

# Annual prescribing report 2022-2023



This report has been developed by:



## Betsi Cadwaladr

### KEY

- Aneurin Bevan
- + Cardiff and Vale
- ◆ Hywel Dda
- ✕ Swansea Bay
- Betsi Cadwaladr
- ★ Cwm Taf Morgannwg
- ▲ Powys



This logo is displayed alongside sections of the report where further data are available on the Server for Prescribing Information Reporting and Analysis (SPIRA). Find out more at [awttc.nhs.wales](http://awttc.nhs.wales)

## Analgesics

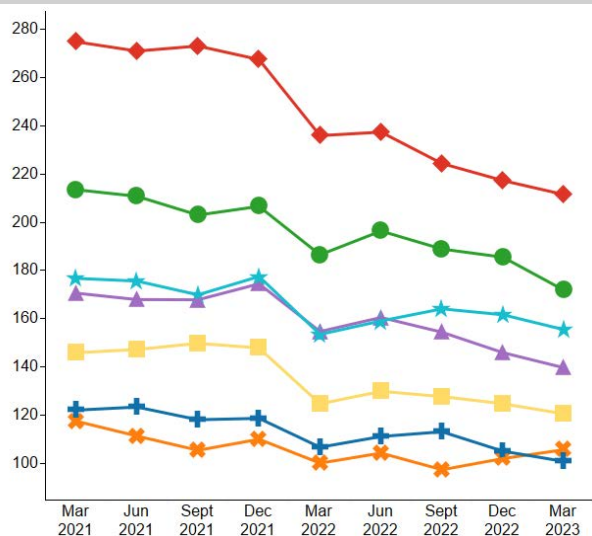
## High-strength opioid prescribing

National Prescribing Indicator 2022-2025

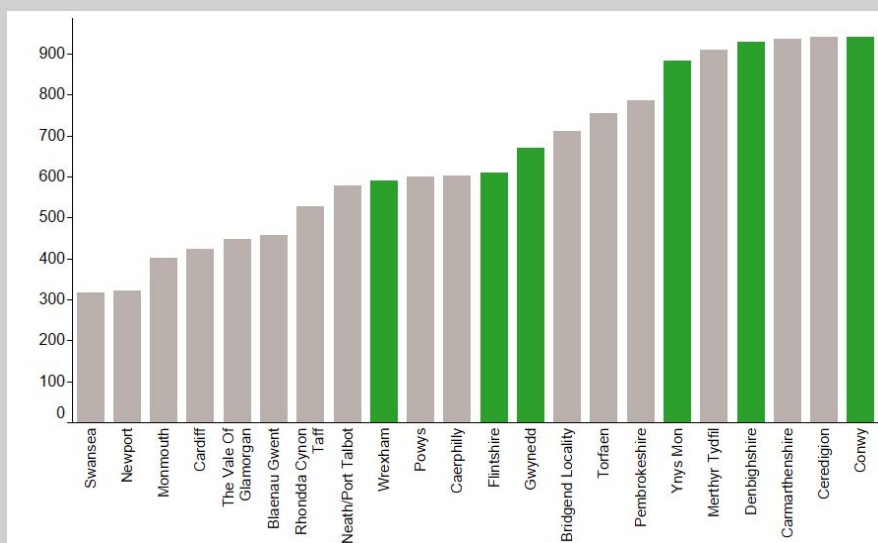


Due to a lack of evidence of effectiveness, opioids are not recommended as a treatment option for the management of chronic primary pain. The British Medical Association briefing paper, *Chronic Pain: supporting safer prescribing of analgesics*, notes that too many chronic pain patients are prescribed opioids at high doses. The aim of this measure is to encourage the appropriate use and review of opioids, minimising the potential for dependence, diversion, misuse and adverse drug reactions.

High-strength opioid prescribing (ADQs per 1,000 patients) - Quarterly trend up to March 2023



High-strength opioid prescribing (ADQs per 1,000 patients) - Locality data - Financial year 2022-2023



When compared with the previous year, Betsi Cadwaladr's performance **IMPROVED**

High-strength opioid prescribing decreased by **8.0%** in 2022-2023



Out of the 7 health boards, Betsi Cadwaladr is ranked:  
 % change from last year : **4<sup>th</sup>**  
 Current overall performance : **6<sup>th</sup>**

## GLOSSARY

**ADQs** – **average daily quantity** – a measure of prescribing volume based upon prescribing behaviour in England. It represents the assumed average maintenance dose per day for a medicine used for its main indication in adults. ADQ is not a recommended dose but an analytical unit to compare prescribing activity.

**DDDs** – **defined daily dose** – a unit of measurement developed by the World Health Organization whereby each medicine is assigned a value within its recognised dosage range. The value is the assumed average maintenance dose per day for a medicine when used for its main indication in adults. A medicine can have different DDDs depending on the route of administration.

**STAR-PU**s – **specific therapeutic group age-sex related prescribing units** – designed to measure prescribing weighted for age and sex of patients. There are differences in the age and sex of patients for whom medicines in specific therapeutic groups are usually prescribed. To make such comparisons, STAR-PU have been developed based on costs of prescribing or items within therapeutic groups.

