

[News story: Antimicrobial resistance: UK launches 5-year action plan and 20-year vision](#)

The government has published [a 20-year vision and 5-year national action plan](#) for how the UK will contribute to containing and controlling AMR by 2040.

The plans include targets, such as:

- cutting the number of drug-resistant infections by 10% (5,000 infections) by 2025
- reducing the use of antibiotics in humans by 15%
- preventing at least 15,000 patients from contracting infections as a result of their healthcare each year by 2024

A major focus of the plan is to make sure current antibiotics stay effective by reducing the number of resistant infections and supporting clinicians to prescribe appropriately.

New technology will also be used to gather real-time patient data, helping clinicians understand when to use and preserve antibiotics in their treatment. This could be followed and adapted all over the world, building the database on antibiotic use and resistance.

The plans cover animals and the environment as well as human health. The government has committed to working with vets and farmers to further reduce antibiotic use in animals by 25% between 2016 and 2020, with objectives to be refreshed by 2021.

The pharmaceutical industry will also be expected to take more responsibility for antibiotic resistance. NICE and NHS England will explore a new payment model that pays pharmaceutical companies based on how valuable their medicines are to the NHS, rather than on the quantity of antibiotics sold.

Antibiotic resistance is predicted to kill 10 million people every year by 2050 without action, as outlined in the [independent review on antimicrobial resistance](#). Without effective antibiotics, straightforward, everyday operations like caesarean sections or hip replacements could become too dangerous to perform.

Since 2014, the UK has cut the amount of antibiotics it uses by more than 7% and sales of antibiotics for use in food-producing animals have dropped by 40%. But the number of drug-resistant bloodstream infections have increased by 35% from 2013 to 2017.

The national action plan and 20-year vision were developed in close collaboration with the devolved UK administrations.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Imagine a world without antibiotics. Where treatable infections become untreatable, where routine surgery like a hip operation becomes too risky to carry out, and where every wound is potentially life-threatening. What would go through your mind if your child cut their finger and you knew there was no antibiotic left that could treat an infection? This was the human condition until almost a century ago. I don't want it to be the future for my children – yet it may be unless we act.

As Health Secretary, responsible for one of the most advanced healthcare systems in the world, I could not look my children in the eyes unless I knew I was doing all in my power to solve this great threat. We have time to act. But the urgency is now.

Each and every one of us benefits from antibiotics, but we all too easily take them for granted, and I shudder at the thought of a world in which their power is diminished. Antimicrobial resistance is as big a danger to humanity as climate change or warfare. That's why we need an urgent global response.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

The increase in antibiotic resistance is a threat we cannot afford to ignore. It is vital that we tackle the spread of drug-resistant infections before routine operations and minor illnesses become life-threatening.

I am very proud of the UK's global leadership on this important agenda. We will continue to work with our partners to drive international action that will protect the health of future generations.

[News story: UK to lead charge in emerging maritime technology](#)

A new strategy launched today (24 January 2019) will set the UK as a pre-eminent global test-bed of emerging technology, enabling the country to capitalise on the economic potential of maritime innovations.

The government has today set out its ambitions for the country to remain a world-leader in the maritime industry for the next 30 years.

The Maritime 2050 strategy outlines a range of short, medium and long-term proposals, including developing technology, people, and infrastructure, to

keep the maritime industry in the UK flourishing.

These include establishing an innovation hub at a UK port by 2030, looking at ways to clean up emissions from the industry, and building on the world-class training already offered to seafarers.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

Maritime is a vital UK industry, bringing in £14 billion to our economy as well as providing thousands of new and exciting careers for people across the country.

This strategy is a clear message to the world – we will continue to be a leading maritime nation for the next 30 years and beyond.

We will be at the forefront of emerging technology and seafarer training and will capitalise on selling this expertise to companies across the world.

New legislation will introduce a domestic framework for autonomous vessels to enhance testing in UK waters. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency is looking at what is needed to ensure the safety of these and other ships. This will set the UK as the best place to trial this technology which will then attract international business and investment, providing a boost to the economy.

The UK will also pioneer the use of virtual and augmented reality in seafarer training as the government looks to establish a Maritime Skills Commission, bringing together leading experts to report in the existing and future needs of the industry – keeping it at the cutting edge of tuition.

Hugh McNeal, chairman of the Maritime 2050 expert panel, said:

Over the last year it has been a privilege to chair the expert panel which has brought together leaders from across the sector, from other world-class industries, academia and promotional bodies, to challenge and support the development of Maritime 2050. The result is a wide ranging and hugely ambitious blueprint for Britain's future as a maritime nation ensuring the economy continues to grow successfully into the second half of the 21st century.

The recommendations published today will enable government and industry to work together to increase trade, attract investment and foster innovation across our thriving maritime sector, while progressing clean maritime growth.

A government-funded 'People like me' project will challenge the perception of the sector to attract more diverse talent. This builds on the work of the Women in Maritime taskforce, which is already working to increase the number

of women employed in the industry.

Harry Theochari, chairman of Maritime UK, said:

For the first time the maritime sector has a real long term strategy – setting out what government and industry will do to position the UK as the world’s leading maritime nation over the coming decades in an increasingly competitive global context.

There are monumental opportunities for our sector – whether on technology, coastal economic development, attracting more maritime business to our shores or for the people that underpin our success.

