



West Yorkshire 'World AMR Awareness Week 2025 *Accessing Antibiotics Safely and Disposing of Them Responsibly* Communications Toolkit

The West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) has developed this toolkit to support NHS and local authority communications leads, GP practices, and community pharmacies in raising awareness during **World Antimicrobial resistance Awareness Week (18–24 November 2025)**.

The campaign is focused on helping people understand:

- **How to access drugs like antibiotics safely** – only when prescribed by a qualified healthcare professional and taken exactly as directed.
- **How to dispose of them responsibly** – returning unused or expired antibiotics to a pharmacy, never saving them for later or throwing them in household waste or water systems.

Why does this matter?

Antibiotics are life-saving medicines, but they are not the right treatment for every illness. Taking antibiotics unnecessarily or not completing a course as the prescriber has advised, can lead to **antimicrobial resistance (AMR)**, making infections harder or impossible to treat in the future.





Primary care focus – antibiotics and children

For 2025/26, the [NHS Performance Assessment Framework](#) has introduced a new **patient safety measure** to monitor how often children are prescribed antibiotics in primary care. This forms part of the national **quality and inequalities metrics** overseen by ICBs.

The goal is to ensure antibiotics are prescribed for children **only when clinically necessary**. Monitoring and analysing prescribing data will help identify variation, improve safe practice, and reduce health inequalities. This initiative will support **better outcomes for children**, protect antibiotics for the future, and strengthen patient safety across the NHS.

Using this toolkit

This resource provides ready-made content and assets for:

- **Social media posts** (X, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn)
- **Digital assets** (graphics, animations, posters)
- **Suggested copy** for websites, newsletters, and local campaigns
- **GP, Pharmacy and Dental practice materials** for signposting patients and families

All content is free to use and can be adapted for local audiences. We encourage partners to align local messaging with this campaign to maximise reach and impact.





Toolkit

This toolkit is designed for use by:

- GP practices / Community pharmacies
- Dental Practices / Oral Health Practitioners
- Midwives
- Allied Health / NMPs
- Social prescribers
- Local authority and NHS communications teams
- Schools / Nurseries

Contents

1. Key Messages (core, consistent statements)

- Antibiotics are powerful medicines but won't work for every illness – most coughs, colds and sore throats get better without them.
- Only take antibiotics when prescribed by a qualified healthcare professional.
- Always finish your course of antibiotics exactly as prescribed – don't save them for later.
- Never share antibiotics with others – what's safe for one person may be harmful for another.
- Unused or expired antibiotics should always be returned to a pharmacy for safe disposal.
- Using antibiotics responsibly today helps protect children's health and keeps them working for the future.
- For your safety, only use antibiotics prescribed for you by a healthcare provider. Don't share or buy them online, overseas, or 'under the counter' – they may not work and could cause harm.



- Take antibiotics only when prescribed by the NHS. Getting them online or overseas can be risky and may mean the wrong treatment, wrong dose, or fake medicines.
- Most coughs, colds, fever and sore throats get better without antibiotics.
- Using antibiotics when they are not needed means they might not work when they are.
- Know when to seek urgent help – and when self-care is the safest option.
- Your GP will only prescribe antibiotics if they are really needed – to protect your child now and in the future.
- Always take antibiotics exactly as directed by your healthcare professional.
- Return unused or expired antibiotics to your pharmacy for safe disposal – don't throw them away or flush them.
- Helpful information – including how to care for a child at home, symptoms to look out for, and when to seek advice from a pharmacist or GP, call NHS 111, or attend A&E – is available on the [NHS West Yorkshire Healthier Together](#) website.
- Not every dental infection needs antibiotics – your dentist will give the right treatment.

