

Animal and Environment Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Delivery Group for Wales

Minutes of the meeting held at National Museum Cardiff on 3rd March 2020

Present at Meeting

Gavin Watkins (GW)	Paul Green (PG)
Estevao Simoes (ES)	Robert Smith (RS)
Ifan Lloyd (IL)	Amelia Stevens (AS)
Catherine Cody (CC)	Sian Timms (ST)
Christianne Glossop (CG)	Marc Alford-Evans (MAE) – Secretariat
Geraint Hamer (GH)	James Sully (JS) – Secretariat

Apologies

Eifiona Williams (EW)	Robin Howe (RH)
Gareth Thomas (GT)	Ian Jones (IJ)
Eleri Davies (ED)	Ann Davies (AD)
Wyn Evans (WE)	Marion Lyons (ML)

Agenda Item 1: Minutes and actions from the last meeting (GW)/(IL)

1. GW went through the minutes of the last meeting. PG submitted his comments to MAE in advance of the meeting, no other amendments were suggested.
2. ST gave an update on the actions logged from previous meetings.
3. IL gave the Delivery Group feedback and a presentation on his work with the antibiotic stewardship group. GW asked if the stewardship group reported to anyone. IL explained that it is an industry group which also has representation from all the devolved administrations. He went on to explain that the group tries to liaise with outside bodies on their antibiotic usage. IL continued to explain that there is currently a data gap between beef and dairy industries. The Electronic Medicine Hub that has been used for the cattle sector is now being incorporated into the wider livestock sector. CG suggested to meet with the Multispecies database group (**ACTION**). PG asked what they would do with the data from Wales once it has been collected. GW suggested that this should be discussed in the surveillance section later on in the meeting. IL explained that there would be different metrics used to calculate different data. He finished by explaining that he felt that the group may want to consider the AMED categorisations.

Agenda Item 2: Sustainable Farming Scheme Update (PR)

4. Phil Roberts (PR) from the Welsh Government presented an update on the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS).
5. CG asked if vets will be included in the co-design and PR confirmed that vets will be included and we agreed (**ACTION**) to provide contact information if needed.
6. AS asked if developing resistance to diseases could be added into the scheme and PR agreed and said he felt like it could be included under elements of surveillance. PG asked if the outcomes could be hard to measure in terms of compliance and he said that there might be some issues with the farming systems because it could potentially favour one farming system over another because some systems are far more bio-secure and not as welfare friendly. PR explained that the scheme will reward more sustainable systems. IL said that he was discussing this with Farming Sustainable Wales and he said that many find that the insurance schemes see the same priorities as the UK. Continuous improvement and valued more by the retail sector. GW asked should the scheme make recording their antibiotic usage electronically a requirement for support. IL said that there needs to be caution because many farmers will not have the facilities to record data electronically and wanted clarity on whether the recording or the reporting of usage electronically is what's being considered because there is a significant difference in what is being considered. AS emphasised that older farmers may feel penalised due to their lack of technology skills so she asked if it would be possible to provide farmers with the choice of a service where someone would record the data on their behalf. CG said that an active health plan may require at least one health visit a year. She commented that the workshops in the future being held by PR will be crucial and it is important that there are Welsh Government Vets present.

Agenda Item 3: Brexit: Introducing the WG position in relation to AMR (ES)

7. ES began his presentation by giving an overview of the EU transition and how it affects AMR. ES explained that there will be no significant changes until Dec 2020. In the WTO, any independent member state can determine their own standards. AMR is not a common feature in trade agreements, it is usually considered an SPS (Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary) matter. ES went on to explain the different types of trading relationships that the UK Government would like to mirror in its future relationship with the EU: CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement) is

branded as a model to follow by the UK Government, which does not follow alignment with rules and regulations with the EU. New Zealand has a cooperative relationship with the EU where they agree to share information. An Australian style free trade agreement would include the requirement to follow certain codes and committing to international standards like wanting to phase out different types of disease threats. Going forward, negotiations will give clarity by the summer of this year on what the commitments in a trade agreement will look like.