## Analgesics

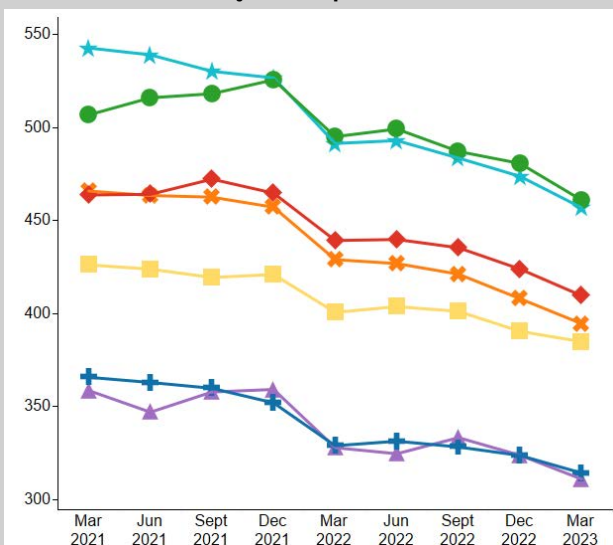
## Tramadol

National Prescribing Indicator 2022-2025

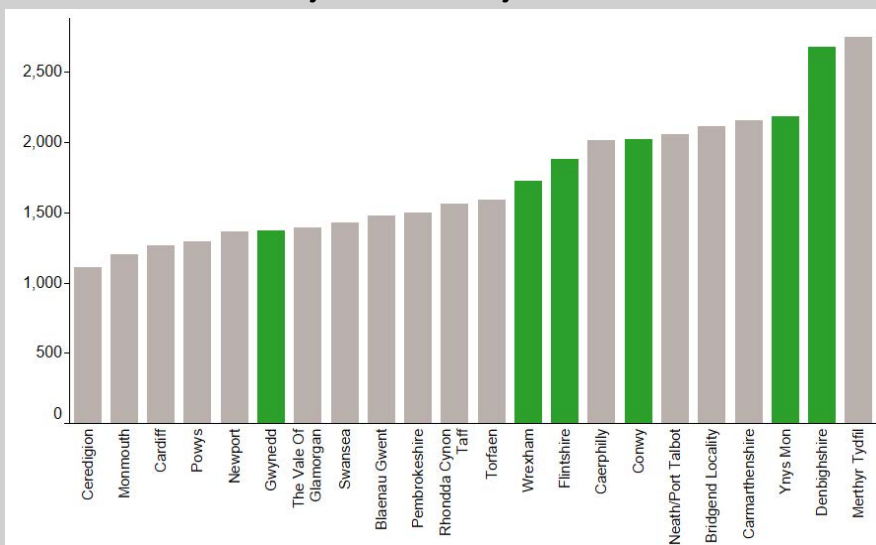


While there is a recognised place in pain management for tramadol, there are concerns regarding the risks associated with dependence, diversion, misuse and adverse drug reactions. The aim of this measure is to promote a prudent approach to prescribing tramadol, taking into account the risks and benefits, and to encourage timely review.

Tramadol prescribing (DDDs per 1,000 patients) - Quarterly trend up to March 2023



Tramadol prescribing (DDDs per 1,000 patients) - Locality data - Financial year 2022-2023



When compared with the previous year, Betsi Cadwaladr's performance **IMPROVED**

Tramadol prescribing decreased by **6.2%** in 2022-2023



Out of the 7 health boards, Betsi Cadwaladr is ranked:

