



- To:
- Integrated care boards (ICBs):
 - chief executives
 - medical directors
 - chief nurses
 - pharmacy leads
 - diagnostic leads
 - primary care leads
 - Trusts:
 - chief executives
 - medical directors
 - chief nurses
 - chief pharmacists
 - diagnostic leads
 - IPC leads
 - All PCNs, GP practices, dental practices and pharmacies in England
 - PCN clinical directors

NHS England
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London
SE1 8UG

18 November 2022

- Cc:
- Regional:
 - directors
 - directors of primary care and public health
 - AMS leads

Dear colleagues,

World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW) 2022

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to tackle antimicrobial resistance (AMR). We are writing to ask you to consider taking specific actions to further tackle this issue, including supporting this year's WAAW.

The global [burden](#) of bacterial AMR has recently been estimated at almost 5 million deaths associated with, and 1.27 million deaths directly attributable to AMR each year. This puts the magnitude of the problem at a level globally which is at least as large as major diseases such as HIV and malaria, and potentially much larger.

Inappropriate use of antibiotics impacts the NHS today. Infections caused by antibiotic-resistant pathogens are associated with repeat primary care consultations, more hospital admissions, longer lengths-of-stay and increased mortality. The [UK national action plan on AMR](#) sets out measures of success to ensure progress towards the UK [20-year](#)

[vision](#). These include, among others, targets to halve healthcare associated Gram-negative bloodstream infections (GNBSIs), reduce the number of specific drug-resistant infections in people by 10% by 2025, and to reduce UK antimicrobial use in humans by 15% by 2024.

The establishment of [Integrated Care Boards](#) (ICBs) creates an opportunity to adopt an integrated approach to improving infection prevention, diagnosis and treatment across primary, community and secondary care pathways, to address the threat of AMR across healthcare systems.

This needs to be supported by strong executive and clinical leadership. The [NHS Operating Framework](#) sets out that ICBs should, 'Work with partners to set system-level strategy and plans, and to ensure effective arrangements for joint working to deliver plans, performance, outcomes and transformation'.

This approach enables strategic, pathway-based approaches to the management of AMR. Alongside ICBs having governance arrangements and strategic plans for AMR in place, and identifying an AMR lead, please take time this week to consider the following actions which partners can take to support improvement across care pathways:

1. Implement the National Infection Prevention and Control [Manual](#) for England

Implementation of the infection prevention and control measures detailed within this evidence-based manual can reduce the need for unnecessary antibiotics by decreasing the risk of transmission from infections agents. Reducing the spread of infection and any subsequent treatment will ultimately improve patient outcomes and help to reduce variation and optimise practice across care settings in England.

2. Review the findings of the recent *Improving the blood culture pathway* [report](#)

Blood cultures are fundamentally important diagnostic tests to guide effective treatment for patients with sepsis. NHS Trusts are strongly encouraged to review the findings of the report and evaluate current performance. An audit tool to assist with this is available on the Office of the Chief Scientific Officer's FutureNHS [Workspace](#).

3. Review prescribing

Prescribers should be supported to prescribe the shortest effective course of antibiotics, following NICE guidelines. Patients should be advised to take antibiotics as directed, not to save for later or share with others, and to return any unused antibiotics to community pharmacies for safe disposal.

For primary care, the [NHS Oversight Framework](#) for 2022/23 includes metrics aligned to the UK AMR National Action Plan for appropriate prescribing of antibiotics and broad spectrum antibiotics. All ICBs should review their current performance from data published on the NHS England AMR Programme's FutureNHS [Workspace](#).

For primary care teams, resources such as the TARGET [toolkit](#) may be helpful.

General dental practitioners should be alerted to the updated 2020 evidence-based [Good Practice Guidelines](#) from the Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK) and the Faculty of Dental Surgery and the national [Dental Antimicrobial Stewardship Toolkit](#).

