



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Animal Antimicrobial Resistance Control Plan for Wales

(2025-2029)



Contents

03	Ministerial Foreword
04	Introduction
06	Reducing the need for and unintentional exposure to antimicrobials
07	Strengthened surveillance
07	Public engagement and education
08	Optimising the use of antimicrobials in animals
09	Investing in innovation, supply, and access
10	Being a good global partner
10	Evaluation

Ministerial Foreword



Responding to the threat of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) I am pleased to launch a new Animal AMR Control Plan for Wales (2025-2029). The plan has been recommended to me by the AMR Animal Health Group (2024-2029), which brings together experts from across several sectors to ensure we work together, taking a joined-up approach to keep antibiotics working, for animals and for people.

AMR is one of the top global threats to public health. In the UK alone there were over 66,000 serious antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections in 2023¹, a figure that without action is set to rise. It is predicted by 2050 AMR will cause more deaths annually than cancer, resulting in AMR being named the 'silent pandemic'.

Publishing a bespoke plan for Wales provides clarity on how we will contribute towards delivering against goals set out in the latest UK National Action Plan² (2024-2029), which is part of the UK's 20-year vision for AMR³. It also allows us to build on the achievements made under our first AMR in Animals and the Environment: Implementation Plan for Wales⁴ (2019-2024).

Preventing the risks AMR poses to our society starts with keeping our animals and people healthy, so we reduce the need to use antibiotics, and preserve them for when they are absolutely necessary. This is exactly the "prevention better than cure" approach enshrined in the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework and, which I want to strive to achieve for all our animals. Efforts to address AMR are clearly aligned with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act⁵. Antibiotics are a precious resource, which we must preserve, to ensure they remain effective for future generations.

Here in Wales, we will continue to apply the One Health approach, working together with public health and environment colleagues to address this complex issue. Furthermore, we will share our approach and learn from each other wherever possible. Only by working together, through a collective effort, will we achieve our common goal.

We will also play to our strengths, building on the excellent delivery efforts, which have been led by our many partners to control the development and spread of AMR. Making a difference will be a result of actions taken on the ground. Whether those actions are big or small, they contribute to our fight against AMR.

I am extremely proud of the contribution Wales has already made to tackling AMR and I welcome the launch of this latest control plan, as we move forward.

Huw Irranca-Davies MS

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs.

1 [Antibiotic resistant infections continue to rise](#)

2 [Confronting antimicrobial resistance 2024 to 2029 - GOV.UK](#)

3 [Contained and controlled: the UK's 20-year vision for antimicrobial resistance](#)

4 [Antimicrobial resistance in animals and the environment: implementation plan | GOV.WALES](#)

5 Well-being of future generations | [Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#)

Introduction

In May 2024, the four nations of the United Kingdom published the second of a series of shared five-year National Actions Plans (NAP), marking the next steps towards achieving the UK's 20-year vision to contain and control the increasing threat of antimicrobial resistance.

The UK National Action Plan sets out an integrated, One Health approach to take in the next steps in tackling AMR.

A summary is shown below:

Confronting AMR: the UK's second 5 year national action plan (2024 to 2029)





Our Animal Health AMR Control Plan for Wales, 2025-2029 contributes directly to relevant goals of the UK NAP, in a similar way to the previous plan for Wales (Antimicrobial Resistance in Animals and the Environment 2019-2024).

“Antimicrobial” includes medicines for the treatment of several different types of disease-causing agents: bacteria, fungi, protozoa, viruses and helminth parasites. As with our previous plan, the focus of our work will be on controlling resistance to antibiotics used to treat bacterial infections. This is because the risk of spread of resistance between organisms is greatest in bacteria, because of their ability to exchange genes. And because, among the various types of antimicrobials, animal use of antibiotics currently has the greatest potential implications for public health.

The delivery of this plan will require partnership working, coordinating public, animal and environmental health to safeguard antibiotics for future generations. While the objectives of this plan are focused on animal health they do not exist in isolation and from their conception have been built around making a meaningful and coordinated contribution to the One Health objective of the UK NAP. Through alignment with the UK NAP, Wales is doing its part to contribute to the global need to combat AMR and reduce the risk it poses to the well-being of future generations.