% change from last year : **6<sup>th</sup>**

Current overall performance : **7<sup>th</sup>**

## Analgesics

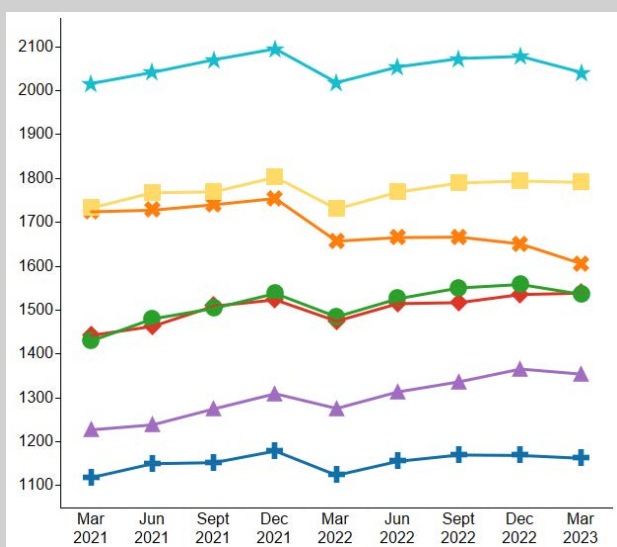
## Gabapentin and pregabalin

National Prescribing Indicator 2022-2025

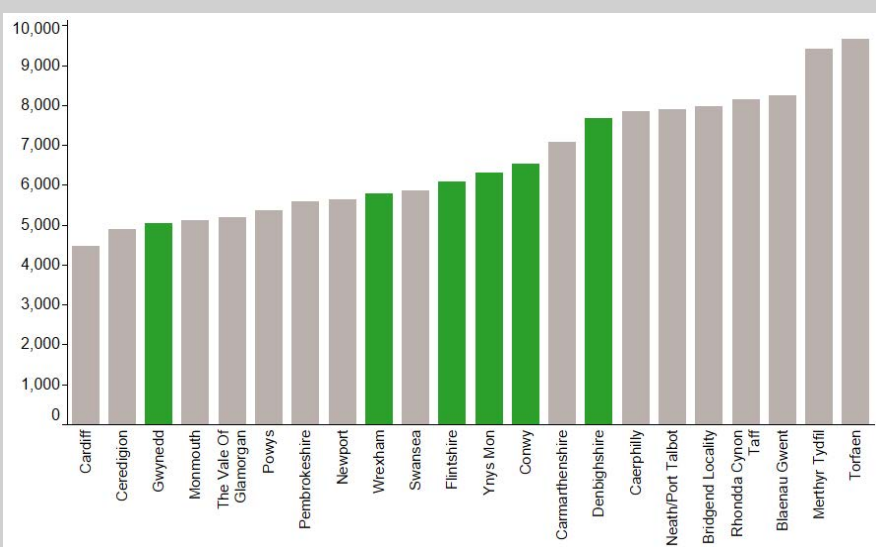


Both gabapentin and pregabalin may cause depression of the central nervous system. When used in combination with other depressants, they can cause drowsiness, sedation, respiratory failure and death. Their potential for misuse, abuse and dependence also exists. The aim of this measure is to encourage the appropriate use and review of gabapentin and pregabalin in primary care, minimising the potential for dependence, diversion, misuse and adverse drug reactions.

Gabapentin and pregabalin prescribing (DDDs per 1,000 patients) - Quarterly trend up to March 2023



Gabapentin and pregabalin prescribing (DDDs per 1,000 patients) - Locality data - Financial year 2022-2023



When compared with the previous year, Betsi Cadwaladr's performance **DETERIORATED**

Gabapentin and pregabalin prescribing increased by **2.7%** in 2022-2023



Out of the 7 health boards, Betsi Cadwaladr is ranked:

% change from last year : **6<sup>th</sup>**

Current overall performance : **4<sup>th</sup>**

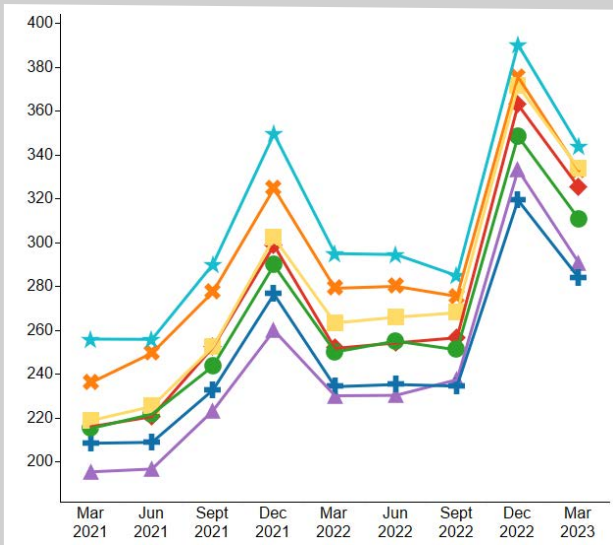
## Antimicrobials

## Total antibiotic prescribing\* National Prescribing Indicator 2022-2025

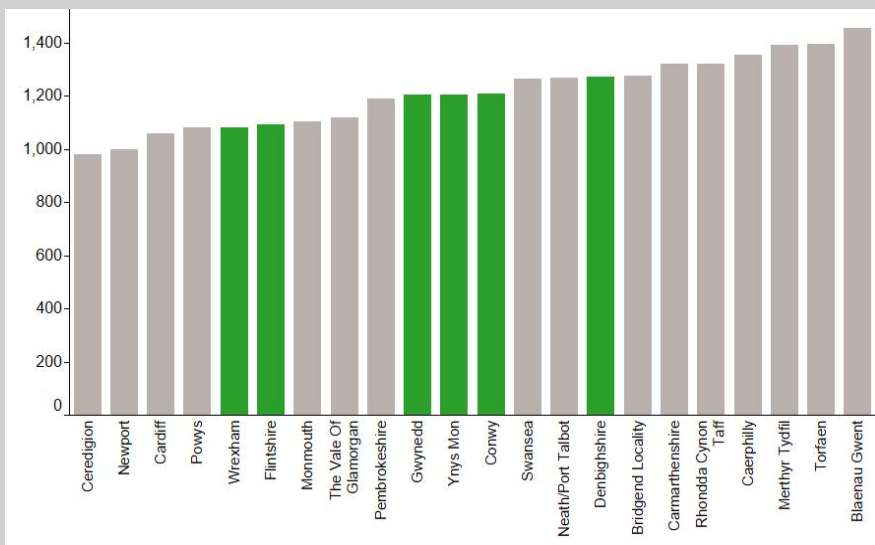


The widespread and often excessive use of antimicrobials is one of the main factors contributing to the increasing emergence of antimicrobial resistance. The aim of this measure is to encourage the appropriate prescribing of all antibiotics in primary care.