2. Social Media Posts (copy & hashtags)

General awareness

- 📍 Want to know why antibiotics don't always help with coughs, colds and flu? Watch our short animation to find out 🖱️ [Antibiotic resistance - why it's important to take action](#)
#WAAW2025 #KeepAntibioticsWorking
- 🌐 Antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest threats to our health. Learn how we can all make a difference in just 2 minutes 🖱️ [Antibiotic resistance - why it's important to take action](#) #ActNow #OnlyIfPrescribed
- 📍 It's World AMR Awareness Week 2025! Antibiotics save lives – but only when used responsibly. Always follow your GP or pharmacist's advice. #KeepAntibioticsWorking #WAAW2025
- ❌ Antibiotics don't treat colds, coughs or flu. ✅ Rest, fluids and paracetamol are usually the best medicine. #WAAW2025





Safe access

- 📍 Antibiotics should only ever be taken when prescribed by your GP, nurse, or pharmacist. Medicines bought online or overseas may be unsafe. Protect your health – #KeepAntibioticsWorking #WAAW2025
- ❌ Avoid buying antibiotics “under the counter” or abroad. ✅ Always get antibiotics safely, through your NHS healthcare professional. #AMRAwarenessWeek #WAAW2025
- 🚫 Fake or unregulated antibiotics can harm your health. ✔️ The safe way is through your NHS prescriber. #PatientSafety
- ⚠️ Children are sometimes given antibiotics – but only when they’re really needed. Too much use now means fewer options in the future. #PatientSafety #KeepAntibioticsWorking #WAAW2025
- 😞 Not sure if you need antibiotics? Your GP, NHS 111 or pharmacist can help you get the right care safely. #WAAW2025
- ❌ Not every infection needs antibiotics. ✅ Discover when they do in our quick explainer 🖱️ [Antibiotic resistance - why it's important to take action](#) #OnlyIfPrescribed #KeepAntibioticsWorking #WAAW2025
- 🦷 Not every toothache needs antibiotics – your dentist will give the right treatment.
- 📍 Antibiotics only work when really needed – trust your dentist’s advice.

Responsible disposal / environment

- 📍 Got leftover antibiotics at home? Don’t put them in the bin or flush them – return them to your pharmacy for safe disposal. #SafeDisposal #WAAW2025
- 🌱 Protect the environment AND protect health. Dispose of antibiotics responsibly by returning them to your local pharmacy. #SustainableNHS #WAAW2025
- ♻️ Don’t bin them. Don’t flush them. 🖱️ [Find out why antibiotics should always be returned to your pharmacy & the Environment](#) #ReturnUnusedAntibiotics #DisposeResponsibly #WAAW2025





- 🌱 Protect your health AND the environment. 🖱️ [Find out why antibiotics should always be returned to your pharmacy](#)
💡 [AMR & the Environment](#) #ReturnUnusedAntibiotics #DisposeResponsibly #SustainableNHS #KeepAntibioticsWorking
#WAAW2025

3. Suggested Webpage

a) GP Copy

Title: Accessing Antibiotics Safely – and Disposing of Them Responsibly

Antibiotics are vital medicines that save lives. But they won't treat every infection and using them too often can mean they stop working when we really need them.

This year, as part of World Antibiotic Awareness Week (18–24 November 2025), NHS West Yorkshire is encouraging people to:

- Take antibiotics only when prescribed, and exactly as directed.
- Avoid saving leftover tablets or sharing them with others.
- Return unused or expired antibiotics to a pharmacy for safe disposal – never throw them away or flush them.

By using antibiotics safely, we can protect our health today and keep antibiotics working for future generations.

Find out more at <https://seriouslyresistant.com/common-infections/>.





b) Pharmacy Copy

Access antibiotics safely

For your safety, antibiotics should **only be taken when prescribed by a qualified healthcare professional** such as your GP, nurse, or pharmacist.

- Buying antibiotics overseas, online, or without a prescription can be dangerous.
- These medicines may be **fake, contaminated, or the wrong treatment** for your condition.
- Using them increases the risk of **serious side effects** and **antibiotic resistance**.

Always speak to your GP, NHS 111, or pharmacist if you are unwell and think you might need antibiotics.

Find out more at <https://seriouslyresistant.com/common-infections/>.

c) Dental Copy

For your safety, antibiotics should only be taken when prescribed by a **qualified dental or healthcare professional** such as your dentist, GP, or pharmacist.