8. ES went on to explain that the Welsh Government policy position on AMR and the UK mandate (despite including a commitment to reduce the spread of AMR bacteria) is disappointing. The delivery group will have to consider how it will contribute in the future by considering the risks of not being aligned with the EU and what can now be done differently as an independent member of the WTO. ES went on to list the opportunities of being an independent member of the WTO which were the new ways we can consider changing how Welsh Government changes its methods of working and regulating. IL asked if Wales wanted a higher standard of animal health and welfare than the other administrations then does that give Wales an advantage in a future free trade agreement with the EU? ES explained that this is already done with the EU export certificates. Animal Welfare isn't a typical trade barrier but can become a unique selling point when marketing Welsh exports to the rest of the world. GW asked that if there should be consideration of tightening the legislation of antibiotic supply. What is the time period of the vet seeing an animal and if it can be a limit? Gwen Rees (GR) said she thinks this is being looked at already. ES explained that any considerations will have to take into account the function of the internal market in the UK.

Agenda Item 4: Arwain Vet Cymru – Project Overview – Gwen Rees (GR)

9. GR from Bristol University gave a presentation on the Arwain Vet Cymru project being undertaken. She explained that she is currently in the process of designing the training vets and would like to get input from the group. This project will come under the Wales Rural Development Programme - RDP projects and is a collaboration with Bristol University, Iechyd Da and Mentor a Business. GR is the project lead and will be supporting and training antibiotic champions across Wales. Vets will be a part of the training to then go back to their practices to give out the correct advice for prescribing antibiotics. Iechyd da will be looking at wholesale purchases for antibiotics. GR explained that they have already started to retrieve data. Each

practice was invited to undertake training and they have designated a prescribing champion for the whole practice. After their training, they spend 2 months to assess what support their practices need. Cardiff University are considering doing a UK wide questionnaire and they are still in negotiations in having access to the Wales wide data. The evaluation will include looking into the wholesale, social science and focus groups. She mentioned that Public health Wales would like to get involved as well as the Welsh Aberystwyth Veterinary School. GR told the delivery group that the training consists of two days - higher training on legislation and what the current industry guidelines are. The second day is a workshop on what the vets would like to feed back to the practices. She will be launching a twitter profile (@ArwainVC) (**ACTION** – organised collaborative communications with CVO's twitter). In terms of the opportunities, this has never happened before. There will be a national network to support vets throughout the process. There will be more data than the project can handle so more will hopefully follow on from this project. GR said building the network of vets might help to make it unacceptable over time to take clients from other veterinary practices. AS felt that incorporating a reminder that vets have a code of conduct in case they feel like they are not in charge of their own practice. GW said that this is about good antibiotic stewardship by vets.

10. Woven through this will be the benefits which it will bring being demonstrated, in practice, to assess future funding. CG said that there could be a link up with the VI centre in Carmarthen (**ACTION**). She asked if GR has engaged with the farming unions yet? CG believes they need to be included. IL said that he believed this has already begun with the farm assurance schemes and overall it has been accepted by the farmers and the industry in Wales. They are crucial in being influencers. CG points out that the RW Society have more members and suggests that this will be a link for promotion/presence at this. GW payed tribute to GR and RS' work pulling all this together.

Agenda Item 5: Surveillance (GW)

11. GW gave a presentation on the Welsh perspective of surveillance requirements for AMR control. He received comments from IJ and RS beforehand. He wanted the opinion of delivery group members on what needs to be measured. He mentioned that this presentation has already been given to the UK Surveillance forum. It is the highest available policy forum between the four devolved administrations. When it comes to surveillance, there are many charts with AMR included. There can be an issue with surveillance if there are issues with not knowing what to measure. IL asked how you can demonstrate at the end of the programme that you've reduced

the use of antibiotics. GW explained there needed to be a record of the level of infection now and then it can be measured by the result. PG asked what the Welsh data will be used to compare. GW explained that it would be useful to use the AMR data collected by regions and practices. He asked the members present what can be measured at the moment and suggested possibly scanning surveillance in abattoirs. GW asked the group members present to look at the list of diseases and add comments in via tracked changes to help develop the surveillance system. PG commented that VMD have done a lot of work in this area already and he said that since last summer a spending review and then a spending round was put together for the year. It's a part of the five year UK action plan. He explained that there were many lengthy debates but there will be a subgroup to look into what antibiotic surveillance should look like in the UK. (**ACTION** – For Estevao or Gavin to volunteer at the next DARC meeting to be a part of the surveillance subgroup).