**Total antibiotic prescribing (items per 1,000 STAR-PU's) - Quarterly trend up to March 2023**



**Total antibiotic prescribing (items per 1,000 STAR-PU's) - Locality data - Financial year 2022-2023**



When compared with the previous year, Betsi Cadwaladr's performance **DETERIORATED**

Total antibiotic prescribing increased by **15.9%** in 2022-2023



Out of the 7 health boards, Betsi Cadwaladr is ranked:

% change from last year : **4<sup>th</sup>**

Current overall performance : **3<sup>rd</sup>**

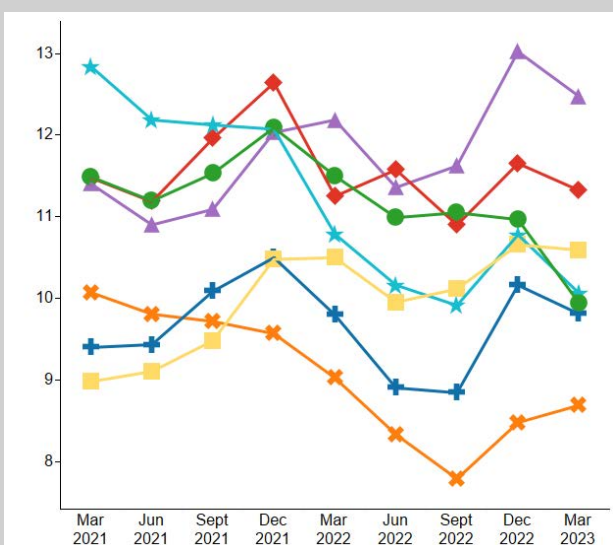
## Antimicrobials

## 4C antimicrobial prescribing National Prescribing Indicator 2022-2025

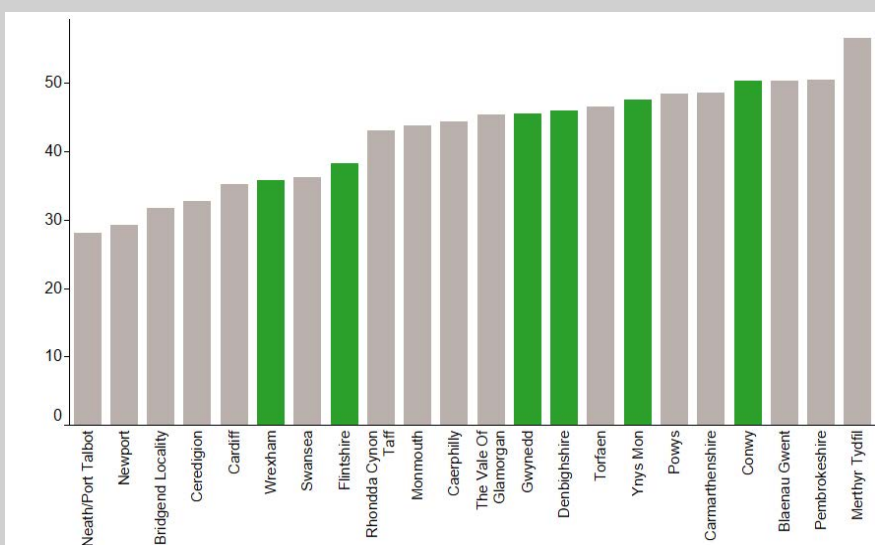


The use of the broad spectrum antibiotics known as 4C antimicrobials (co-amoxiclav, cephalosporins, clindamycin and fluoroquinolones) when narrow spectrum antibiotics remain effective increases the risk of healthcare associated infections (e.g. *Clostridioides difficile*, methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* and resistant urinary tract infections). The aim of this measure is to reduce variation in and overall prescribing of the 4C antimicrobials in primary care.

