average time taken for newly-recommended medicines to become available to patients had decreased by 85% from 90 days to 13 days (p<0.01)⁵. As shown in figure 2, the time to formulary addition varies across health boards. However, all have an average time below 30 days from addition to the New Treatment Fund and to when the medicine was made available on the health board formulary.



Figure 1. A bar chart to show the number of medicines on health board formularies within 30 and 60 days of addition to the New Treatment Fund

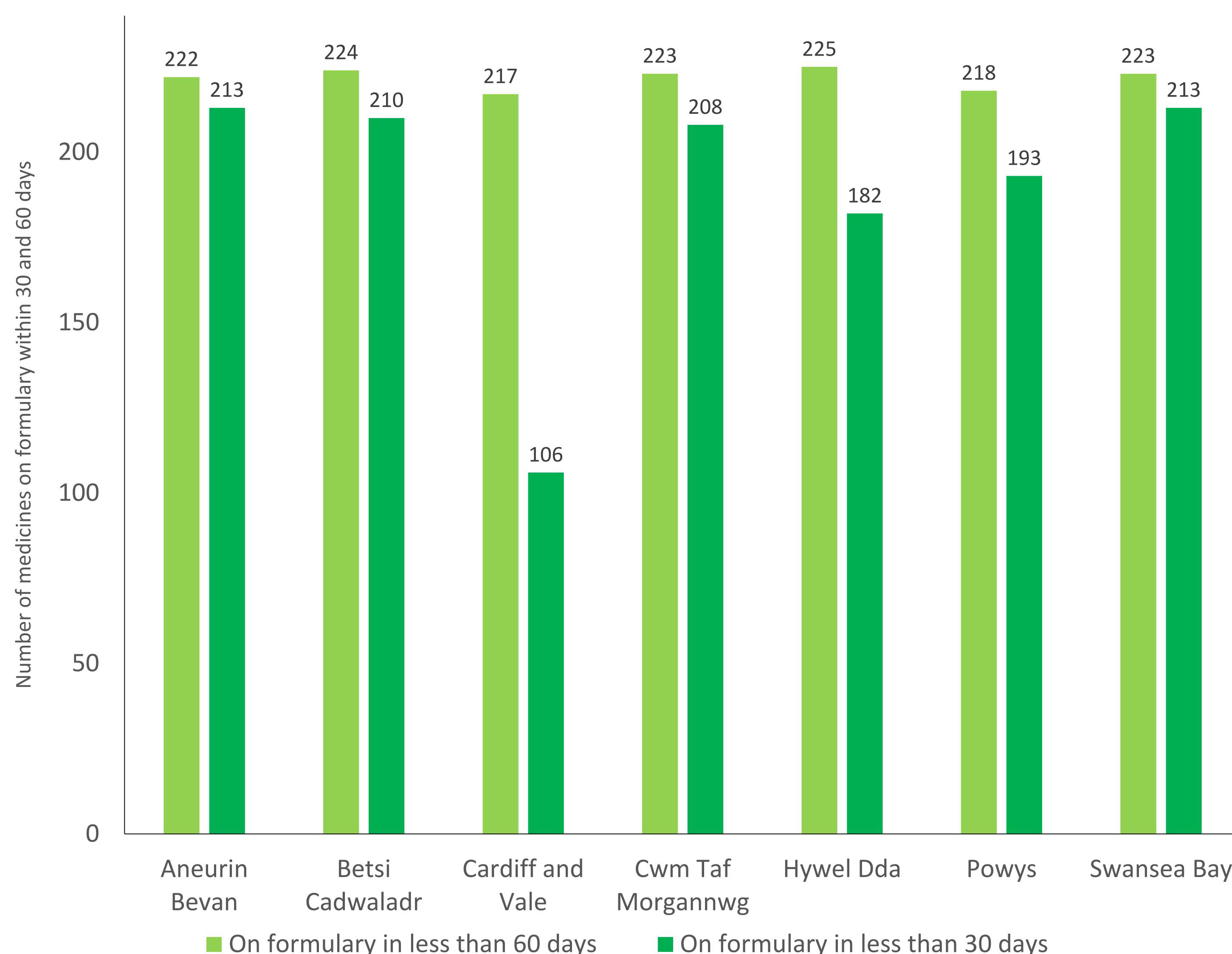
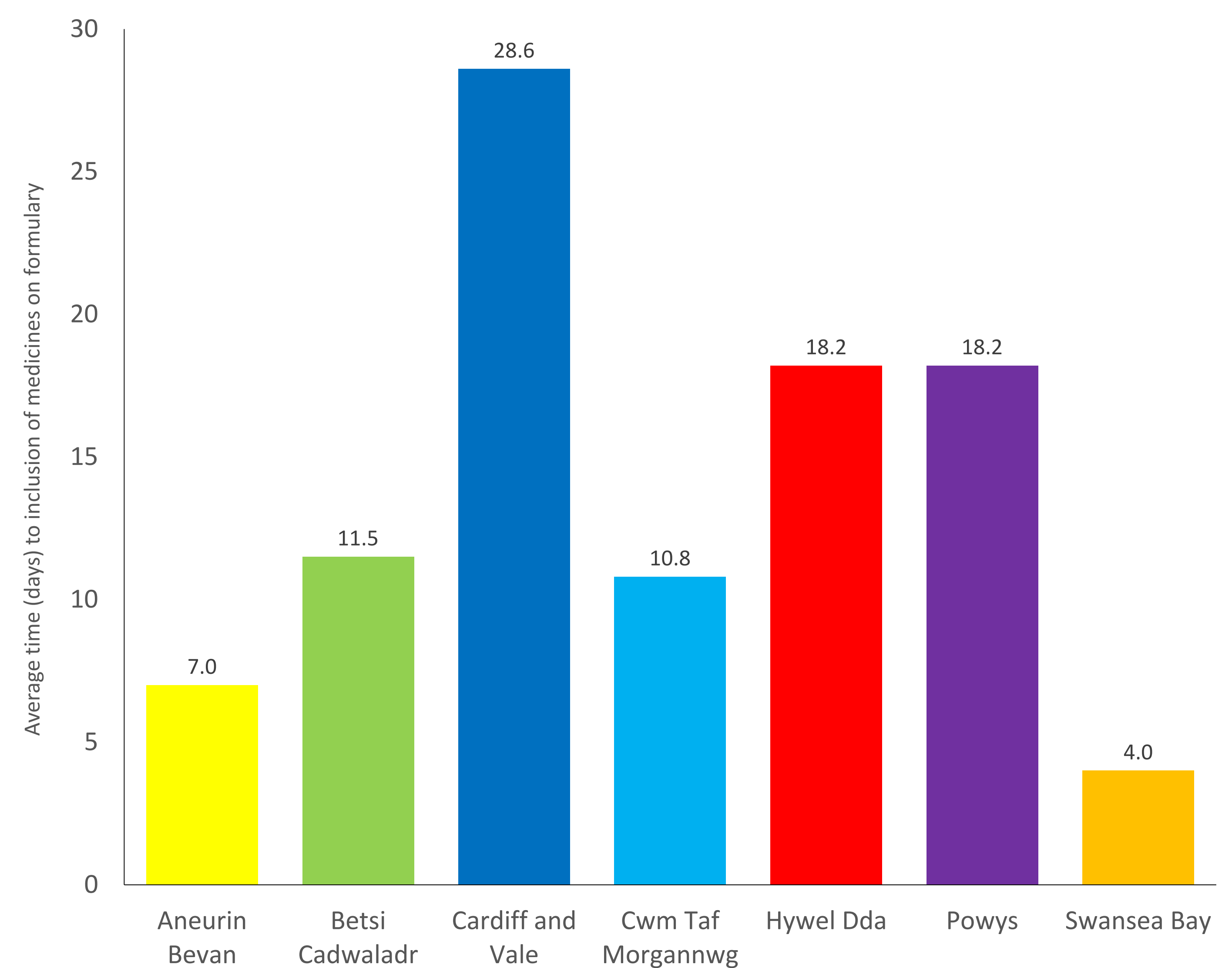


