

Vaughan Gething AC / AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd
Deputy Minister for Health



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MB/VG/0432/15

Kirsty Williams AM
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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10th February 2015

Dear Kirsty,

Apologies for the delay in responding but I am now in a position to update you on the points you raised as part of the plenary debate on the substance misuse annual report held on 2 December 2014.

During the debate you asked about the use of the new All Wales Medicines Strategy Group prescribing guidelines to GPs with regard to tramadol. I can confirm that in January 2015, the All Wales Therapeutic and Toxicology Centre undertook an analysis of tramadol prescribing between October 2013 and September 2014 which highlighted changes in tramadol prescribing since the Tramadol Educational Resource Materials were available for use in NHS Wales. This analysis found the increasing trend of tramadol prescribing has been reversed and a decrease in prescribing in all health boards has now been seen. It also found a downward trend in the prescribing of tramadol as a percentage of all opioids. Data on the length of time for which people are prescribed tramadol is currently not available.

You also raised a question on accesses to the Steroids and Image Enhancing – Drug Toolkit produced by Public Health Wales. I can confirm that hard copies of the toolkit have been distributed to the PSE co-ordinators of every secondary school in Wales including pupil referral units (PRU) via the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme. This approximates to 250 secondary schools and 30 pupil referral units. In addition, the Healthy Schools Network have supported and promoted the use of the toolkit within the network of secondary schools in Wales.

To ensure the quality and quantity of supporting information and materials, I understand that Public Health Wales engaged with young people through consultations, focus groups, and content testing throughout each stage of the toolkit development process. This included groups of young people from 3 Secondary Schools, 2 Youth Councils, 2 Youth Clubs, and a PRU. In addition, professional feedback has been gathered from teachers and youth workers.

I hope this additional information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Vaughan Gething AC / AM
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Deputy Minister for Health

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