- Most **dental infections can be treated directly** by your dentist (for example, by draining the infection, cleaning the tooth, or removing it if necessary).
- **Antibiotics are not always the right treatment** – they are usually only prescribed if there is a spreading infection, swelling, or other serious signs.
- Buying antibiotics overseas, online, or without a prescription can be dangerous. These medicines may be fake, contaminated, or the wrong treatment for your condition.
- Using antibiotics incorrectly increases the risk of serious side effects and antibiotic resistance, making future infections harder to treat.





If you have dental pain or swelling, the best and safest option is to **contact your dentist for advice and treatment**. If you cannot access a dentist and need urgent help, call NHS 111.

Find out more at <https://seriouslyresistant.com/common-infections/>.

4. Hashtags & Handles

UKHSA WAAW 2025	Safe Access Focus	Safe Disposal Focus	Dental / Oral Health	Wider Awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #AntibioticGuardian • #KeepAntibioticsWorking • #WAAW2025 • #ConfrontingAMR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #OnlyIfPrescribed • #TrustYourNHS • #SafeAntibiotics • #UseAntibioticsWisely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #ReturnUnusedAntibiotics • #DisposeResponsibly • #PharmacyReturns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #DentalAntibiotics • #AntibioticsAndTeeth • #OnlyIfPrescribed • #TrustYourDentist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #ProtectAntibiotics • #FutureWithoutResistance • #ResponsibleAntibiotics

5. Sample Articles:

- a) General - [Sample article for staff bulletin / newsletter](#)
- b) [Newsletters - Key reminders for Primary Care and AMR and the Environment](#)
- c) [General - Community-friendly article](#)
- d) [Community-friendly article specifically for schools and nurseries \(parent-friendly -focus on children's health\)](#)
- e) [Community friendly article specifically for social care](#)
- f) [Staff facing article for Hospice's](#)
- g) [Staff facing article for Universities and Higher Ed.](#)
- h) [Staff facing article specifically for Sexual Health Providers](#)





6. Social media plan

Day / Date Theme	Suggested Message	Images <i>Click on the image to download relevant file</i>
<p>Day 1 – 18 Nov (Launch)</p>	<p>🌐 It's #AMRAwarenessWeek! Antibiotics save lives – but only if we use them responsibly. 💊</p> <p>👉 Always take them only if prescribed by your NHS healthcare professional.</p> <p>Find out more at https://seriouslyresistant.com/common-infections/. #OnlyIfPrescribed #KeepAntibioticsWorking#WAAW2025</p>	 <p>Download File: https://www.wypartnership.co.uk/download_file/14151/4230 FORMAT: Static image Alt / Descriptive text: Image reads Bacteria are becoming resistant to antibiotics.</p>



Day 1 –

18 Nov
(Global X
relay
message)

Antimicrobial Resistance is one of the most urgent global threats to the public's health.

Antibiotics can cause side-effects, including nausea and diarrhoea and contribute to the development of #AntibioticResistance

#AntibioticGuardian #KeepAntibioticsWorking
#WAAW2025

UK Health Security Agency

#AntimicrobialResistance is one of the most urgent global threats to the public's health. Antibiotics can cause side-effects, including nausea and diarrhoea and contribute to the development of **#antibioticresistance**.



**BECOME AN
ANTIBIOTIC GUARDIAN**

Keep Antibiotics Working



#AntibioticGuardian #KeepAntibioticsWorking #WAAW

Download File: [Global Twitter Relay Image 2.png \(1280x720\)](#)

FORMAT: Static image

Alt / Descriptive text: UKHSA, Antibiotic Guardian, and Keep Antibiotics Working logos with campaign hashtags. Image shows antibiotic pills, a QR code linking to the Antibiotic Guardian site, and text warning that antibiotic resistance is a global health threat and antibiotics can cause side effects



