# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Digital Medicines Transformation Portfolio: Digital Primary Care Prescriptions in Wales** |
| **DATE** | **17 November 2023** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

On 7 November, the first prescriptions in Wales were transferred digitally between a patient’s GP and their community pharmacy. This is a major milestone in our journey towards digitising every prescription in every healthcare setting across Wales.

I have [previously update](https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-progress-digital-medicines-transformation-portfolio)d Members about the Digital Medicines Transformation Portfolio in January; this statement provides a further update about progress made to date.

The portfolio, hosted by Digital Health and Care Wales, which involves all health boards, Velindre University NHS Trust, the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust and NHS Wales Shares Services Partnership, continues to make good progress across its four priority areas:

* Primary care, which includes the implementation of the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS).
* Secondary care, which focuses on the digitisation of hospital electronic Prescribing and Medicine Administration (ePMA) activities across all NHS hospital wards in Wales and, in due course, the electronic transfer of prescription information on discharge from hospital and from outpatient departments to community pharmacies.
* Patient access and the development of medicines features in the NHS Wales App, including allowing people to order repeat prescriptions, view medicines information, nominate a pharmacy of their choice, and access information about their medicines.
* Shared Medicines Record (SMR) – the creation of a central consolidated repository, where a person’s medicines information will be held, easily accessed and shared with appropriate controls. It will enable the seamless transfer of medicines information in real-time between primary and secondary care settings and between NHS organisations.

Since 7 November, digital prescriptions have been transferred between the Lakeside Medical Centre and the Wellington Road pharmacy in Rhyl. I would like to thank the staff at both the GP practice and pharmacy for their support as the first adopters of the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) technology.

The deployment of EPS in Wales requires commercial GP and community pharmacy IT system suppliers to undertake software development. Some suppliers are making faster progress than others – the rollout of EPS will therefore be staggered based on readiness of supporting systems. The portfolio team is working with suppliers to ensure the rollout is as fast as possible.

The portfolio team has also started to explore how other primary care settings – dentistry, optometry and independent prescriber pharmacists – can use digital prescribing to ensure the Shared Medicines Record is a complete picture of all prescriptions.

In secondary care, the first two health boards have selected preferred ePMA suppliers and are working towards awarding contracts. All health boards are on track to publish their invitation-to-tender documentation before the end of the calendar year. All health boards are planning to start implementation early in the next financial year, ensuring deployment happens at pace and that lessons are shared between health board teams.

On patient access, repeat prescription ordering is available within the NHS Wales App for those people whose GPs have enabled the functionality. This allows users to easily and quickly order repeat prescriptions. Further functionality, including the ability to nominate a preferred community pharmacy to receive prescriptions and notifications within the app when their prescription will be ready, is being developed and should be available before the end of the financial year.

Finally, progress on the Shared Medicines Record has reached a key milestone to deliver the technical capability needed for ePMA and SMR to go live, allowing the electronic sharing of data between systems to support healthcare professionals to deliver patient care. Work has focused on enabling medicines, allergy, and discharge information to be shared between systems to help clinicians to do their job more effectively and improve patient care.

A Welsh Health Circular, setting out the consistent way data will be shared (with appropriate controls in place) was [published](https://www.gov.wales/introduction-hl7-fhir-foundational-standard-all-nhs-wales-bodies-whc2023018) in June, supplementing the Data Standard Change Notice for Medicines and Allergies published in 2022, enabling the seamless and safe sharing of medicines information between systems and removing the need for manual transcription. The team continues to engage with others across the UK and globally in this highly innovative area.

I will continue to update Members as work progresses.