**4C antimicrobial prescribing (items per 1,000 patients) - Quarterly trend up to March 2023**



**4C antimicrobial prescribing (items per 1,000 patients) - Locality data - Financial year 2022-2023**



When compared with the previous year, Betsi Cadwaladr's performance **IMPROVED**

4C antimicrobial prescribing decreased by **7.3%** in 2022-2023



Out of the 7 health boards, Betsi Cadwaladr is ranked:

% change from last year : **3<sup>rd</sup>**

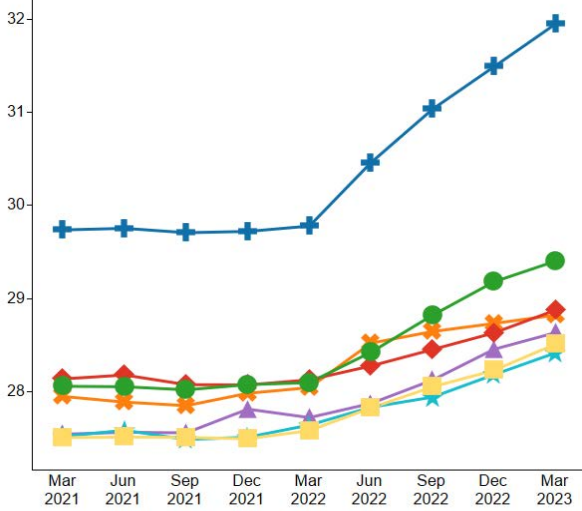
Current overall performance : **5<sup>th</sup>**

\*The higher rate of Group A *Streptococcus* infections seen during the quarter ending December 2022 will have likely contributed to the increased use of antibiotics, compared to the same quarter of the previous year

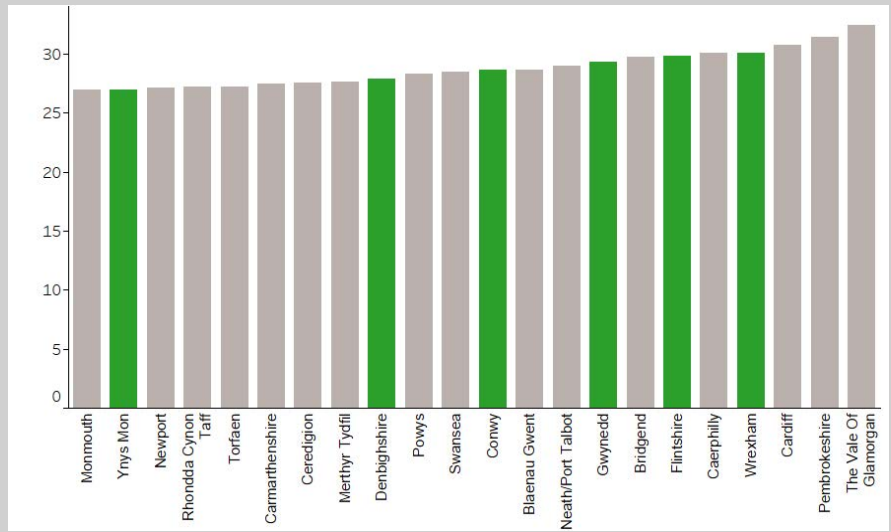


Increasing the 28 day prescribing interval (where appropriate) will release capacity for community pharmacists to deliver clinical services and reduce the administrative burden within GP practices. The average quantity dispensed, of a group of once daily medicines, can provide an indication of change.

Prescribing intervals (Average quantity dispensed per item) - Quarterly trend up to March 2023



Prescribing intervals (Average quantity dispensed per item) - Locality data - Quarter ending March 2023



When compared with the previous year, Betsi Cadwaladr's performance **IMPROVED**

Average quantity dispensed per item increased by **3.2%** in 2022-2023



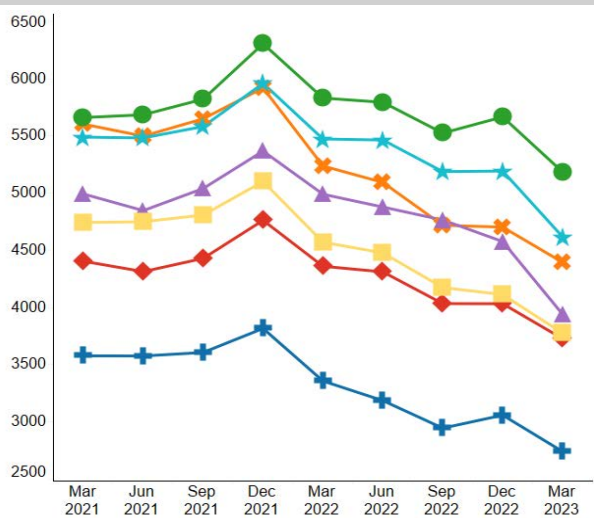
Out of the 7 health boards, Betsi Cadwaladr is ranked:

% change from last year : **2<sup>nd</sup>** Current overall performance : **2<sup>nd</sup>**

