

# Creating an NHS 'Fit for the Future'

*Dr Richard Greville - Director, ABPI Cymru Wales  
& Distribution Supply Chain*

As we've all seen over the last year, medicines and vaccines are transforming our lives like never before. At the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI), whilst continuing to supply cutting edge treatments that improve and save the lives of millions of people, our members have worked collaboratively and collectively to speed up the development and delivery of vaccines and treatments to address the pandemic.

As the dust settles from the Welsh Parliament elections, our manifesto continues to be relevant. It outlines ABPI member views on how we can best capitalise on the advances made by the UK's life science industry, to improve the health of patients in Wales.

We focus on two main themes:

- Making Wales the best place in the world for patients to benefit from innovative medicines and vaccines
- Building a thriving environment for medicine discovery, so that Wales is at the forefront of world-leading research and development of new medicines and vaccines

Creating an NHS 'fit for the future' is about embracing cutting edge technology so all patients in Wales have access to world-class standards of care and disease prevention.

Working together with our members, NHS Wales and patients, the next Welsh Government can deliver patient access to the latest medicines and vaccines. We know this, because since 2016, the ground-breaking New Treatment Fund has strengthened and accelerated access to the newest, innovative, effective medicines for NHS patients across Wales.



*Dr Richard Greville - Director, ABPI  
Cymru Wales & Distribution Supply  
Chain*

Continuation of this progressive £80-million Fund will enable the fast and consistent routine adoption of all medicines found to be clinically and cost-effective, underpinned by a collaborative approach to the horizon scanning of medicines in development, which we have supported since 2016.

*Continued overleaf*

Whilst NHS Wales continues to receive funding for the adoption of medicines with positive approval from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and / or the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG), the New Treatment

Fund has facilitated service reconfiguration in the delivery of these innovative treatments, when required.

This policy has benefited patients wherever they live in Wales, whatever their condition, and has shown that working collaboratively

ensures we get the right medicines to the right patients at the right time.

To read more about the New Treatment Fund and our other Manifesto Key Asks, please visit our website [English](#) / [Cymraeg](#).

## Delivering Change in Rare Disease

### *ABPI Cymru Wales working with Genetic Alliance UK*

**The past year has been difficult for many of us, particularly those who have been shielding. If you are one of the estimated 175,000 people in Wales who have been affected by a rare disease or condition at some point in your life, you will know that levels of loneliness and social isolation in this community is high, particularly now, with the greater risks from COVID-19.**

In the UK, alongside countries in the EU, we define a disease or condition that affects fewer than 5 people in 10,000 as “rare”. Currently, there are 6,172 rare conditions classified; 72% of these are genetic, and 70% begin in childhood. To help support those with a rare disease, in January, a new Framework for Rare Diseases was published, supported by all four governments in the UK.

The pandemic has shown us how quickly industry, academia, health services and regulators can move to research, develop and approve new medicines and vaccines. We need to build on that energy if we are to truly realise the goals set out in the Framework. This will include the development of a Wales Action Plan, which provides an opportunity to learn from the pandemic and ensure that those affected by rare conditions are not disadvantaged as we recover.

Access to medicines is central in both the Framework and the Cross Party Group’s report. Whilst there are more than 6,000 rare conditions, currently only around 200 of these have a licensed medicine available in Europe. However, there are many new treatments in the pipeline, which could help transform people’s lives and potentially provide cures.

Health systems across the UK need to get better, and quicker at making these treatments available to patients and there is a golden opportunity to improve access to these new medicines: the ongoing NICE methods review.

Alongside the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group, NICE (The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) has the important job of deciding whether new medicines should be made routinely available to patients in Wales, based on their clinical and cost-effectiveness.

The Framework identifies four important priorities that must be addressed:

- **help patients get a final diagnosis faster,**
- **increase awareness among healthcare professionals,**
- **better coordinate care, and (crucially),**
- **improve access to specialist care, treatments and medicines.**

To support the Wales Action Plan, the previous Welsh Parliament’s Cross Party Group for Rare, Genetic and Undiagnosed Conditions, chaired by Angela Burns MS, and administered by charity, Genetic Alliance UK, published a report highlighting the key issues affecting people living with rare conditions across Wales. These include:

- **effect on mental health,**
- **access to medicines, and**
- **the impact of COVID-19**

*Continued overleaf*

The way it does this is currently being updated and it is important that more flexibilities for assessing rare disease medicines are added.

This is a golden opportunity, as it coincides with a pharmaceutical industry commitment to ensure the introduction of new medicines is affordable to the NHS. Through the 'Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access' (VPAS), the amount spent on new medicines is capped, with the industry reimbursing all expenditure above agreed growth levels. Since 2019, companies have paid back over £1 billion across the UK, giving financial certainty to the NHS.