The newly established Animal AMR Delivery Board for Wales will drive delivery of this Plan over the

next four years, by bringing together the collective knowledge and experience of the different sectors to ensure this Plan not only meets the Welsh Government’s ambitions and objectives but also considers the realities on the ground. Throughout the delivery of this Plan, we will liaise with partners across public and environmental health to help maximise the impact of the Plan and its objectives.

Within this Plan we have chosen to focus on key outcomes across the four themes of the UK NAP which either specifically relate to animal health, or where Wales can deliver actions in animal health to make a substantial positive impact.

Reducing the need for and unintentional exposure to antimicrobials

Infection prevention and control

Disease prevention in farmed and companion animals is already a key priority for Wales, reducing the need for antimicrobials is a key step to tackle the threat of resistance. Our approaches to addressing the threat of AMR will be guided by the latest evidence to allow **informed interventions** to take place and deliver a key objective of reducing our reliance on antimicrobials.

In farmed animals, veterinary action-focused animal health and welfare planning is aligned with the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS). Wales will integrate proactive animal health planning and good biosecurity measures into farming businesses.

Preventing infection involves reducing exposure to infectious agents, and maximising the resistance of the host, should such exposure occur. Wales will take a holistic approach to infection prevention and control and will exploit all opportunities to do so. For example:

- Breeding for disease resistance and for animals suitable for their management system
- Good nutrition
- Good housing and grazing management

- Biosecurity
- Good hygiene
- Preventive vet inputs
- Monitoring and recording – knowing the health status.

Wales is committed to One Health working, which means addressing the development of AMR in people and animals, often driven through the use of antibiotics. Importantly, it also means addressing the various ways in which AMR may spread, which can occur through the environment and the food chain. **Waste minimisation and effective waste management** are essential to reducing preventable, unintentional exposure to antimicrobials and the risk of the emergence and dissemination of AMR.

There are synergies in our goals to reduce the risk of AMR through waste management and the delivery of other Welsh Government priorities around agri-pollution and environmental stewardship. Reducing the need to use antibiotics and antimicrobials to a minimum reduces exposure of animals to antimicrobials, and also reduces the risk of adverse impacts of antibiotics on wildlife and the environment, and the onwards spread of AMR and AMR driving chemicals into the environment.



Strengthened surveillance

Understanding the animal disease burden and how those on the frontline tackle it is critical to delivering effective strategies to combat AMR. We seek to optimise our surveillance of infection, outbreaks and response to more clearly understand the drivers of antimicrobial use (AMU) and how they may be prevented.

