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Prof Alison Strath
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Chief Medical Officer
Prof Sir Gregor Smith
Chief Dental Officer
Dr Tom Ferris
Chief AHP Officer
Carolyn McDonald



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Dear Colleagues,

Update on Indicators for Antibiotic Use

In March 2025 [DL \(2025\)05](#), the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care approved standards and indicators for HCAI which included no increase in the incidence (number of cases) of *Clostridioides difficile* infection (CDI), *Escherichia coli* bacteraemia (ECB), and *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteraemia (SAB) by March 2026 from the 2023/2024 baseline.

The [UK AMR National Action Plan 2024 - 2029 \(NAP\)](#) sets out renewed UK-wide antibiotic use and healthcare associated infection targets, namely the ambition to, by 2029, reduce total antibiotic use in human populations by 5% and to achieve 70% of total use of antibiotics from the Access category across the human healthcare system. Both targets are set against a 2019/20 baseline.

Previous antibiotic indicators which were issued in February 2023, [DL \(2023\)06](#) and extended to 2024 have now been reviewed and replaced with the following antibiotic prescribing indicators across primary and secondary care in Scotland to support the delivery of the UK NAP targets.

Primary Care Targets:

1. By 2029, 90% of prescriptions of amoxicillin and 60% for doxycycline in primary care will be for a 5-day course
2. By 2029, 85% of prescriptions of trimethoprim and nitrofurantoin for women in primary care will be for 3 days
3. By 2029, Less than 3% of all antibiotics in primary care will be for co-amoxiclav and ciprofloxacin combined

Secondary Care Targets:

4. By 2029, IV antibiotic prescribing (DDDs per 1000 acute occupied beds) will be 10% lower than the 2019 baseline
5. By 2029, 95% of antimicrobial prescriptions will have an indication recorded in secondary care

From:

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DL/2025/27

Addresses

NHS Scotland Chairs
NHS Scotland Chief Executives
Chief Officers Health and Social Care Partnerships
Chief Social Work Officers
Local Authorities
HR Directors
Medical Directors
Nurse Directors
Primary Care Leads
Directors of Pharmacy
Directors of Public Health
Directors of Dentistry
Health Protection Teams
Optometric Advisors
Infection Control Managers
Infection Control Doctors
Infection Control Nurses
Scottish Microbiology and Virology Forum
Scottish Antimicrobial Prescribing Group

Dental Prescribing Targets:

6. By 2029, total antibiotic use in dental prescribing will be 5% lower than the 2019 baseline.
7. By 2029, penicillin will be prescribed more frequently than amoxicillin in general dental practice and will account for at least 60% of total antibiotic prescribing

These indicators were developed in collaboration with stakeholders and are supported by the Scottish Antimicrobial Prescribing Group and ARHAI Scotland and will be kept under review to ensure that they are supporting boards to improve antimicrobial prescribing and delivery of the NAP. We recognise and thank you for your continued support and efforts in the containment and control of AMR and look forward to our continued collaboration in this very important area.

If you have any questions about the content of this publication, please contact the Healthcare Associated Infections/ Antimicrobial Resistance Policy Unit at HAI-AMR_Policy_Unit@gov.scot.

Yours sincerely,



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