



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

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To: Local Authority Chief Executives  
Directors of Public Health

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Dear colleagues

We are pleased to report that there has been a reduction in prescribing of antibiotics in primary care and a clear shift toward more targeted prescribing across England. Many Local Authorities and Health and Wellbeing Boards, have taken decisive action in this field and so can share in the credit for this achievement. Thank you very much for your efforts, this is a great outcome for all.

With World Antibiotic Awareness Week (18-24 November) and European Antibiotic Awareness Day (18 November) approaching, we would like to suggest some actions to build upon this success.

Good infection prevention and control in schools is key to reducing the spread of infectious diseases in the wider community. We therefore encourage you to make sure that local schools know where to find [PHE's advice and resources on this matter](#). It would also be useful to draw schools' attention to [PHE's e-Bug programme](#), which has a wealth of free resources linked to the national curriculum that can be used to support education on antibiotics. Please find attached a template letter (annex 1) which you may wish to adapt and send to schools to help raise awareness of these resources.

In addition to contacting schools, we encourage you to review the other suggested actions and resources attached (annex 2). We also invite you to register your organisation's actions on the [Antibiotic Guardian website](#).

If you have any queries, please contact the World Antibiotic Awareness Week / European Antibiotic Awareness Day and Antibiotic Guardian National Lead, Dr Diane Ashiru-Oredope at [diane.ashiru-oredope@phe.gov.uk](mailto:diane.ashiru-oredope@phe.gov.uk).

Yours faithfully

**Professor Chris Whitty**  
Chief Medical Officer for England

**Professor Yvonne Doyle**  
Medical Director, Public Health England

Dear Headteacher,

### **Preventing infectious diseases in schools**

I hope you are having an excellent term. As winter approaches, I wanted to get in touch to offer some guidance regarding infection prevention and control at your school. I hope you will find this helpful.

As you will know, schools offer the perfect breeding ground for many common winter infections. These infections then spread rapidly, causing disruption to pupils, staff and parents.

There are however some simple actions that you can take to minimise this disruption and help keep your pupils and staff healthy.

Firstly, I would like to draw your attention to [Public Health England's \(PHE\) advice and resources on controlling the spread of infections in the school environment](#). This gives practical advice on how to prevent and respond to cases of common infectious diseases.

Secondly, colleagues in your local Health Protection Team are always willing to give tailored advice and support to schools who suspect they may have an outbreak (i.e. 2 or more cases of the same infection or illness). Please do call upon them as needed. Their contact details can be found on the [PHE website](#).


Good infection control in the community is important both in minimising the number of people who suffer from infections and in reducing the development of antimicrobial resistance, the process by which bacteria develop the ability to survive antibiotic treatment. So finally, please find a template newsletter item overleaf on the topic (you can also [download here](#)), which I invite you to share this World Antibiotic Awareness Week (18-24<sup>th</sup> November). **Please let PHE know if you share the newsletter via the [Antibiotic Guardian Schools page](#).**

Following on from this, if you are not already aware, you may also be interested to learn that PHE has a programme called [e-Bug](#). This provides a wealth of free resources linked to the national curriculum which can be used to support education on antibiotics and antibiotic resistance.

Yours faithfully,

XXX

## Taking ANTIBIOTICS when you don't need them puts you and your family at risk

Keep  Working



Antibiotics are used to treat bacterial infections such as meningitis, tuberculosis and pneumonia. They do not work on viruses, so antibiotics cannot treat infections such as colds and flu. Bacteria are continually adapting to develop new ways of withstanding antibiotic treatment. This is called antibiotic resistance and is one of the biggest threats facing us today.

Antibiotic resistance can then spread between different bacteria in our bodies. Antibiotic resistant bacteria can be carried by healthy or ill people and can spread to others. Overuse and misuse of antibiotics is a major factor that causes antibiotic resistance. The more often a person takes antibiotics, the more likely they are to develop antibiotic resistant bacteria in the body. To reduce this risk, it is important that antibiotics are taken only when necessary and that patients follow advice given by the doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

There are simple actions you can take to help keep antibiotics working:

- Don't ask for antibiotics if you have a cough or cold. Antibiotics should only be taken for bacterial infections. Many infections get better on their own, without the need for antibiotics. Go to your pharmacist for advice first and they may be able to help with your symptoms.
- If the doctor does prescribe you with antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed; never save them for later and never share them with others.
- Spread the word. Tell your friends and family about antibiotic resistance.

You can also help prevent infections spreading by:

- Using tissues and disposing of them when you sneeze.
- Washing hands thoroughly with soap, especially after you have used a tissue or sneezed into your hand.
- Get the flu vaccine if you or your child are eligible.



