



Portffolio Trawsnewid Gweinyddu
Meddyginiaethau'n Ddigidol
Digital **Medicines** Transformation
Portfolio



ANNUAL REVIEW 2023



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01. FOREWORD

Welcome to the first annual review of the Digital Medicines Transformation Portfolio which is delivering one of the biggest changes to prescribing, dispensing and medicines administration in the history of NHS Wales.

**Professor
Hamish Laing**

DMTP Senior
Responsible
Owner



Medicines are a vitally important part of healthcare, at some point touching the lives of nearly every person living and working in Wales. Yet, the way we manage medicines, largely using paper processes, has not changed significantly since the birth of the NHS in 1948.

That's why the creation of the Digital Medicines Transformation Portfolio (DMTP) by Welsh Government in April 2022 was such a pivotal moment. It gave us the mandate to move forward at pace with a portfolio that will make a big difference to patients, carers and clinicians, improving safety and streamlining processes.

I am confident that the work we are undertaking will have significant impact. While medicines bring big benefits, they also have the potential to cause problems. The introduction of a fully digitalised system will reduce

medication errors; extensive and reliable information will be available on medication usage and effectiveness, and for the first time a patient's full medication record will be available wherever they receive care.

It's also about putting in place the measures needed for long-term sustainability, as health and care services face the challenges of rising demand, costs and expectations.

I am immensely proud of our progress and as you read this review you will find out more about the transformation we are delivering. We established four major and connected programmes and projects as a single Portfolio within a short space of time and will be beginning to deliver an e-Prescription Service this autumn, just over 18 months from when we started. An amazing achievement.

I have also been encouraged to see the enthusiasm with which health boards, trusts and clinical professionals are embracing change and their willingness to work together for the common good. Our focus on engagement and listening is supporting a culture of collaboration across Wales.

An excellent example of this are the communities of practice established by those who will be using the new e-Prescribing and Medicines Administration (ePMA) systems in our hospitals so they can learn together and share best practice, saving duplication and time.

None of this would be possible without the exceptional work of the whole DMTP team and I take this opportunity to thank them again for their talent, passion and dedication. Their efforts and professionalism were reflected in the very positive feedback and rating from our first Independent Assurance Review (Gateway 0).

My thanks also to our Welsh Government sponsor Andrew Evans, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, our partners in NHS England, our host organisation Digital Health and Care Wales and our many stakeholders including hospital and community clinicians, their representatives, patients and system suppliers. Your input is critical to our success.

Finally, as a strong advocate for the environment I am pleased this move to paperless working will help to reduce the NHS carbon footprint – and dramatically reduce the 40 million paper prescriptions printed in primary care and the hundreds of thousands of hospital medication charts used and filed away in Wales each year.



02. THE PORTFOLIO IN NUMBERS

4 national programmes
and projects.

81 million



items prescribed each year in
primary care.

40 million



prescription forms issued each
year by GPs.

50 million



items prescribed in Welsh
hospitals each year.

382



GP practices in Wales.

708



community pharmacies in
Wales.

82



NHS hospitals in Wales.

3.1



million people in Wales.

03. OUR WORK

DMTP is making the prescribing, dispensing and administration of medicines everywhere in Wales, easier, safer, more efficient and effective, for patients and professionals through digital.



Rhaglen **Gwasanaeth Rhagnodi Electronig** Gofal Sylfaenol
Primary Care **Electronic Prescription Service** Programme



Rhaglen **Rhagnodi a Gweinyddu Meddyginiaethau** Gofal
Eilaidd yn Electronig
Secondary Care Electronic **Prescribing and Medicines
Administration** Programme



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Prosiect **Cofnodion Meddyginiaethau** a Rennir
Shared **Medicines Record** Project







Prosiect **Mynediad i Gleifion**
Patient Access Project

Following an [independent review](#) of prescribing in 2021, Welsh Government set out a [digital medicines plan](#) for Wales and set up the Digital Medicines Transformation Portfolio (DMTP), in April 2022.

The Portfolio brings together four national programmes and projects that will deliver the benefits of a fully digital prescribing approach in all care settings in Wales, for health professionals and patients.

