# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Publication of the UK Antimicrobial Resistance National Action Plan 2024-29** |
| **DATE**  | **08 May 2024** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan MS, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services****Huw Irranca-Davies MS, Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs** |

Antimicrobial resistance has been declared by the World Health Organisation as one of the 10 global health threats facing humanity; it is estimated that globally 10m people could die every year as a result of antimicrobial resistance by 2050.

In 2019, the Welsh Government, in partnership with the other UK governments, signed up to a 20-year vision for the containment and control of antimicrobial resistance by 2040. Ensuring the continued effectiveness of antibiotics is essential to our goal of a healthier Wales, enshrined in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Antimicrobial resistance arises when organisms which cause infection evolve ways to survive treatment – they become resistant to the medicines (antibiotics and antimicrobials) which we have developed over many years to treat such infections. Although resistance occurs naturally, the inappropriate use of antimicrobials in both human and animal medicine, plants and crops, alongside unintentional exposure, is rapidly accelerating the pace at which it develops and spreads.

The spread of antimicrobial resistance is resulting in the emergence of new generation of so-called superbugs – if this continues unchecked, the antibiotics we currently rely on to save lives and treat infections will no longer work in the future.

In a future where antibiotics and antimicrobials are ineffective, routine surgery would become too dangerous to perform and chemotherapy prohibitively high risk.

As part of the UK 20-year vision to confront and address antimicrobial resistance, all four nations are committed to developing a series of five-year national action plans to prioritise actions and direct resources in areas of highest risk. The first of these was the 2019-24 national action plan. In Wales, we delivered a wide programme of work, which resulted in:

* Obtaining, for the first time, antibiotic usage data for the dairy, beef and sheep sectors
* Partnership working towards reduced use of antibiotics in food-producing animals through the [Arwain DGC project](https://menterabusnes.cymru/arwaindgc/home-2/), which received UK and international recognition
* Delivery of antimicrobial prescribing guidance for primary and secondary healthcare through a collaborative approach with pharmacists across NHS Wales
* Development of the antimicrobial data library to provide interactive access to antimicrobial usage and resistance data for NHS Wales across primary and secondary care.

Today, together with the other UK governments, we are publishing the 2024-29 national action plan. It includes nine strategic outcomes organised under four themes:

* Reducing the need for, and unintentional exposure to, antimicrobials
* Optimising the use of antimicrobials
* Investing in innovation supply and access
* Being a good global partner.

The Welsh Government has agreed tackling the threat of antimicrobial resistance to be a priority in a One Health approach. This approach aims to balance and optimise the health of people, animals, ecosystems and the wider environment, recognising they are closely linked and interdependent. The programme of work will involve collaborative working across all sectors (human health, animal health and the environment). Governance arrangements for the Wales programme of work will link with the wider UK programme to monitor delivery on commitments and report on progress annually.

Success is dependent on a wide range of partners working together. We are very grateful to all those in Wales who have contributed to the progress over the course of the previous national action plan. We look forward to building on this progress together over the next five years.