

[Statement by Scotland's Brexit Minister on the introduction of the Scottish Continuity Bill](#)

Below is a statement given by Michael Russell, Scotland's Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe, on the Scottish Continuity Bill. Check against delivery.

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Author:

[Press release: Research reveals levels of inappropriate prescriptions in England](#)

This implies that antibiotic prescribing nationally should be reduced by 10% by 2020, in accordance with the national ambition to cut levels of inappropriate prescribing in half. These data are published in 5 articles in a supplement to the Journal of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy.

Professor Paul Cosford, PHE Medical Director said:

Antibiotics are critical to modern medicine, saving millions of lives since the 1940s when they were first introduced. Using antibiotics when you don't need them threatens their long term effectiveness and we all have a part to play to ensure they continue to help us, our families and communities in the future.

This publication highlights the role GPs can play and I urge all practices to look at ways they can reduce their inappropriate prescribing levels to help make sure the antibiotics that save lives today can save lives tomorrow.

Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt said:

Drug-resistant infections are one of the biggest threats to modern

medicine and inappropriate prescribing of antibiotics is only exacerbating this problem.

We are leading the world in our response. Since 2012, antibiotics prescribing in England is down by 5% and we've invested more than £615 million at home and abroad in research, development and surveillance. But we need to go further and faster otherwise we risk a world where superbugs kill more people a year than cancer and routine operations become too dangerous.

Antibiotics are important for treating serious bacterial infections, but their effectiveness is threatened by antibacterial resistance. Antibiotics are unique among drugs as the more they are used, the less effective they become and over time resistance develops. In response to this, the UK government set an ambition to reduce inappropriate antibiotic prescribing by 50% by 2020. This work seeks to quantify the amount of current antibiotic prescribing that is inappropriate.

The research found that the majority of antibiotic prescriptions in English primary care were for infections of the respiratory and urinary tracts. However, in almost a third of all prescriptions, no clinical reason was documented. Antibiotic prescribing rates varied substantially between GP practices, nonetheless, there is scope for all practices across the country to reduce their rates of prescribing.

For most conditions, substantially higher proportions of GP consultations resulted in an antibiotic prescription than is appropriate according to expert opinion. An antibiotic was prescribed in 41% of all uncomplicated acute cough consultations when experts advocated 10%, as well as:

- bronchitis (actual: 82% versus ideal: 13%)
- sore throat (actual: 59% versus ideal: 13%)
- rhinosinusitis (actual: 88% versus ideal: 11%)
- acute otitis media in 2 to 18 year olds (actual: 92% versus ideal: 17%)

This work demonstrates the existence of substantial inappropriate antibiotic prescribing and poor diagnostic coding in English primary care. Better diagnostic coding, more precise prescribing guidelines, and a deeper understanding of appropriate long-term uses of antibiotics would allow identification of further reduction potentials.

Read the supplement [Appropriateness of antibiotic prescribing in English primary care](#).

Contact [Daniel Luzer](#) to request a copy of the journal supplement.

This work was resourced by Public Health England (PHE).

Public Health England press office

Email

phe-pressoffice@phe.gov.uk

Telephone

020 7654 8400

Out of hours telephone

020 8200 4400

Press release: Find out about the latest plans to reduce flood risk in Otley

Updated: Revised date for the event following adverse weather conditions on Thursday 1 March.

Visitors to the drop in will have an opportunity to see how feedback from the last event in October has helped to shape options for flood alleviation scheme for Otley.

A review of the digital model of the river is now complete, and the testing of options in the model has begun, so the team would now like to share the findings from the work and get feedback for the next steps.

Representatives from Leeds City Council, Environment Agency and WSP (the consultants undertaking survey and investigation work) will be at the event to answer any questions and discuss the latest progress.

The drop in will be held at:

- The Core Otley, Unit 11 Orchard Gate, Otley LS21 3NX on Tuesday 13 March between 4–7pm

The town suffered flooding on three occasions between November and December 2015, which saw 74 properties affected. In the Autumn Statement 2016, Government announced £2 million to invest in a scheme to reduce the risk of flooding to homes and businesses.