Digital ways of working are set to transform patient care and services by replacing the paper-based processes currently used in hospitals, GP practices and community pharmacies.

Our programme and projects are:

-  The delivery of an Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) in primary care
-  The implementation of electronic Prescribing and Medicines Administration (ePMA) in every ward in every hospital in NHS Wales.
-  The development of a Shared Medicines Record
-  Medicines functionality in the NHS Wales App

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“We want to make sure services deliver the best outcomes for citizens and are designed around how citizens and service providers want to use and manage those services... This programme will transform prescribing in Wales.”



September 2021 Written statement launching e-prescribing.

Eluned Morgan MS

Minister for Health and Social Services

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People at the centre

DMTP is a service transformation with people at its centre. That's why engagement with our stakeholders is a golden thread to ensure we deliver high quality services that meet the needs of the public, patients and healthcare professionals who use them.

As new digital ways of working are introduced there will be changes to processes for prescribing, administering and dispensing of medicines across many different sites and specialist care settings in Wales.

To ensure we understand what this means for patients and healthcare staff we partnered with the Centre for Digital Public Services (CDPS) to

engage with people who are directly involved in prescribing, dispensing, administering or receiving medicines in primary and secondary care.

With an initial focus on primary care, teams from DMTP and CDPS conducted user research and service design about cross-border prescriptions and dispensing processes and explored the impact of service implementation in secondary care.

We also worked closely with patient groups, such as the Digital Services for Patients and Public Assurance Group, to ensure the new digital services meet people's needs.

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“DMTP's approach to putting patients and healthcare professionals at the heart of how they design services aligns with the digital service standards for Wales. Our partnership is built on a mutual commitment to engage with users before designing or making improvements to digital solutions or services. We have worked collaboratively to turn research findings into actions based around user need and have really enjoyed supporting the Portfolio in its aim to transform services.”



Myra Hunt

Joint-Chief Executive, Centre for Digital Public Services

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“The Patients and Public Assurance Group has been really pleased to work so closely with DMTP to share feedback from patients and the public which is essential to make digital prescriptions and prescribing a success for them and improve their lives. It is really exciting to be part of co-producing this and seeing how patients can share their lived experiences and needs to inform the design of services and shape access to medicines and prescriptions, including through the NHS Wales App.”



Joanna Dundon

National Digital Lead – Public Engagement and Chair of the Patients and Public Assurance Group

Collaboration with health boards and trusts across Wales is essential to the successful delivery of this Portfolio – we are definitely stronger together – and so we met with frontline staff to ensure the services we are designing meet their needs.

We visited hospitals, GP practices and community pharmacies to gain knowledge and insight and discuss the potential impact of digital medicines transformation. The visits provided first-hand experience of working with patients, prescriptions and medications, helping us to understand the existing processes.

Engagement during our first 18 months has been wide-ranging and encompasses stakeholders from across NHS Wales and the UK including for example,

Community Pharmacy Wales, General Practitioners Committee Wales, Local Medical Committees, pharmacy system suppliers, Company Chemists Association, Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry Cymru, Directors of Nursing, Senior NHS Leaders, NHS Wales Heads of Pharmacy, NHS Wales Digital Leads and Medical Directors.

It has also been essential for the Portfolio to work with Digital Communities Wales and Digital Inclusion Alliance Wales (of which DMTP SRO Hamish Laing is chair) to ensure that the needs of digitally excluded people are taken into account.

Recent figures show that seven per cent of adults in Wales (around 180,000 people) are not online and with digitally excluded people being among the highest users of healthcare services it's vital to ensure no one is left behind. We are working closely to put plans and communication in place to reach these citizens and ensure their needs are met.

As the Digital Medicines Transformation Portfolio is in the Programme for Government, we work closely with Welsh Government colleagues and our sponsor Chief Pharmaceutical Officer Andrew Evans to ensure the Portfolio aligns with strategic aims and delivers transformational and sustainable change to help ensure the NHS is fit for the future. All our activities have been enhanced by strong support from Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services.

“

“Putting patients and healthcare professionals at the heart of our design is essential to delivering effective services that work for the people who use them.”