Genetic Alliance UK's Action for Access report makes recommendations for tackling problems of uncertainty and systematic inflexibility and moving the dialogue forward on access to rare disease medicines. For health systems across the UK to get better and quicker at making these available, it is essential that the voices of people affected by rare diseases are heard and central to decision making. The pharmaceutical industry stands ready to play our part in securing the changes required to ensure those with rare diseases and their families across the UK can benefit from quicker diagnosis, better care and better treatments in years to come.

The Rare Disease Framework sets that challenge - together we must deliver it, we owe people with rare diseases nothing less.

To learn more about the work of ABPI Cymru Wales, please contact Joe Ferris (jferris@abpi.org.uk)

To learn more about the work of Genetic Alliance UK in Wales, please contact Emma Hughes (emma@geneticalliance.org.uk)

## What technologies and new treatments are on the horizon?

**The way the pharmaceutical industry and our colleagues in health care and academia look for new treatments and cures is evolving, and medicines are more personalised now than ever before. Treatments are becoming more sophisticated as we gain a better understanding of science and disease.**

Developments such as genomics are helping us to spot how diseases like cancer are affecting patients differently. They're giving us new clues for how to develop new medicines.

The first step is to identify the target; maybe a cell receptor or an enzyme or a gene that's involved in the disease process. The next challenge is to find something which affects that target to interfere with or prevent the development of disease or symptoms. Sometimes we test tens of thousands of molecules either through computer modelling, or in test tubes or cell cultures or in animals, to identify a few that are effective enough to take forward to trial in patients.

Across all disease areas, the pharmaceutical industry invests more than anyone else in research and development (R&D). The UK's pharmaceutical industry invests £4.3bn every year in R&D and we'd like the next Welsh Government to actively look at how more of this pot could be attracted to Wales.

In Wales, the life sciences industry employs around 11,000 people in well-paid, high quality jobs across the country and export about £980 million. But we believe that we could do more. Health and Care Research Wales reported that, in 2018/19, a little over 0.5% of the population were recruited into a health or care study and there were only 212 active commercially sponsored studies in Wales.

In Wales, since the start of the pandemic, we've collaborated in the RECOVERY Trial. Initially Aneurin Bevan University Health

Board, Public Health Wales and Cardiff University's Centre for Trials Research were involved in the work, being led by the University of Oxford. As the research developed, all Health Boards became more involved. RECOVERY was set up appropriately, but quickly. Going forward, we need to adopt the lessons from Wales' work on research programmes, like RECOVERY, during COVID-19.

The ABPI would like to see research put at the very heart of our innovative health service – just as we've seen during the COVID-19 pandemic. We need to learn the lessons and then implement them – not just in large scale trials, but also for more targeted research into areas like advanced therapies.

New science is becoming more and more precise. Even though failure rates are still high we're learning about disease all the time and when we do have successes, we're bringing improvements to the lives of millions of patients around the world.

In [this video](#) the team at the ABPI take you through the process of researching, developing and launching a medicine - the time it takes, and the steps and commitment needed to bring brand new treatments to people.

The ABPI will be working with colleagues at the Welsh NHS Confederation and European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) to bring an update on the pipeline of medicines, based on [this Report](#), to the Senedd on the 6th July 2021. To find out more, email Joe Ferris – jferris@abpi.org.uk

# Collaboration is Key

As we recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, we have called on the next Welsh Government to work with stakeholders, including the pharmaceutical industry, to reap the clear patient and health system benefits from working collaboratively.

At the start of 2020, we launched a [toolkit on joint-working](#) alongside our colleagues at the [Welsh NHS Confederation](#). Joint-working projects aim to deliver 'triple wins' in the form of benefits to patients, the Welsh NHS, and the pharmaceutical company or companies involved and is a key part of the long-term plan for health and social care, A Healthier Wales.

Our toolkit supports projects with appropriate governance and gives those working in NHS Wales and in the pharmaceutical industry a clear template of questions to ask themselves before embarking on any work. For an industry as highly regulated as pharmaceuticals, this gives the peace of mind our colleagues need to enter joint-working projects here in Wales.

Underpinning everything our members do is the [ABPI Code of Practice](#), which sets out the requirements our industry must comply with and supports companies' commitment to self-regulation; to operate in a professional, ethical and transparent manner.