4. Ensure timely intravenous to oral antibiotic switch as soon as appropriate

Studies suggest timely switching could release up to 5 million bed days^{1,2} per year and a substantial amount of [nursing time](#), as well as significantly reducing the carbon footprint of the NHS. The NHS England 2022/23 Priorities and Operational Planning [Guidance](#) calls upon healthcare systems to support reduced lengths of hospital stays by ensuring intravenous antibiotics are only used for as long as clinically necessary, with a switch to oral antibiotics as soon as appropriate. Recommended criteria for IV-to-oral switch are available [here](#).

5. Reduce inpatient exposure to “Watch” and “Reserve” antibiotics

For hospitals, the UK AMR National Action Plan includes an ambition to reduce inpatient exposure to the highest priority critically important antibiotics from the “Watch” and “Reserve” categories of the World Health Organisation's [AWaRe](#) list. This ambition is reflected in the NHS [Standard Contract](#) for 2022/23. Acute hospital Trust Boards are actively encouraged to be appraised of their current performance using the UKHSA [Fingertips](#) website.

6. Adopt the Academy of Medical Royal College's (AoMRC) statement on the initial antimicrobial treatment of sepsis in hospital

The AoMRC's statement on the [initial antimicrobial treatment of sepsis](#) will support appropriate use of antibiotics and improve patient outcomes.

Appendix 1 and 2 detail a range of useful resources for tackling AMR during WAAW 2022 and beyond. Please share and promote these within your organisation.

¹ [Feasibility study of hospital antimicrobial stewardship analytics using electronic health records - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

² [Early switching of antibiotic therapy from intravenous to oral using a combination of education, pocket-sized cards and switch advice: A practical intervention resulting in reduced length of hospital stay - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)


If you have any queries relating to the above actions, please contact england.prevention-amr@nhs.net.

For broader WAAW queries, please contact the WAAW and Antibiotic Guardian national lead, Prof Diane Ashiru-Oredope via espauro@ukhsa.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,



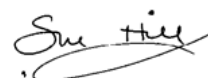
Professor Stephen Powis
National Medical Director
NHS England



Sara Hurley
Chief Dental Officer,
England



David Webb
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
NHS England



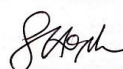
Professor Dame Sue Hill
Chief Scientific Officer for
England



Dame Ruth May
Chief Nursing Officer,
England



Dr Kiren Collison
GP and Interim Medical Director for Primary Care
NHS England



Professor Susan Hopkins
Chief Medical Advisor
UK Health Security Agency

APPENDIX 1: Suggested actions for WAAW 2022

As part of your activities for the awareness week you are invited to encourage colleagues to take and or lead in supporting others to take the following simple actions:

- Choose their [Antibiotic Guardian pledge](#) and encourage colleagues, family members and friends to do the same. You may wish to share your pledge on social media platforms to encourage others to join you also. Please include #AntibioticGuardian, #KeepAntibioticsWorking and #WAAW in social media posts.
- Register your organisation's AMR awareness activities by using the [online registration form](#) (this will take less than 5 minutes). Following registration, you will receive an email with your certificate for your organisation which can be displayed.
- Access [digital resources](#) for health care workers that can be used and shared during WAAW. These resources build on those produced in 2020 and 2021, including digital notes, images and social media messages.
- Visit the [FutureNHS AMR Programme website](#) for access to key national guidance, updates and content available relating to infection management and antimicrobial resistance, and as a mechanism to share knowledge and to network with other colleagues across the country.
- Use social media and community networks to engage with diverse population groups to promote key messages on AMR throughout the winter season using #AntibioticGuardian and/or #KeepAntibioticsWorking. Ready to use social media images and messages are available via [the WAAW digital resources folder](#)
- Encourage staff to engage with available training resources around infections <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/antimicrobial-resistance>