Rhian Hamer

DMTP Portfolio Director



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04. STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE

The Portfolio strategy and brief were approved by Welsh Government in September 2022 detailing key outcomes, expected benefits and timelines. It is supported by a pro-active communications and engagement strategy and plan.

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“Teams across Wales have made excellent progress towards the Portfolio’s aspirations.

The digital services that will be delivered by the Portfolio team will transform the way that medicines are prescribed, dispensed and administered across Wales, benefitting the system, clinicians and most importantly patients.

Pre-implementation work is well underway in every health board to deliver an ePMA solution in every hospital in Wales, and there is excellent collaboration with NHS England to support the implementation of EPS across all parts of Wales.”

Andrew Evans

Welsh Government Chief Pharmaceutical Officer and Sponsor of the Digital Medicines Transformation Portfolio.



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Independent Gateway Assurance Review

In March 2023, DMTP SRO Hamish Laing invited Welsh Government to carry out an Independent Assurance Review (Gateway 0) of the Portfolio to ensure that it is set up correctly to deliver a successful transformation programme that will see all the benefits we expect for patients and healthcare professionals across Wales.

The review, which took place in summer 2023, focused on the progress made since the Portfolio was launched. It looked at leadership, governance arrangements, finances, effective management of programmes and projects within its scope, and how well it works with other key programmes in Digital Health and Care Wales and the wider NHS in Wales.

It also considered the arrangements for identifying and managing the main Portfolio and Programme risks and that the Portfolio has the right skills and resources in place and is supported by key stakeholders.

As part of the review, interviews took place with over 25 key stakeholders, including Welsh Government, Centre for Digital Public Services, Digital Services for Patients and Public, the National Data Resource Programme, General Practitioners Committee Wales, health boards and trusts. A report and feedback have been provided to the Portfolio.

This provided us with a high assurance rating (Amber/Green) for our governance and processes, and confirmed that were set up to be likely to succeed in delivering our outcomes.

“

“We are delighted to have this endorsement and will be following up the assessment team’s recommendations on how to strengthen the Portfolio further. There is an exciting future ahead for DMTP and we want to make sure we have solid foundations of governance and planning to give us the greatest chance of achieving all our aims and objectives.”

Professor Hamish Laing

Portfolio SRO



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05. DELIVERING AN ELECTRONIC PRESCRIPTION SERVICE (EPS) IN PRIMARY CARE IN WALES

Exciting changes to the way prescriptions are issued in primary care in Wales have progressed at pace to provide services that will be better for patients, healthcare staff and the environment.

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“Through e-Prescribing, we can improve and digitise the way patients, clinicians and pharmacists access and manage the provision of medicines across the health system.



This will include: patients' access to medicines, prescribing of medication by clinicians, the assurance and dispensing of prescriptions by pharmacists, and the auditing and pricing of medicines by monitoring authorities.”

September 2021 Written statement launching e-prescribing.

Eluned Morgan MS

Minister for Health and Social Services

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What are we doing?

Currently, prescribing is paper-based with GPs and other prescribers needing to print and sign hard copies before handing to the patient or sending to the pharmacy. Each year more than 81 million items are prescribed by GPs using 40 million paper prescription forms.

We are introducing digital prescriptions and signatures using EPS to save time and make the process easier, safer and more efficient for doctors, pharmacies, healthcare staff and patients. It will also simplify the reimbursement process for community pharmacies.

GP teams, and in future dentists and other non-medical prescribers, will be able to send prescriptions electronically to a pharmacy of their patient's choice without the need for a paper form.

This means that:

-  Prescription forms will no longer have to be collected from the GP practice
-  Prescribers will be able to issue and sign prescriptions faster, freeing up more time for patient care
-  The management of medicines and repeat prescriptions will be safer
-  There will be big savings on paper usage
-  Prescriptions can be tracked from prescriber to the pharmacy so no 'lost prescriptions'.



Delivering at pace: what have we have done so far?

Although the EPS in Wales is based on the one already used in England there are significant differences requiring technical and process changes. This means the service used by NHS England could not simply be 'switched on' for use in Wales.

A lot of engagement with users and technical changes by software suppliers has been needed to get things ready for Wales. We have also had important support from our partners in NHS England.