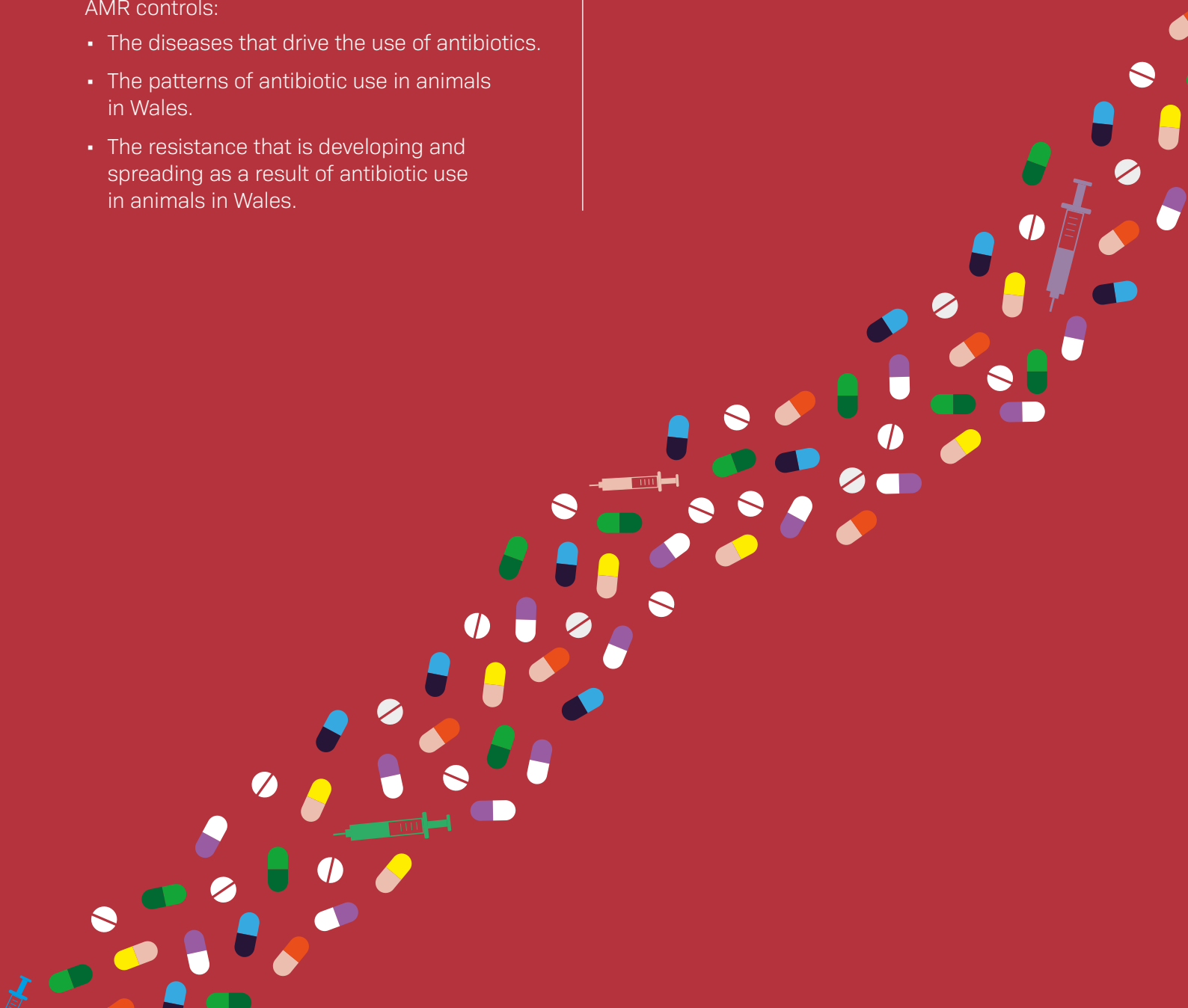
Surveillance will not only help inform interventions but also improve our capability to measure, predict and understand transmission of resistant organisms and their genes.

There are three main areas we need to measure to monitor and ultimately deliver our AMR controls:

- The diseases that drive the use of antibiotics.
- The patterns of antibiotic use in animals in Wales.
- The resistance that is developing and spreading as a result of antibiotic use in animals in Wales.

Public engagement and education

A collaborative One Health approach is required to tackle AMU and AMR, and Wales understands government only plays one role in a complex system. Real change is delivered by professionals such as veterinarians, animal owners, the research community, academia and the wider public. Tackling AMR requires knowledge and understanding of the nature of the threat by the public. We will work in partnership to promote **public awareness campaigns** and spread the messages around responsible AMU, prescribing practices, preventative veterinary medicine and AMR through **educational and other settings**.



Optimising the use of antimicrobials in animals

Antimicrobial Stewardship

Our ambition is for Wales to be an exemplar of the responsible use of antibiotics in animals and for our vets and animal keepers to adopt the highest standards of antibiotic stewardship. We believe Wales is well-placed to pioneer new approaches to ensure antibiotics are used with care and in ways which reduce the risks of the development of resistance.

We will support opportunities to improve **clinical decision making and appropriate prescribing of antimicrobials**. We will maintain high standards of health and welfare while optimising AMU through training and education of the **veterinary workforce** to bring about positive changes to prescribing behaviours.

