

Enclosure No:	4/AWMSG/1016
Agenda Item No:	8 – Strategy for Genomics and Precision Medicine in Wales
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Action for AWMSG:

AWMSG is requested to consider the response to the consultative questions regarding the Strategy for Genomics and Precision Medicine in Wales

Purpose:

In January, a Genomics Taskforce was established to ensure Wales capitalises on recent advances in genomics for health and wealth. This led to the production of a Statement of Intent for Genomics and Precision Medicine in Wales which was published in March 2016.

The Taskforce is now working to develop a wider Strategy for Genomics and Precision Medicine by autumn 2016. The aim of the strategy is to create an internationally competitive environment for genomics and precision medicine to support the delivery of prudent healthcare for the population of Wales.

The Taskforce has asked AWMSG to consider the following questions:

1. What are the key priorities for the development of clinical genetics services to underpin precision medicine in NHS Wales?
2. What are the key developments in genomics and precision medicine that are needed in Wales to support research and innovation?
3. What developments in genomics platforms, facilities and expertise are needed in Wales to underpin collaborative working with industry in precision?
4. What is needed to ensure that the NHS Wales workforce is equipped to deliver genomic and precision medicine?
5. Do you have any concerns regarding the Statement of Intent, and the proposed Strategy for Genomics and Precision Medicine in Wales?

Summary:

These questions will inform the development of the Strategy and form an important part of their plan to engage with stakeholders. The Taskforce is looking to engage with interested parties across Wales and has arranged a series of consultation workshops across Wales. The purpose of the meetings will be:

- To share information about plans for developing a Strategy for Genomics and Precision Medicine in Wales
- To allow stakeholders (including those from the public and patients, Higher Education Institutions, the NHS, Industry and the Third sector) to contribute their opinions and voice any concerns
- To capture the opinions of these key stakeholders to inform the development of the Strategy

Response by the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group to the Consultative questions – Strategy for Genomics and Precision Medicine in Wales

In January 2016, a Genomics Taskforce was established to ensure Wales capitalises on recent advances in genomics for health and wealth. This led to the production of a Statement of Intent (Sol) for Genomics and Precision Medicine in Wales (published in March 2016):

<http://gov.wales/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/previous-administration/2016/genomics>

The Taskforce is now working to develop a wider Strategy for Genomics and Precision Medicine by the autumn of 2016. The aim of the strategy is to create an internationally competitive environment for genomics and precision medicine to support the delivery of prudent healthcare for the population of Wales. The Taskforce has posed the following five questions. The responses by AWMSG are shown in italics below each question.

1. What are the key priorities for the development of clinical genetics services to underpin precision medicine in NHS Wales?

The key priorities are:

- a) *To ensure that the work of clinical genetic services is closely integrated with, and supported by the All-Wales laboratory genetics, and also has close collaborative links with the All-Wales microbiology service. This will ensure that patients in Wales have access to a coordinated, efficient and responsive service, and that partnership working with other bodies is most likely to be fruitful.*
- b) *To use the opportunities for collaboration afforded by the good communications between organisations in Wales to ensure that, from the outset, there is true partnership-working in precision medicine initiatives between the NHS, the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, the university sector and the public, and a clear forum for discussion and debate around goals and challenges.*
- c) *To ensure that there is close collaborative working between the clinical genetics service and the public and patients (and their representative support groups) using the principles of co-production articulated in Wales' approach to prudent healthcare. This engagement should be completely transparent. Only if we have the full trust and support of citizens will we be able to ensure that effective electronic storage and sharing of clinical data underpins the development of precision medicine in an environment where data protection and the privacy of individuals are fully assured. Therefore effective patient/public engagement and outreach, linked to high-quality educational approaches to explain the need for data storage, sharing and collaborative research etc., are also vital.*

2. What are the key developments in genomics and precision medicine that are needed in Wales to support research and innovation?