The global ocean economy will double in value to \$3 trillion by 2030. Competitor maritime nations are hungry for the prize, and Maritime 2050 will ensure that the UK is best-placed to capitalise. The task of turning these ambitious recommendations into reality rests on the strength of partnership between industry and government. Industry is committed to delivery.

By 2030, the government will develop a Maritime Innovation Hub, supporting new technologies while also boosting regional productivity with new jobs. And later this year, a Clean Maritime Plan will set out ways the UK will lead the way in green standards to reach zero emission shipping as quickly as possible.

[News story: Hammond tells Davos: “Britain is a great place to do business”](#)

- Chancellor will say UK’s standing as world leader is here to stay
- Hammond commits to future-proofing UK economy for fourth industrial revolution
- £100 million investment will boost UK innovation

“Britain is a great place to do business,” the Chancellor will tell business leaders in Davos today, as he commits further investment for research and technology.

Leading the UK delegation to the World Economic Forum, the Chancellor will announce £100 million to create 1,000 new PhD places across the UK for the next generation of Artificial Intelligence. This will bolster UK universities’ existing strengths in research excellence.

The money will fund research into life-saving technology to be used in NHS hospitals, and improve voice-recognition software for business and consumers. The funding will also help cities to protect citizens from pollution hotspots through the development of early warning systems.

This builds on the government's commitment to bring investment in research and development to a record level – not seen since the 1970s, as Britain builds on its role as an outward-looking, innovative nation.

Speaking at a CBI event in Davos, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond is expected to say:

Britain is a great place to do business. And we are determined, as we leave the EU, to make sure it remains that way.

We are leading the way in the tech revolution. The UK digital sector is now worth over £130 billion with jobs growing at twice the rate of those in the wider economy.

I want to ensure we remain the standard bearer, so we must invest in our new economy so that it can adapt and remain competitive.

We are backing British innovation to help create growth, more jobs and higher living standards.

Further information

The UK has shown international leadership in responding to the challenges of the modern age through:

- a world-leading Digital Services Tax which will ensure that digital businesses pay a fair amount of tax
- a review of competition in the digital economy, led by Professor Jason Furman, putting the UK at the forefront of a global debate on how to ensure tech markets remain competitive and work for consumers
- a National Retraining Scheme which is giving working people the skills they need to succeed in a changing economy

The UK has a thriving digital sector, worth over £130 billion, and a digital economy employing more than 2 million people.

The funding announced today is part of the £7 billion extra we have committed to science and innovation since 2016 – the largest increase for 40 years.

The unemployment rate in the UK is at its lowest since 1975.

The employment rate is at a record high and wages are rising at the fastest pace in over a decade.

Compared to this point in previous years, the deficit is the lowest in 16 years. The deficit is down by four fifths since 2010 and debt is falling on a

sustained basis for the first time in a generation.

Press release: Self Assessment taxpayers have one week left to file their return

More than 3.5 million customers have just one week left to complete their Self Assessment tax returns and pay any tax owed, warns HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

The deadline to complete a 2017 to 2018 tax return online is 11.59pm on 31 January, and last year more than 93% of customers filed their returns by the deadline.

An extra 25,000 customers have already filed their Self Assessment compared to this time last year. HMRC is reminding customers that if their tax return is late, they will receive a £100 penalty – even if they do not owe any tax. The longer the delay, the more they will have to pay.

Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Mel Stride, said:

The deadline for the Self Assessment tax return is fast approaching, but there is still time for the 3.5 million customers who haven't completed their return to file by 31 January. With only 7 days to go it is important that customers are reminded of the Self Assessment deadline in order to avoid paying penalties.

Angela MacDonald, HMRC Director General of Customer Services, said:

We are encouraging all Self Assessment filers to complete their returns by 31 January and support is available every step of the way. Taxpayers can make use of HMRC's online services, webinars and videos, the customer service helpline, webchat or our social media channels. We are on-hand to offer support and advice to help you complete your tax return.

If customers think they will not be able to complete their tax return by 31 January, please contact HMRC. Help is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk), from the Self Assessment helpline on 0300 200 3310 and on social media.

Self Assessment facts summary:

- 11,564,363 total Self Assessment returns due
- 8,063,550 returns received (70%), as of 22 January 2019
- 3,500,813 returns still to file, as of 23 January 2019 (compared to 3,524,798 as at 23 January 2018)
- 7,359,607 returns, as of 22 January 2019, filed online (91% of total filed)
- 703,943 returns filed on paper (9% of total filed)

The penalties for late tax returns are:

- an initial £100 fixed penalty, which applies even if there is no tax to pay, or if the tax due is paid on time
- after 3 months, additional daily penalties of £10 per day, up to a maximum of £900
- after 6 months, a further penalty of 5% of the tax due or £300, whichever is greater
- after 12 months, another 5% or £300 charge, whichever is greater

There are also additional penalties for paying late of 5% of the tax unpaid at 30 days, 6 months and 12 months.

Tax is automatically deducted from the majority of UK taxpayers' wages, pensions or savings. For people or businesses where tax is not automatically deducted, or when they may have earned additional untaxed income, they are required to complete a Self Assessment tax return each year.

[News story: Celtica Hav report published](#)



Photo: fotoflite.com

Our report into the grounding of the Bahamas registered cargo vessel Celtica Hav on a stone training wall in the approaches to the River Neath in March last year, is now published.

The report contains details of what happened, the subsequent actions taken and recommendations made: [read more](#).

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