APPENDIX 2: Key AMR resources that can support your actions to tackle AMR

AMR Resources	Click on URLs below to access resources
UK Government AMR National Action Plan	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-5-year-action-plan-for-antimicrobial-resistance-2019-to-2024
English surveillance programme for antimicrobial utilisation and resistance (ESPAUR) annual report	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-surveillance-programme-antimicrobial-utilisation-and-resistance-espaur-report
A range of tools and resources are available for healthcare professionals to help you contribute to achieving the national ambitions of halving HA-GNBSI and inappropriate antibiotic prescribing through the collaborative work of NHS England, Health Education England, NICE and UKHSA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS England: Improving the blood culture pathway • NHS England » National infection prevention and control • NHS Long Term Plan • NHS Oversight Framework • NHS Operational Planning Guidance • UKHSA • Health Education England • NICE • WAAW/EAAD/AG resources toolkit
Preventing healthcare associated Gram-negative bloodstream infections (GNBSI) and supporting best practice for IPC developing local collaborative actions to reduce these infections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing GNBSIs • Every Action Counts • National IPC Manual • Influenza and pneumococcus vaccination uptake data
The AMR indicators on UKHSA Fingertips provide a range of trust level data sets on antimicrobial resistance, healthcare-associated infections, antibiotic prescribing, infection prevention and antimicrobial stewardship that can be used Other sources of presenting antibiotic prescribing data for primary care are also available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/amr-local-indicators • PrescQIPP AMS Hub • Open prescribing
The number of Antibiotic Guardians per 100,000 population for each CCG is also available via UKHSA Fingertips and by local authority via Antibiotic Guardian website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/amr-local-indicators/data#page/3/gid/1938132929/pat/46/par/E39000030/ati/153/are/E38000010/iid/92019/age/1/sex/4
The Royal Pharmaceutical Society AMR campaign and CPPE provide specific resources for pharmacists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.rpharms.com//resources/quick-reference-guides/antimicrobial-stewardship-ams-grg • https://www.cppe.ac.uk/therapeutics/ams
The Start Smart Then Focus toolkit for secondary care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/antimicrobial-stewardship-start-smart-then-focus • https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/antimicrobial-intravenous-to-oral-switch-criteria-for-early-switch
IV-to-oral switch criteria and tool	

<p>The TARGET Antibiotics Toolkit for primary care e led by UKHSA and RCGP are available from the RCGP website and include a range of resources specific for general practice and community pharmacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.rcgp.org.uk/TARGETantibiotics
<p>The dental AMS toolkit provides a set of resources to help primary care practitioners promote the appropriate use of antibiotics in dental care. The Faculty of General Dental Practice UK (FGDP) and the Faculty of Dental Surgery of the Royal College of Surgeons of England (FDS) Antimicrobial Prescribing in Dentistry Good Practice Guidelines were updated in 2020 and support the judicious use of antimicrobials in dentistry.</p> <p>Additional resources are available via the British Dental Association and College of General Dentistry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dental-antimicrobial-stewardship-toolkit • https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/dental-faculties/fds/faculty/news/archive/antimicrobial-prescribing-guidelines/ • https://cgdent.uk/standards-guidance/ • https://bda.org/amr
<p>Healthcare students are encouraged to learn more about and raise awareness of antimicrobial resistance with peers especially non-healthcare students during World Antibiotics Awareness Week and become Antibiotic Guardian_Champions.</p> <p>Students can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete a short e-learning AMR module developed by Health Education England • access the online On Demand module learning sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://bit.ly/AG-healthcare-student-champions • https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/antimicrobial-resistance/ • https://antibioticguardian.com/Meetings/fifth-national-students-amr-conference-online-on-demand-module-learning-sessions-2021/
<p>Materials for school children and their families are available via e-bug (including resources specific for COVID-19), Antibiotic Guardian Youth Badge, which educate on infection prevention and control as well as microbes, their spread and use of antibiotics with schools</p> <p>Healthcare workers, scientists and public health professionals can also sign up to become Antibiotic Guardian Schools Ambassadors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.e-bug.eu/ • https://antibioticguardian.com/Resources/antibiotic-guardian-schools-ambassadors/