



7 May 2024

Dear Steve,

PUBLICATION OF THE 2024-29 AMR NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

I am writing to inform you, in your role as Chair of the Health and Social Care Select Committee, that tomorrow we will be publishing the 2024-2029 UK antimicrobial resistance (AMR) national action plan, which I have attached with this letter.

Antimicrobials have a far wider supporting role in modern medicine than just treating infection, as they make it possible for life-changing healthcare, such as hip replacements through to organ transplants, to be carried out safely. Research, partially funded by DHSC, published in 2019 by The Lancet has shown that AMR is a leading cause of death around the world. In England, data from the English Surveillance Programme for Antimicrobial Use and Resistance (ESPAUR) shows that resistance is affecting patients in England now. The 2022-23 ESPAUR report highlights that there were over 58,000 severe antibiotic resistant infections in 2022.

That is why this Government remains committed to reducing the impact of AMR on human, animal, plant and environmental health. This national action plan sets out evidence-based activity, developed through extensive stakeholder engagement, which will strengthen work to prevent infections, optimise the use of antimicrobials, and invest in research and innovation. This plan, co-developed with the Devolved Governments in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, lays out a comprehensive set of commitments, across human healthcare, animal health and welfare, food and the environment, which will make a five-year contribution towards achieving the UK vision for AMR to be contained, controlled and mitigated by 2040.

Substantial progress has been made on AMR in the UK over the past decade. This progress is in part attributable to the Health and Social Care Committee's inquiry into AMR in 2018, which called on the government to place AMR as a Top Five Policy priority. The report and recommendations that resulted from that inquiry have contributed to work to

reduce antimicrobial environmental contamination, reduce antibiotic use in animals and the development of the novel purchasing project in the NHS. This plan will build on the progress made in key areas such as infection prevention and control and antimicrobial stewardship. It also includes commitments focused on public engagement and health inequalities, informed by key learnings from the AMR Call for Evidence and the COVID-19 pandemic.

This milestone publication positions the UK to continue to act as a global leader in tackling AMR, setting the scene for the United Nations General Assembly High Level Meeting on AMR in September later this year. The plan sets a solid precedent for other countries to see and hopefully follow, to ensure continuity of successful treatment and prevention of infectious disease for future generations.

Following your involvement in the development and publication of the 2019-24 national action plan as a minister in DHSC, I hope that you agree that this plan is an important next step in addressing AMR to ensure antimicrobials can continue to underpin modern medicine and save lives.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Maria', with a stylized flourish above the name.

MARIA CAULFIELD