Engaging with veterinary practices, through ongoing initiatives such as the Veterinary Prescribing Champion network, we will continue to strengthen the veterinary profession in Wales, ensuring they are equipped with the best possible knowledge of AMR to be credible advocates and exemplars for its control.

We will continue to prioritise training on deciding whether antibiotic therapy is necessary and appropriate, and where necessary antibiotics are selected based on best clinical outcome and least risk of AMR development.

We recognise that selection, by vets, of the most appropriate antibiotic for both infection cure and resistance risk reduction is a key part of antimicrobial stewardship. We will promote work to provide guidance for antibiotic selection, including filling knowledge gaps where they exist.

AMR Workforce

The veterinary profession in Wales has responsibility for the prescription of antibiotics and as such also has the responsibility to ensure they are used appropriately, with a view to minimising the risk of AMR development.

Animal keepers are often those to administer antimicrobials to animals in Wales and have a responsibility to ensure they are administered correctly, following veterinary advice.

Within Wales we have a growing expertise in tackling AMR in animals, and our academic institutions and experts play a key role in supporting our efforts. We will continue to build our AMR expertise within Wales to help us deliver positive change for Wales.

We will support projects which are working to drive best behaviours among vets and animal keepers in Wales to prevent disease and use antibiotics responsibly. Many farms in Wales are successfully using small amounts of antimicrobials, we will seek to learn lessons from this and enable success stories to be shared.

We will promote **initiatives to support animal health** such as the animal health and welfare cornerstone of the SFS. By supporting collaborative work between farmers and vets to improve the health and welfare of animals in Wales, we hope to reduce the burden of disease which leads to AMU.

Wales will continue to work with medical and public health colleagues to share best practices and learn mutual lessons to further the goals of strengthening antimicrobial and diagnostic stewardship.

Investing in innovation, supply, and access



Tackling AMR requires knowledge and understanding of the nature of the threat. Our evidence needs are large and broad, from the molecular basis of resistance development and spread, to the behaviours of vets and animal keepers who prescribe and use antibiotics.

We will continue to contribute our requirements and advice to appropriate research programmes around **evidence generation and use**. We are committed to working in partnership to help support the development of novel treatments and vaccines with a view to reducing AMU. We also aim to support the development and deployment of diagnostic techniques and technologies to assist veterinary clinicians determine if antibiotic treatment is needed, and, if so to select appropriate antibiotics for cure and for minimal risk of resistance development.

We will actively seek opportunities for scientists based in Wales to contribute to this Plan. We will actively engage with **research networks** to best understand the rapidly changing research landscape, minimise the risk of duplication and highlight areas of interest for developing and delivering Welsh policy.

Being a good global partner

AMR is a global and societal threat, and its control and prevention must be a global and societal effort.

This is reflected in the UK AMR NAP, with ‘being a good global partner’ being one of its four main themes. International diplomacy to achieve global AMR control is primarily the job of the UK Government. However, for animal-based control of AMR, we will contribute to those efforts as a fully integrated part of this Plan. We will do this by sharing what we have learned with counterparts across the UK, and, where appropriate, beyond. Likewise, we will also actively seek to learn from AMR control efforts and outcomes from across the world which are relevant to Wales.

Some successful initiatives delivered as part of our previous AMR Implementation Plan have generated widespread interest. We will continue to engage with counterparts internationally to contribute fully to the global AMR control effort.

Evaluation

The latest Wales AMR Animal Health Delivery Group has been established to refine and guide the Animal Health AMR Control Plan for Wales, and to ensure the Plan is delivered and its outcomes are achieved.

The Plan outlines priorities, how these contribute to the strategic outcomes, and key actions. The plan will be kept under review and if necessary, additional priorities can be included to reflect any new emerging situations, which may materialise. It is expected some priorities will remain in place over several years whilst others may have a much shorter lifespan but nevertheless can have considerable impact. The Delivery Group will share as much information as possible, with regular stakeholder updates providing further information on our approach.