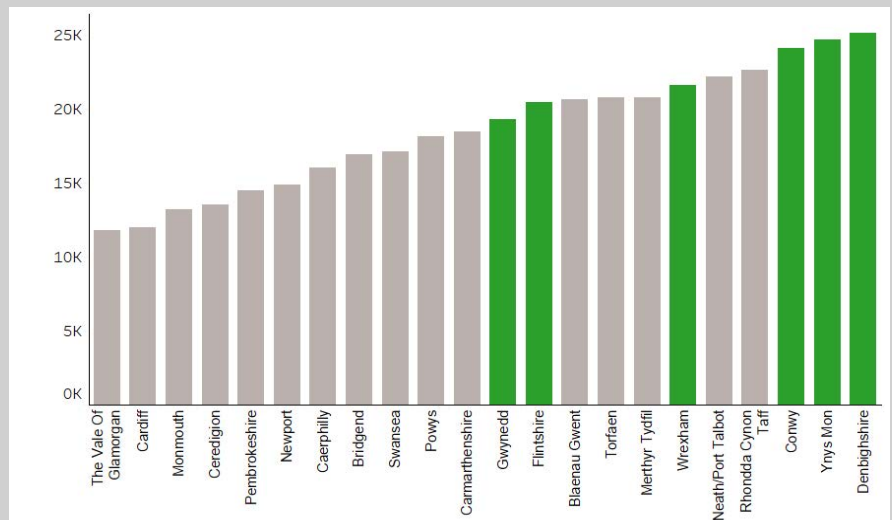


Hydrofluorocarbons are powerful greenhouse gases used in metered dose inhalers (MDIs). Low global warming potential (GWP) inhalers, including dry powder inhalers (DPIs) and soft mist inhalers, have a lower carbon footprint than MDIs. The National Prescribing Indicator Decarbonisation of Inhalers aims to encourage an increase in the use of low GWP inhalers, to reduce the carbon footprint of inhaler prescribing in Wales.

Indicative carbon footprint of inhalers (CO<sub>2</sub> tonnes per 1,000 patients) - Quarterly trend up to March 2023



Indicative carbon footprint of inhalers (CO<sub>2</sub> tonnes per 1,000 patients) - Locality data - Quarter ending March 2023



When compared with the previous year, Betsi Cadwaladr's performance **IMPROVED**

Carbon footprint decreased by **6.2%** in 2022-2023



Out of the 7 health boards, Betsi Cadwaladr is ranked:

% change from last year : **7<sup>th</sup>** Current overall performance : **7<sup>th</sup>**

# Safety

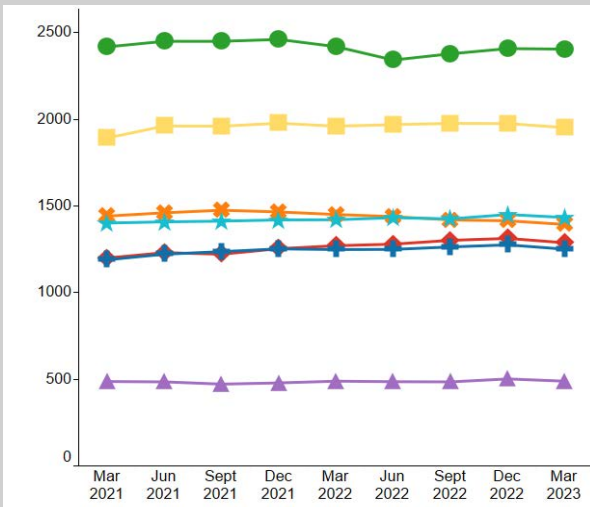
## Prescribing Safety Indicator\*

Patients aged ≥ 65 years old prescribed an antipsychotic  
National Prescribing Indicator 2022–2025

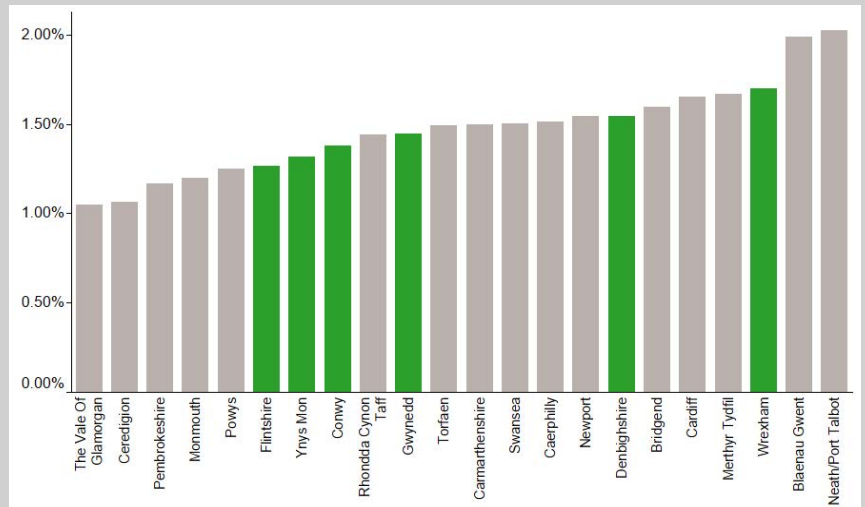


Antipsychotics should be avoided in patients with dementia unless the person is at risk of harming themselves or others, or experiencing agitation, hallucinations or delusions that are causing them severe distress. Patients identified by this indicator should be reviewed and/or monitored as appropriate.