In November 2023 we reached an exciting milestone when Lakeside Medical Centre and Wellington Road pharmacy in Rhyl became the first places to test the Electronic Prescription Service in Wales.

Prescriptions for patients of the practice are now being sent electronically from their GP practice to the pharmacy without

the need for a paper prescription form.

When this detailed testing phase is complete in early 2024, the Electronic Prescription Service will start to be rolled out across Wales in a phased approach.

We are working closely with GPs, pharmacies, system suppliers, NHS England, Community Pharmacy Wales, NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership, DHCW and NHS Wales to plan this.

With the help of Life Sciences Hub Wales, we set up a Community Pharmacy System Innovation Fund at the start of April 2023 to provide development grants to suppliers of digital pharmacy systems in Wales to accelerate the development of their systems to use EPS.

The fund will also support them to deliver innovations that will result in paperless dispensing and to integrate with the new NHS Wales App. Five suppliers have already been awarded grants under this scheme.

“

“Digitisation of the Welsh prescription service will deliver a safer and more efficient system benefitting patients whilst freeing up vital time and resource for healthcare professionals. We're proud to be supporting this transformation by managing the fund and award process and look forward to seeing improved service delivery across the nation.”

Cari-Anne Quinn

Life Sciences Hub Wales Chief Executive



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Key milestones

Two further major milestones have been achieved that are essential for EPS.

1. Changes have been made in the General Medical Services Contract to allow GPs to authorise prescriptions digitally from 1st October 2023.

2. The Primary Care EPS Programme Board approved “cross-border community pharmacy nomination” meaning that a prescription from a GP in Wales can be collected from a pharmacy in England and prescriptions from GPs in England can be dispensed by Welsh pharmacies. Having agreed the principle, the technical requirements to allow this are now being built.



“I’m delighted at the progress that is being made. To begin live testing an EPS service is an important milestone.

We are in the early stages of the journey to deliver an EPS in Wales and are looking forward to being able to start delivering the service in a phased roll out across Wales from January 2024”-



Jenny Pugh-Jones

Senior Responsible Owner, Primary Care EPS Programme



06. SECONDARY CARE e-PRESCRIBING AND MEDICINES ADMINISTRATION (ePMA)

Good progress has been made to introduce electronic Prescribing and Medicines Administration, which will bring new digital systems into every ward in every hospital in NHS Wales.

What are we doing?

In future all prescriptions and medicines administered on hospital wards will be recorded digitally, replacing the traditional paper medication charts that have been used since the NHS was founded. This will bring many benefits including:

- There will be no need to manually transcribe a patient's list of current medication on admission to hospital, saving time and reducing mistakes
- The medication record for every patient will be available to health professionals 24/7, from anywhere in the hospital at the touch of a button
- Specialised decision support tools in the software will reduce prescribing errors and possible contra-indications
- No time will be wasted searching for or rewriting paper charts and paper will be saved
- Patients' medicines will be managed more quickly, improving care and experience



Focusing on delivery: What we have done so far?

With a strong focus on delivery across Wales, the ePMA team is managing a complex national programme being delivered locally. A key milestone was passed when a national framework for ePMA suppliers was published in November 2022.

We have worked with Welsh Government to fund an ePMA project team for every health board and Velindre University NHS Trust to prepare for their procurement of one of the three approved suppliers. The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust also established a project team to consider its options.

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board have now chosen their ePMA supplier and are planning implementation.

Other health boards and Velindre are following close behind.

To share best practice and learning, we have created communities of practice for health professionals across Wales. These bring together people who will be using the new ePMA systems, breaking down organisational boundaries.

Learning from the Swansea Bay University Health Board Hospital ePMA pathfinder is also helping inform our processes and we are grateful to the team for sharing their experiences and expertise.

To understand better the needs of staff who will use the new system we commissioned the Centre for Digital Public Services (CDPS) to carry out user research in five different clinical areas and are working with health boards to turn the results of this research into action.



"We have seen how using more technology in a patient's care has a positive impact and supports clinicians and pharmacists. It helps clinicians get the right medications to the right patients at the right time, which is a vital part of a patient's care. It also puts data at the fingertips of the clinician, improving decision making and patient safety."