The scheme is being led by Leeds City Council working closely with the Environment Agency.

Leader of Leeds City Council Councillor Judith Blake said:

Together with our partners we are continuing to make good progress

on our plans for flood prevention measures in Otley. The modelling work on the river is finished and we are now testing the possible options. We want local residents and businesses to be as involved as possible in these plans as they develop, so would encourage people to go along to the drop-in session, find out more and give us their views.

John Woods, flood risk management advisor at the Environment Agency said:

We're grateful to everyone who came along to the last event in October to give us your views and ideas. We have looked at these in detail with Leeds City Council's engineers and consultants WSP and have tested a number of them in the digital model to assess their impact on flooding. Residents views are once again really important in helping us to shape the preferred option for Otley.

Work to pull together data to better understand the potential paths of flood water as well as collating historic and recent flood information began last year. The information from these investigations, carried out by consultants, WSP, has been used to update an existing digital model of the River Wharfe which has helped to form potential options for a scheme, which are now being tested.

The Otley Flood Alleviation Scheme is one of several schemes that is adopting a catchment-wide approach. This means the entire River Wharfe catchment area will be considered to help reduce flood risk. This approach looks at a combination of natural processes and engineered options to help slow the flow and catch water further up the catchment so that flood peaks are reduced further downstream.

For those who can't make it to the drop-in, members of the project team will be working regularly from Otley Town Council's office, and can be contacted on 01943 466335 or call in for a chat between these times:
Tuesday 13th March 3pm – 6pm, Wednesday 11th April 3 – 6pm.

[Press release: Illegal Newcastle scrapyards charged with £7k fine](#)

A Newcastle man has been fined for operating a vehicle scrapyards without a permit in a prosecution brought by the Environment Agency.

Ronald Coulson Vincent Grieveson, 23, of Forest Hall, appeared at Newcastle Magistrates' Court on Friday, February 23.

He pleaded guilty to illegally storing and treating waste vehicles and parts without a permit. He was fined £3,628, and ordered to pay costs of £3,273.58 and a victim surcharge of £362.

Acting on behalf of the Environment Agency, solicitor Chris Bunting told the court Grieveson had been operating an illegal waste site at Unit C, Grieveson Industrial Estate, Byker, without an environmental permit.

Environment Agency officers visited the site on 16 November 2016 and saw oil seeping from loose car engines onto the concrete and into a combined sewer system nearby. Grieveson was told to stop illegal activities and stop oil leaking off site.

On a further visit a month later, Environment Officers found oil continued to leak off site from engines left on the concrete surface. More car engines were stored in a red skip and various car parts and tyres were stored elsewhere on the site.

Grieveson was issued with a legal notice warning him to stop all illegal activity on site and remove all waste by 16 January 2017. Yet, when officers returned again on 27 February 2017 they found little had changed.

In court solicitor, Jack Lovell, in mitigation stated that Mr Grieveson realised he had been naïve and foolishly thought he could operate legally with just a waste carrier's licence. Mr Grieveson produced photographs to show the site is now cleared of waste.

Jamie Fletcher, Area Environment Manager, Environment Agency, said:

It is important that waste materials are stored, handled and disposed of correctly to protect the environment and safeguard human health. The defendant in this case continued to operate outside the law despite numerous warnings, and by handling un-depolluted vehicles and parts, he caused pollution.

Anyone who has information about waste crimes can call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

STEVEN MAIJOR SPEECH AT THE SECOND ANNUAL FINTECH AND DIGITAL INNOVATION CONFERENCE

The Chair of the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA), Steven Maijor, delivered a [keynote speech](#) at Afore Consulting's Second Annual

FinTech and Digital Innovation Conference in Brussels on 27 February.

In the course of his speech he addressed three key areas of FinTech, beginning with the structural features of FinTech, monitoring FinTech by looking at economic function and concluded his remarks by outlining the challenges and opportunities for regulators.