- a) *We fully support the proposal outlined in the "Strategy for Genomics and Precision Medicine in Wales" document that coordination in genomics research, and close linkage with clinical and laboratory genetics services, allied to effective leadership, is necessary to ensure that Wales can consolidate in its areas of existing strength, whilst also responding in a timely and flexible fashion to emerging new opportunities and technologies.*

- b) *Good public engagement (see above) is also crucial if recruitment to clinical trials in precision medicine is to be optimised.*
- c) *The work of the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) databank should be further supported and strengthened so that health (including outcomes) and social care data can be linked with interventions involving precision medicine to support longitudinal research.*
- d) *We note and appreciate the comment in the Statement of Intent that “equitable and quick access to new medicines is supported through the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG), a single body that provides advice and guidance to NHS Wales on the appraisal and adoption of medicines”. AWMSG will continue to do all it can to maintain this reputation for timeliness and equity of access for patients, and will explore how it can respond optimally to the new opportunities afforded by the development of precision medicine.*

3. What developments in genomics platforms, facilities and expertise are needed in Wales to underpin collaborative working with industry in precision medicine?

- a) *A biomarker and molecular testing service using state of the art, standardised, validated and quality-assured tests which are available throughout Wales and with adequate capacity to meet the needs of clinicians must be supported and adequately resourced in order to facilitate the optimum introduction of new precision medicines into clinical practice.*
- b) *Adequate investment in information technology, bioinformatics and clinical research facilities will be necessary to ensure that Wales is an attractive place for manufacturers of diagnostics and precision medicines to conduct research and development, including clinical trials.*

4. What is needed to ensure that the NHS Wales workforce is equipped to deliver genomic and precision medicine?

- a) *Precision medicine will have an increasing impact on many specialities, optimising safe and effective use of targeted therapies for a wide range of conditions. It will also be increasingly important in helping to prevent disease and in effective screening programmes. If the uptake of precision medicine is to be uniform and not patchy in routine practice in Wales, it is important that the clinical workforce have educational opportunities to understand the relevance of precision medicine to their future practice.*

The Royal College of Physicians has developed a group of “clinical champions” to develop and encourage the development and understanding of genomics within their speciality and this approach may be valuable in the promotion of understanding of the role of precision medicine also¹. However, educational resources relevant to those specialities will need to be developed and/or widely utilised.

- b) *Education in precision medicine, and the opportunities for personalised medicine which it affords, are embedded in undergraduate training programmes for future health professionals and life scientists in Wales as well as in continuing professional development programmes for existing health professionals.*
- c) *It is important to ensure that prescribing and decision support systems in primary and (soon) secondary care in Wales assist health professionals in their*

understanding of the opportunities afforded by precision medicine so they are supported in decision-making and accessing the relevant genomic and precision medicine services for their patients most appropriately and without avoidable delay.

5. Do you have any concerns regarding the Statement of Intent, and the proposed Strategy for Genomics and Precision Medicine in Wales?

We do not have any specific concerns regarding the Statement of intent or the proposed strategy. We feel it is a bold strategy, which has been clearly articulated. However, it will need strong commitment and support from all stakeholders if it is to fully realise its ambitious objectives.

Reference

1. Slade I & Burton H. Preparing clinicians for genomic medicine. *Postgrad Med J* 2016; 92: 369-71.

About the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group

Established in 2002, the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) provides advice to the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport on the managed introduction of new medicines into NHS Wales and on the appropriate use of existing medicines. AWMSG promotes local prescribing initiatives and highlights best practice. It operates in an open and transparent way.

AWMSG is made up of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, academics, health economists, a pharmaceutical industry representative and a lay member who together reach a consensus on the introduction of newly licensed medicines into NHS Wales, and on policies that promote the best use of medicines for patients in Wales. All involved work together to ensure equity of access to the most clinically appropriate and cost-effective medicines. The Group's main priorities are:

- Health technology appraisals: To develop timely, independent and authoritative advice on newly licensed medicines.
- Medicines optimisation: To develop resources that support prescribers and thereby maximise health gain through the safe, clinically effective and cost-effective use of medicines.