Tracey Bell

Swansea Bay UHB Head of Digital Planning for Planned Care and Community



Benefits identified in the evaluation of the Swansea Bay ePMA pathfinder.

83% of pharmacists and **75%** of nurses



agreed or strongly agreed that ePMA supports safe practice and medication safety

Time released to care

 Up to

9,166 hours

freed up by using ePMA.

(Neath Port Talbot Hospital -
NPTH 2020-21)

 Up to

3,154 hours

freed up by using ePMA.

(Singleton Hospital, Swansea
Q1 2021-22)

Reduced expenditure



10%

reduction in medicine costs compared
with the same period the previous year
(NPTH Q1-2 2021-22)

07. SHARED MEDICINES RECORD (SMR)

Our technical teams have been working together in DHCW and with colleagues in NHS Wales to design and develop the first Shared Medicines Record for patients in Wales.

What are we doing?

The SMR programme is creating a single consolidated record of medicines for every patient in Wales that is accessed easily and shared when needed.

The record will bring all medication information for patients in Wales into one place, showing current and previous medicines and allergies. This will mean:

For the first time, healthcare professionals will have a clear and more complete view of all of a patient's medicines and allergies.

Patients won't need to keep giving their medication details every time they see a healthcare professional.

A patient's medicines will be uploaded automatically to different systems saving time for clinicians and reducing errors when medicines details are transcribed from one system to another.

Comprehensive medicines information will be available to support clinical decision making and mitigate risk at points of transfer of care. It will do this by capturing, storing, collating, and sharing data from many accredited systems that create medicines information digitally.

“

“It is great to reach this important milestone. In collaboration with our National Data Resource colleagues, we have proved that it is possible to create a shared medicines record. Having a demonstrator means we can create a common understanding of what that involves and will allow us to build in feedback as it is developed.”

Rhian Rice

Assistant Chief Architect



”

It's all about data: what we have done so far?

A major milestone was reached in March 2023 with a successful technical proof of concept (TPOC) for data sharing.

Working closely over seven weeks with the National Data Resource (NDR) programme, our team showed in testing that medicines information could be shared safely and efficiently between the different GP record systems in Wales and our SMR.

The achievement followed a period of extensive user research with over 100 people who shared their views on what they wanted to see in an SMR, helping the team to build a picture of its overall purpose and the features it would need.

There was also significant engagement with other countries who are developing similar capability to learn from their work and help inform the design of our SMR.

The technical approach to the capturing, storing and sharing of these data, including making sure that it works with the new

electronic Prescribing and Medicines Administration (ePMA) system, is a big step forwards for the overall goal of having an SMR that has all the data in one place to support the care of patients across Wales.

For this approach to be successful it is vital that the different sources of medicines data move and code the medicines information in standard ways.

So, in November 2022 the Medicines, Allergies and Intolerance Data Standards Change Notice was published and recently Welsh Government mandated use of the HL7 FHIR interoperability standard.

Work has also progressed on processes needed to allow medicines information to be shared seamlessly across systems and with the Shared Medicines Record once it is developed.

A priority for the technical design was to ensure that the solution combines business needs with the best performance.

08. PATIENT ACCESS (NHS WALES APP)

The NHS Wales App is an exciting development led by our colleagues in the Digital Services for Patients and Public Programme (DSPP).





This will change the way people manage their care and connect with health providers and is a great opportunity for medicines management too. We are working closely with DSPP to include specific features about medicines.

What are we doing?

Our Patient Access project has specified medicines-related features to be built into the App. These includes ordering and manage repeat prescriptions and viewing the list of current and past medications and allergies.

It will also let patients select (“nominate”) the pharmacy they would like their prescription to be sent to electronically for dispensing. This feature is part of the Portfolio’s work to implement the Electronic Prescription Service in Wales.

Other benefits include:

-  Getting a message when medicines are ready in the pharmacy
-  Sharing and receiving important health information
-  Helping patients to manage their condition and medication better
-  Enable users to play a more active part in their own health and well-being

Public testing: what has been done so far?

Working closely over the past 12 months with DSPP and Kainos, the developers of the NHS Wales App, a huge amount of work has taken place to get two key medicines features into the first version of the NHS Wales App, which began testing with the public in early April 2023.