Number of patients ≥ 65 years old prescribed an antipsychotic - Quarterly trend up to March 2023



Number of patients ≥ 65 years old prescribed an antipsychotic as a percentage of all patients ≥ 65 years old - Locality data - Quarter ending March 2023



### Comparing number of patients identified, quarters March 2023 vs March 2022

Betsi Cadwaladr's performance **IMPROVED**  
Number of patients identified decreased by **0.6%**

### Comparing number of patients as a % of patients ≥ 65 years old, quarters March 2023 vs March 2022

Out of the 7 health boards, Betsi Cadwaladr is ranked:  
% change from March 2022 : **3<sup>rd</sup>** Current overall performance : **3<sup>rd</sup>**

# Safety

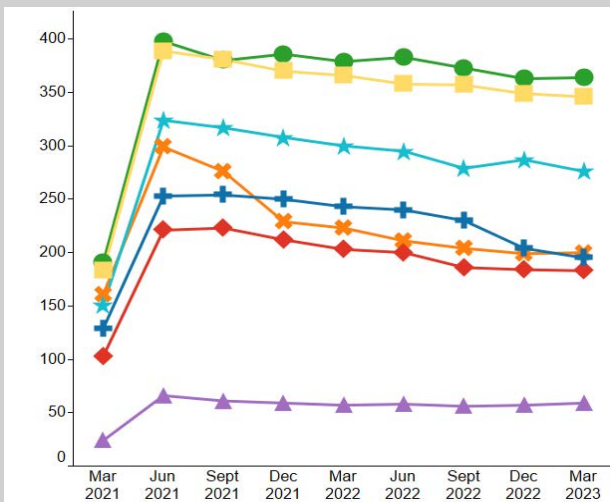
## Prescribing Safety Indicator\*\*

Female patients aged 14–55 years old with a prescription for sodium valproate  
National Prescribing Indicator 2022–2025

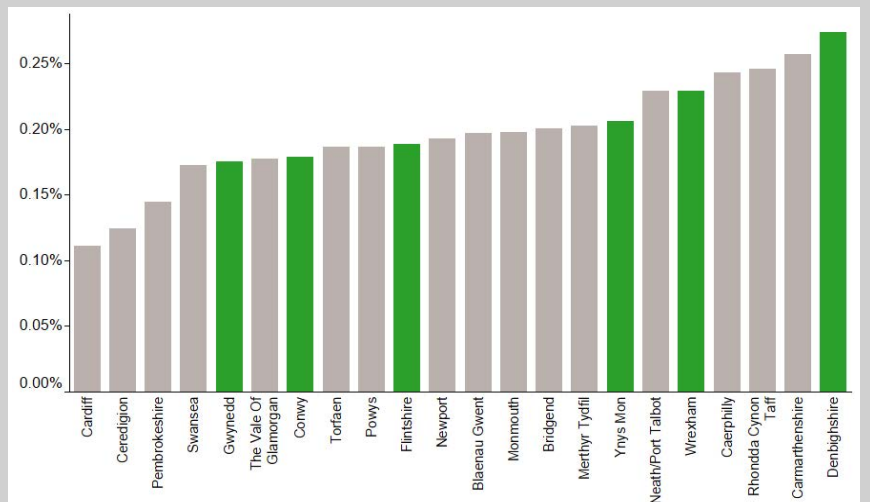


Due to the high risk of malformations and developmental problems associated with exposure of babies to valproate medicines in the womb, they must no longer be used in women or girls able to have children unless they have a Pregnancy Prevention Programme in place. Patients identified by this indicator should be reviewed.

Number of female patients aged 14–55 years old with a prescription for sodium valproate - Quarterly trend up to March 2023



Number of female patients aged 14–55 years old with a prescription for sodium valproate as a percentage of female patients aged 14–55 years old - Locality data - Quarter ending March 2023



### Comparing number of patients identified, quarters March 2023 vs March 2022

Betsi Cadwaladr's performance **IMPROVED**  
Number of patients identified decreased by **4.0%**

### Comparing number of patients as a % of female patients aged 14–55 years old, quarters March 2023 vs March 2022

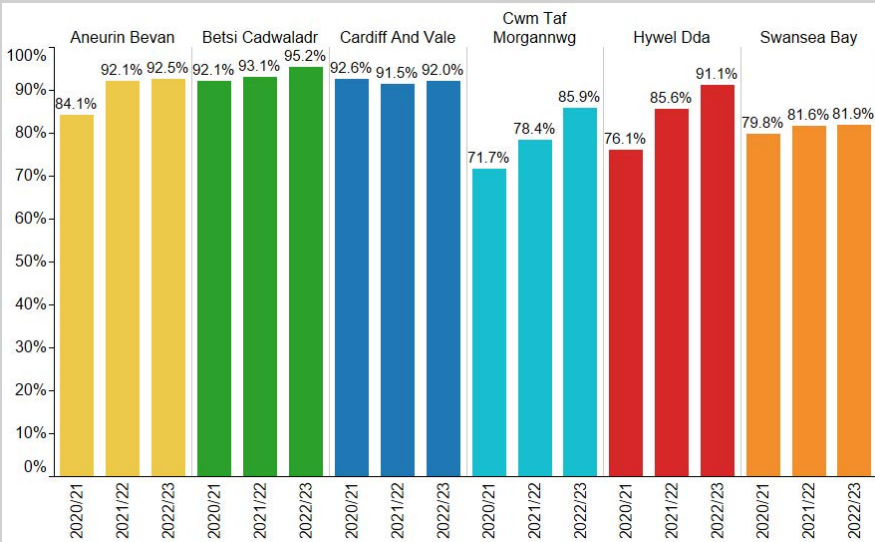
Out of the 7 health boards, Betsi Cadwaladr is ranked:  
% change from March 2022 : **6<sup>th</sup>** Current overall performance : **5<sup>th</sup>**