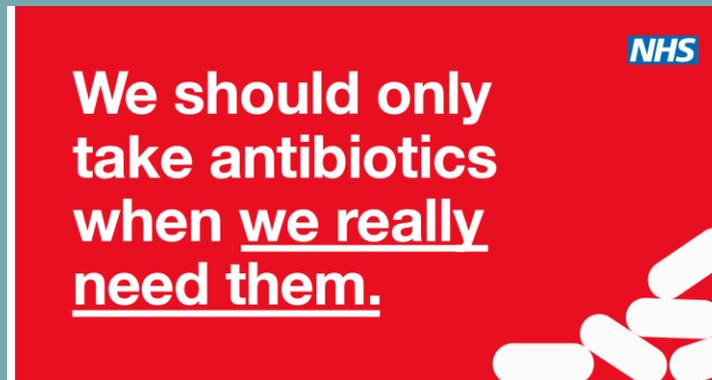


Day 2 –
19 Nov
(Children’s
Safety)

⚠️ Protecting children’s health means using antibiotics wisely. Too many prescriptions now could mean fewer options in the future.
💡 Trust your GP, nurse, or pharmacist for safe advice.

Find out more at
<https://seriouslyresistant.com/common-infections/>.

#OnlyIfPrescribed #PatientSafety#WAAW2025



Download File: https://www.wypartnership.co.uk/download_file/13998/4230

FORMAT: Static image

Alt / Descriptive text: Image reads We should only take antibiotics when we really need them

Day 3 –
20 Nov (Cold
& Flu Myths)

❌ Antibiotics don’t treat coughs, colds, or flu.
✅ Rest, fluids, and paracetamol are usually the best medicine.

Find out more at
<https://seriouslyresistant.com/common-infections/>.

#UseAntibioticsWisely #WAAW2025





		<p>Download File: https://www.wypartnership.co.uk/download_file/13997/4230 FORMAT: Static image Alt / Descriptive text: Image reads Antibiotics are not always the right treatment.</p>
<p>Day 4 – 21 Nov (Safe Access)</p>	<p>🚫 Don't share antibiotics or buy antibiotics overseas, online, or "under the counter."</p> <p>✓ They may be fake, unsafe, or the wrong treatment for you. Antibiotics are safe only when prescribed by your NHS professional.</p> <p>Find out more at https://seriouslyresistant.com/common-infections/.</p> <p>#TrustYourNHS #OnlyIfPrescribed#WAAW2025</p>	 <p>Download File: Don t share antibiotics 1080x1080px 03.mp4 FORMAT: animated graphic 'Don't share with friends or family' animated graphic (mp4 file) Alt / Descriptive text: Image reads 'Don't share antibiotics with friends or family. Antibiotics to treat your infection may not be able to help your friend or family member.' The website address is www.seriouslyresistant.com Hashtag Take Antibiotics Seriously.</p>





Day 5 –
22 Nov (Safe
Disposal)

- 📍 Got leftover antibiotics at home?
- 👉 Don't bin them. Don't flush them.
- ✅ Return them to your pharmacy for safe disposal.

#ReturnUnusedAntibiotics
#DisposeResponsibly
#WAAW2025



Download File: [Antibiotic Amnesty.png \(543x286\)](#)

FORMAT: Static image

Alt / Descriptive text: Image reads Antibiotic Amnesty. Antibiotics should never be saved for later or shared with others. Hand your old or unused antibiotics in at any local pharmacy. Antibiotic Guardian. Keep antibiotics working.





Day 6 –
23 Nov
(Environment)

 Flushing or binning antibiotics can harm our environment.

Protect nature *and* protect health: return unused antibiotics to your local pharmacy.

#DisposeResponsibly #SustainableNHS



Download File: [Safe Disposal image 2.png \(1080x1350\)](#)

FORMAT: Static image

Alt / Descriptive text: Image reads Protect the Environment. Return unused of expired antibiotics. Never save them for later or throw them in household waste or water systems. Local pharmacies will safely dispose for you.

7. Additional Resources

West Yorkshire Resources, including digital pack with alternative static images for digital displays and social media content, big screen films and additional language resources, are available [\[here\]](#) to reinforce the national key messages.