These are ordering repeat prescriptions and being able to see the prescription history.

The NHS Wales App can now be downloaded and is being tested with patients in a small number of GP practices across Wales, to make sure it works as planned, is safe and is meeting users' needs.

Patients whose surgery is not yet part of the testing can still download the App and register their interest to be notified when their GP practice is offering services through the App.

We have also been working with patients and pharmacies to design the best way to let people know when their medicines are dispensed and ready.

This research is now complete and the feature is being built into the NHS Wales App over the next few months. We expect it to be very popular.

We know that many people are not able or do not wish to use digital services for their healthcare and so we are making sure they can still access all the services they need as they did before we had the NHS Wales App.

Working closing with the digital inclusion experts, Digital Communities Wales, we will also signpost help for people who would like to get online and to use the App.

We also started a Welsh Language Technical Group in March 2023 to explore how we can make best use of Welsh for medicines information and features in the App.

09. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Communicating and engaging with our stakeholders is vital to the success of all four areas of the Portfolio.

Our communications team has set out our approach in a communications and engagement strategy, approved by the Portfolio Board earlier this year.

From the outset we knew that we needed to make sure we were regularly and consistently communicating with patients, healthcare professionals and organisations so that they were aware of our work, could share their views and inform our plans, and that we were collaborating and listening to make sure the services we are designing will meet their needs.

More than 50 engagement activities have taken place with stakeholders from across Wales including patient groups, health boards and trusts, GPs, community pharmacies and professional organisations.

We brief the Minister for Health and Social Services regularly on progress and publish a DMTP newsletter with the latest news on all areas of the Portfolio. We report to Welsh Government and provide reports to DHCW.

We have DMTP pages on our host's website (DHCW) and have created news stories and social media posts on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.

Our communication resources support the four programmes and projects within the Portfolio and include toolkits and patient-facing communications such as leaflets and posters, events and videos.

We also contribute to the DHCW newsletter, webinars, staff conferences and bring our teams together for development days which provide an opportunity for colleagues to share experiences and learn from each other.

We want everyone who is part of the Portfolio to gain new skills and knowledge during their time with us.

10. WHAT'S NEXT?

Deliver real benefits and make a big different to patients, the public and healthcare professionals across Wales.



To transform prescribing in primary care from paper to digital we will see:

- EPS testing phase completed by the end of 2023.
- Early adopters starting to use EPS from January 2024.
- Working with our suppliers we will roll out EPS in phases across Wales as quickly and safely as possible during 2024.
- Patients benefitting from an improved, safer, more efficient and effective service as their surgery and pharmacy introduces EPS.







To deliver ePMA on every ward in every hospital in NHS Wales we will see:

- Cardiff and Vale UHB and Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB completing their procurement in early 2024.
- All other University Health Boards and Velindre University NHS Trust procuring by Spring 2024.
- Implementation of ePMA in Health Boards well underway during 2024.
- Collaboration and shared learning to help support new ways of working across all organisations.
- Research alongside roll out to gain as much learning as possible for the future.






To develop the first ever Shared Medicines Record in Wales we will see:

-  The SMR operational within the National Data Resource by the end of March 2024.
-  Medicines and allergies information from different systems, such as GPs and the early ePMA deployments brought into the SMR.
-  Work to align other sources of medicines with the SMR during 2024.
-  Medicines information accessible 24/7 to support patient care.



As the NHS Wales App moves forward, we will see medicines features made available for patients including:

-  Using the App to select and nominate a preferred pharmacy to receive their digital GP prescription(s) and dispense their medicines in 2024.
-  Getting a message and notification in the App to let them know that their medicines are ready.
-  Being able to access prescription services via the App in every GP surgery in Wales within 24 months.

11. WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit our website Digital Medicines Transformation Portfolio - Digital Health and Care Wales (<https://dhcw.nhs.wales/dmtp>) and sign up to our newsletter.

Contact the team:

DMTP.Comms@wales.nhs.uk

Watch our video:

Digital Medicines Transformation Portfolio funded by Welsh Government and hosted by Digital Health and Care Wales



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GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Iechyd a Gofal
Digidol Cymru
Digital Health
and Care Wales



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
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