12. GW went on to explain that the outcome will be to identify resistant bacteria in animals. He explained that there are two ways of doing it: scanning surveillance and active surveillance which is done through EU directives in pigs and poultry. There is possibly a gap to consider what else needs to be included. Very recently there has been a requirement to look for salmonella in sheep. CG said that measuring the final outcomes could be difficult. Human Health – Chief Medical Officer wrote to every GP to inform them of their prescribing limits to make sure that people were able to use antibiotics appropriately. AS explained that Bristol University has people who are working on antibiotic research and likes having this data to try to get people to work together. There are delivery partners in Wales, people to go to for this. GW explained that one of the aims of AVC is to get vets to do this as well and that he wants it to be done on a voluntary bases and publishing the data would be required for this to succeed. RS explained that there was an example of this – prescribing amounts per practice. GW if we can demonstrate that we can reduce the use of antibiotics without harming animal health and welfare? PG agreed it would be fantastic to establishing a link to resistance patterns. Amelia suggested that there should be an outcome devised that would be able to be communicated on a public relations level. PG said that if it is target focused then it will miss the point completely.

Agenda Item 6: Proposed Projects for Delivery & Budget Update (GW)

13. GW presented different potential delivery options and projects for the AMR Implementation plan. Members are asked to note any suggestions and ideas down

to be able to put in the plan. ST explained that suggestions from the DG would assist in the work of moving the project forward.

14. GW presented each objective from the Antimicrobial Resistance in Animals and the Environment: Five Year Implementation Plan for Wales 2019-2024, against projects and work that is currently been undertaken or planned to be carried out.
15. Objective 1 - Affective protection and control. Quite a lot occurring through RDP projects being funded now. These are demonstrated in the RDP graphic. GW explained the flow of work and delivery landscape between the RDP. Does there need to be more work? The DG were asked to consider and to submit any thoughts via email. Animal health planning slides – GW said that he was open to another name, he also explained that there would be an implementation period then an impact analysis to follow.
16. Objective 2 – Antibiotic stewardship. Some of it has already been touched upon. The group decided that it is a project that it wants to pursue. APHA have sent GW prescribing guidance in Dutch to mirror. GW said that the options for this objective are that we want to improve on this business here. Is development of a code of practice a project in itself? AS explained that it is difficult and unworkable to expect every vet to follow a universal advice and guidance. AS explained that there would be practices who will be resistant because they know that they will lose money. GW feels that it has to be a bottom up approach. He asked the group to consider how to do this.
17. Objective 3 – Environmental work. GW Defra themselves are at the point of going forward. GH explained that there still needs to be time to disseminate the information and research to make sure that work isn't being duplicated. GW said that WHO has already given guidance to look for chemicals and bacteria in slurries? PG mentioned that during the discussions to put together the National Action Plan, the problem of the environment is the lack of monitoring information for antimicrobial resistant bacteria. There is a certain degree of monitoring that companies are required to do by law but there needs to be guidance. GW mentioned that there is a wide range when it comes to the environment. GW explained that they don't know how important the environment is in spreading antimicrobial resistant bacteria that affects animals and humans (possibly). GW suggested possibly looking into farm waste (slurry & manure) to trace the antimicrobial resistant bacteria that is there. GR said she doesn't know of any research happening but there might be something happening with the soil study in Aberystwyth University.
18. Objective 4 – Stronger laboratory capacity. There is a suggestion to look at animals and people. In particular famers. AS suggested include Vets. PG warned that there

should be a consideration to be careful what you are looking for. GW mentioned about using salmonella in sheep and beef in abattoirs. PG confirmed that there is evidence that the beef and lamb areas are the best to be considered for high AMR tracing.

19. Objective 5 – Invest in the innovation, supply and access to tackle AMR. GW clarified that it is related to the international approach and currently this component remains blank. He asked the DG to suggest work that is currently going on or that the WG could commission for this.
20. ST explained that over the next couple of weeks she will be discussing funding options. The next meeting will be in June so the window of opportunity for suggestions is in the next two weeks.

Agenda Item 7: AOB (All)

21. ST has started to draft the annual review. She will be sharing with the group for a review (**ACTION**). It will be a rolling document and then be developed into an infographic for the farming/veterinary press. This review will just be for the work of the first year. The final document at the end of the five years will be published on the website with a section from Christianne and the Minister. GW suggested that this could be an opportunity to raise the profile of the Delivery Group.
22. IL suggested putting together an event with GR's presentation and using the Vet Cymru Conference with a full afternoon on AMR. RS was invited but can't go. GW would like a member from the group to attend. Will either be IL, IJ or Gavin.
23. VMD funding bid – ST suggested that arrange a meeting with the VMD (**ACTION**)
24. World Hand Hygiene Day – JS will be putting together everyone's suggestions. It will be turned into a GIF to be circulated via social media (**ACTION** – circulate to everyone).
25. Travel Claims – Complete this before the end of the financial year.
26. Dates of remaining meetings – confirmed for the rest of the year. They will all be held in CP2.