**You can find out more and choose a pledge about how you can protect yourself, your family and friends against the spread of antibiotic resistance on the Antibiotic Guardian website (<http://antibioticguardian.com/>).**



**There are several fun educational activities linked to the national curricula to educate children on microbes, infections and antibiotics on the e-Bug website ([www.e-bug.eu](http://www.e-bug.eu)).**

## **Annex 2: Other suggested actions for DsPH and HWBBs tackling antimicrobial resistance**

- Support PHE's national ["Keep Antibiotics Working" campaign](#) and encourage partner organisations to do so. Activities could include displaying the campaign materials on your premises or on websites, including your [social media accounts](#).
- Share the ["Keep Antibiotics Working" healthcare professionals](#) toolkit with relevant partners.
- Ensure managers of Local Authority commissioned care homes are aware of the procedures to follow if residents develop infections: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/infection-prevention-and-control-in-care-homes-information-resource-published> Make people aware of how to correctly use antimicrobial medicines and the dangers associated with their overuse and misuse. Refer to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance for Local Authority public health teams on preventing and controlling infections through behaviour change: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG63>
- Visit the improvement hub for Gram-negative bloodstream infections [to develop collaborative actions across local health economies to reduce these infections:](#) <https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/preventing-gram-negative-bloodstream-infections/>
- Register your organisation's AMR awareness activities by 31 December 2019 using the [online registration form](#) (this will take less than five minutes), and display the certificate you receive.
- Becoming an Antibiotic Guardian, and encourage colleagues, friends and family to do the same, by making a pledge at the [Antibiotic Guardian website](#)
- Get further creative ideas for local action via the shared learning pages on the Antibiotic Guardian website that highlight recent local and regional projects/campaigns on AMR that were peer-reviewed and shortlisted for the 2018 [Antibiotic Guardian awards](#).

## Appendix

The [WAAW/EAAD/AG resources toolkit](#) provides information and signpost to resources (leaflets, posters, social media posts) that can be used for local campaigns.

### Key AMR resources are also available:

AMR Resources	Click on URLs below to access resources
<p>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 <a href="#">NHS Improvement</a>, <a href="#">NHS England</a>, <a href="#">Health Education England</a>, <a href="#">NICE</a> and <a href="#">Public Health England</a></p> <p>Keep Antibiotics Working campaign materials</p>	<p><a href="#">NHS Improvement</a>,  <a href="#">NHS England</a>,  <a href="#">Health Education England</a>,  <a href="#">NICE</a>  <a href="#">Public Health England</a>  <a href="#">Keep Antibiotics Working Campaign</a></p>
<p>Improvement <b>hub for Gram-negative bloodstream infections</b> <a href="#">to develop local collaborative actions to reduce these infections</a></p>	<p><a href="https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/preventing-gram-negative-bloodstream-infections/">https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/preventing-gram-negative-bloodstream-infections/</a></p>
<p>The <b>AMR indicators on PHE Fingertips</b> 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</p>	<p><a href="http://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/amr-local-indicators">http://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/amr-local-indicators</a></p>
<p>The number of Antibiotic Guardians per 100,000 population for each CCG is also available via <b>PHE Fingertips</b> and by local authority via Antibiotic Guardian website</p>	<p><a href="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">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</a></p>
<p>The Royal Pharmaceutical Society AMR campaign and CPPE provide specific resources for <b>pharmacists</b></p>	<p><a href="http://www.rpharms.com/ams">http://www.rpharms.com/ams</a>  <a href="https://www.cppe.ac.uk/therapeutics/ams">https://www.cppe.ac.uk/therapeutics/ams</a></p>
<p>The <b>TARGET Antibiotics toolkit for primary care</b> are available from the RCGP website and include a range of resources specific for general practice and community pharmacy</p>	<p><a href="http://www.rcgp.org.uk/TARGETantibiotics">http://www.rcgp.org.uk/TARGETantibiotics</a></p>

**Key AMR resources are also available (contd):**

<b>AMR Resources</b>	<b>Click on URLs below to access resources</b>
<p><b>The dental AMS toolkit</b> provides a set of resources to help primary care practitioners promote the appropriate use of antibiotics in dental care.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dental-antimicrobial-stewardship-toolkit">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dental-antimicrobial-stewardship-toolkit</a></p>
<p><b>Health students</b> are encouraged to learn more about and raise awareness of antimicrobial resistance with peers especially non-health students during World Antibiotics Awareness Week and become Antibiotic Guardian_Champions.</p> <p>Students can also</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complete a short e-learning AMR module developed by Health Education England and</li> <li>• attend a student conference on AMR</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://bit.ly/AG-healthcare-student-champions">http://bit.ly/AG-healthcare-student-champions</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/antimicrobial-resistance/">https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/antimicrobial-resistance/</a></p> <p><a href="https://antibioticguardian.com/meetings-events/">https://antibioticguardian.com/meetings-events/</a></p>
<p>Materials for <b>school children and their families</b> are available via e-bug, 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><a href="http://www.e-bug.eu/">http://www.e-bug.eu/</a></p> <p><a href="http://antibioticguardian.com/Resources/junior-family-antibiotic-guardian/">http://antibioticguardian.com/Resources/junior-family-antibiotic-guardian/</a></p>
<p>Guidelines and guidance for <b>vets, farmers and animal keepers</b> on the responsible use of antimicrobials are available through Veterinary Medicines Directorate and Defra</p>	<p><a href="http://antibioticguardian.com/Resources/veterinary-medicine-livestock/">http://antibioticguardian.com/Resources/veterinary-medicine-livestock/</a></p>