\* Prescribing Safety Indicators will not pick up instances where a patient has been reviewed and prescribing has been found to be appropriate.  
† The search for this Prescribing Safety Indicator was amended from the quarter ending June 2021 to include female patients aged 14–55 years. Data prior to this includes female patients aged 14–45 years only.

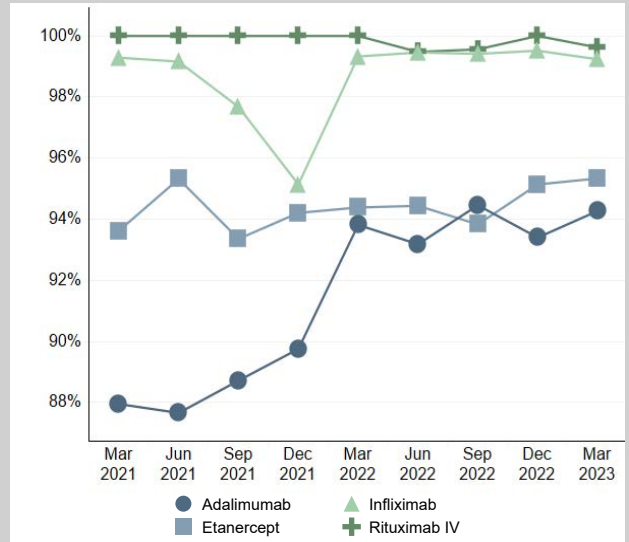


A biosimilar medicine is a biological medicine that is developed to be highly similar and clinically equivalent to an existing biological medicine. They increase choice for patients and clinicians and drive commercial competition. The aim of this measure is to ensure prescribing of best value biological medicines supports cost-efficient prescribing in Wales.

Biosimilar prescribing (as a % of total biologic)



Biosimilar usage in Betsi Cadwaladr (as a % of total biologic) - Quarterly trend up to March 2023



**Please note:** These data are extracted via a central mapping of individual items. This is reviewed on a regular basis and therefore differences may exist between various data sets.

When compared with the previous year, Betsi Cadwaladr's performance **IMPROVED**

Biosimilar prescribing (as a % of total biologic) increased by **2.3%** in 2022-2023

Out of the 6 health boards\*, Betsi Cadwaladr is ranked:

% change from last year : **3<sup>rd</sup>** Current overall performance : **1<sup>st</sup>**

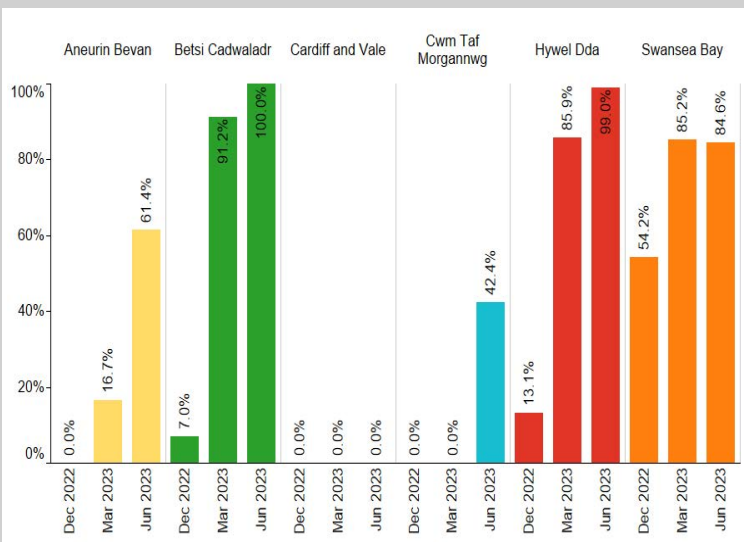
\*Powys is not included in this measure.

Annex - Value

Prescribing of generic lenalidomide and biosimilar ranibizumab

Generic versions of lenalidomide and biosimilar versions of ranibizumab are now available. To provide a baseline measure for improvement in 2023-2024, an early indication of their use has been included below. It is anticipated that switching to the generic or biosimilar versions of these medicines will produce significant financial savings for the NHS in Wales.

Generic lenalidomide purchases (as a % of total lenalidomide)



Biosimilar ranibizumab purchases (as a % of total ranibizumab)