Figure 2. A bar chart to show the mean time taken (days) for health boards to have medicines on formulary following addition to the New Treatment Fund



Conclusion

Prior to setting up the monitoring system, the formulary status of medicines recommended by NICE or AWMMSG were only available from individual systems. At the request of Welsh Government and in collaboration with other stakeholders, AWTTC has created an innovative and robust system for the accurate monitoring of the formulary addition of medicines within the New Treatment Fund by individual organisations. This provides a transparent system for demonstrating the rapid and comprehensive uptake of medicines deemed clinically-effective and cost-effective by NICE or AWMMSG.

References

1. The New Treatment Fund - Access to medicines recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the All-Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG). Welsh Government. 2017. Accessed 24/07/20.
2. Harvey and Holmes. Nominal group technique: An effective method for attaining group consensus. International Journal of Nursing Practice. 2012;18:188-194.
3. BBC news. 2017-2020. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales>. Accessed 16/12/2020.
4. The New Treatment Fund: Medicines Recommended by NICE and AWMMSG Health Board Formulary Status (from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019). The All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre. 2020. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-02/the-new-treatment-fund-health-board-formulary-status-2019.pdf>. Accessed 06/01/2021.
5. New Treatment Fund cuts average access time for new medicines from 90 days to 13 days. Welsh Government. 2020. Accessed 24/09/20.

Boldero R¹, Curran T¹, Haines K¹, Morton M², Routledge PA¹.

¹. All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre, The Routledge Academic Centre, Cardiff, Wales.

². Health and Social Services Group, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, Wales.