The latest iteration of the Code, due for implementation from the 1st of July 2021, continues to regulate the advertising of prescription medicines to health professionals,



Rick Greville (ABPI Cymru Wales) and Darren Hughes (Welsh NHS Confederation) at the launch of the toolkit on joint-working

administrative staff, and the public. It also sets out the behaviours that embody the spirit of the Code. These new ABPI Principles are:

- **benefitting patients,**
- **acting with integrity,**
- **ensuring transparency, and**
- **treating everyone with respect.**

Following this update, we'll be re-assessing our joint-working toolkit, to make sure that it's still fit for purpose and making revisions, if not. Working together and backing collaboration by all parts of the health system will support the innovation-ready healthcare system we strive for in Wales.

To see some examples of how the pharmaceutical industry collaborates with others, please visit our [NHS-Industry Partnership Case Studies Repository](#) website.

## Chair of the ABPI Cymru Wales Industry Group Lee-Ann Farrell (Johnson & Johnson)



Lee-Ann Farrell, Chair of ABPI Cymru Wales Industry Group

**Lee-Ann Farrell is an experienced Senior Government Affairs Manager, with an extensive knowledge of NHS Wales, the AWMSG appraisal process and Welsh health policy, developed over 24 years working in the pharmaceutical industry in Wales.**

Lee-Ann's career with Johnson & Johnson began in 1999, as a hospital representative. In her current role as Senior Government Affairs Manager for Wales, Lee-Ann is responsible for representing the company with all government agencies and patient advocacy groups, with regards to all issues associated with the UK business. Additionally, Lee-Ann has responsibility for the UK Johnson & Johnson strategy for their vaccine's portfolio, collaborating with the Department of Health, UK HSA and UK Government ministers.

Lee-Ann has been an active member of ABPI Wales Industry Group (WIG) group

for the past fourteen years and has previously held the position of WIG Industry Representative on the All Wales Prescribing Industry Group (AWPAG), Chair of the ABPI WIG Mental Health sub-group and most recently the ABPI Wales Industry Group representative on the Cross-Party Cancer Group.

Lee-Ann has three children, two grandchildren and loves working in Wales. She said: 'I feel privileged to be working with so many people who share the vision of the Welsh Government's long-term plan: A Healthier Wales - giving the people of Wales the best health outcomes possible.'

# Valuing Vaccines

The pharmaceutical industry is dedicated to developing effective vaccines that benefit people’s health, the economy and society. Vaccination has saved more lives and prevented more serious diseases than any other advance in recent medical history. It has also enabled the economy to thrive and reduced the burden on the NHS. Every year, 2 to 3 million lives are saved across the world through immunisation.

After clean water, vaccines are the greatest public intervention for reducing infectious diseases and deaths. It is why pharmaceutical companies are constantly researching new vaccines to protect us all.

Vaccines are used as a preventative measure in healthy individuals to protect the body against a particular disease. They have eliminated polio, diphtheria and congenital rubella from the UK - helping to reduce the burden of infectious diseases. In fact, 5 lives are saved by vaccination every 60 seconds.

With the global population of people aged 60 and older

growing, vaccination has become a key component of healthy ageing. In the first five years of the shingles vaccine programme, there have been over 49,000 fewer GP visits and over 1,800 fewer hospitalisations for shingles and its complications, saving the NHS an estimated £10.5million.

Vaccination has delivered huge public health benefits for a relatively small investment. The cost of buying vaccines is just 0.3% of the total health budget. In addition, the return on investment of public health interventions averages around £14 for every £1 spent.

Without vaccination, 1.6million school days are missed every year

and vaccination helps to prevent loss of productivity through illness and absence from work. 6million working days are lost in the UK due to seasonal flu every year.

High uptake is needed to keep infectious diseases under control. Before the introduction of the childhood pneumococcal vaccination, one child in every 200 in the UK was admitted to hospital for pneumococcal pneumonia during their first five years.

*To find out more about vaccines and their potential role in addressing health inequalities and delivering a Wales - and NHS - fit for the future, visit our [Valuing Vaccines](#) website.*



**The MMR vaccine has made once common childhood infections extremely rare in Wales today**

SOURCE: Public Health Wales -<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/measles/wales-measles-and-rubella-elimination-task-group-action-plan-2019-2021/> (p.5)

**HPV**  
Protecting against HPV through vaccination can prevent 7 types of cancer including mouth, throat and cervix.

**Measles**  
From 2000-2018 measles vaccinations prevented an estimated 23.2 million deaths.

**Flu**  
Flu vaccines help prevent between 5,000 and 9,000 deaths per year.

For further information about any of the issues in this Bulletin or about ABPI Cymru Wales, please contact:

**Dr Richard Greville,**  
Director ABPI Cymru Wales  
Email: [rgreville@abpi.org.uk](mailto:rgreville@abpi.org.uk)  
Tel: 029 2045 4297

