**News release**

18 November 2020

**NHS clinical commissioning groups in North Yorkshire and York pledge support for World Antimicrobial Awareness Week**

The NHS in North Yorkshire and York is backing a global campaign which aims to increase awareness of antibiotic resistance and reduce unnecessary prescribing.

Every year, World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (18-22 November) shines a light on global antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and the spread of drug-resistant infections.

As resistance grows to a wider range of drugs, the World Health Organization has broadened the focus of its international campaign from antibiotics to all antimicrobials. This year’s theme for World Antimicrobial Awareness Week 2020 for the human health sector is “United to preserve antimicrobials”.

NHS North Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) clinical prescribing lead, Dr Tim Rider, said: “Taking antibiotics inappropriately encourages harmful bacteria that live inside you to become resistant. This means that antibiotics may not work as well if you’re unfortunate enough to become very unwell further down the line and you really need them.

“If you or a family member has a cold or other viral infection, antibiotics won’t help – antibiotics do not work on viruses, they only help in infections caused by bacteria. So if you do come down with a winter bug, rather than visiting a GP to get antibiotics, visit your local pharmacy instead. They’ll be able to recommend effective over-the-counter medicines that will help ease symptoms or pain – and they’ll point you back towards your doctor if there’s any sign of your illness being something more serious.”

Laura Angus, NHS Vale of York CCG’s Strategic Lead Pharmacist, added: “We all have a part to play to ensure antibiotics remain effective for serious bacterial infections such as sepsis, pneumonia, urinary tract infections, meningococcal meningitis and sexually transmitted diseases. If you are worried you may have something more serious than a cold or flu, speak to your doctor who will be able to advise you on the best treatment option.”

With no new antibiotics developed in the last 30 years patients are encouraged only to take them if they really need to.

Without the effectiveness of antibiotics, routine operations like hip replacements, organ transplants and caesarean sections or chemotherapy treatments will become increasingly dangerous or impossible.

More information on this year’s campaign can be found on the World Health Organization website at <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-antimicrobial-awareness-week/2020>

On 18 November, it’s also European Antibiotic Awareness Day. There’s more information, here: <https://antibiotic.ecdc.europa.eu/en>

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors**

**About NHS North Yorkshire CCG**

[NHS North Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Group](https://www.northyorkshireccg.nhs.uk) was formed in April 2020 and is responsible for ‘buying’ health services for more than 425,000 people living in the county. It replaces NHS Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby CCG, NHS Harrogate and Rural District CCG and NHS Scarborough and Ryedale CCG which have now been disestablished. The organisation is led by Accountable Officer, Amanda Bloor, and the Clinical Chair is Dr Charles Parker.

**About NHS Vale of York CCG**

[NHS Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group](https://www.valeofyorkccg.nhs.uk) serves a population of more than 350,000 people in York, Selby, Tadcaster, Easingwold and Pocklington and the surrounding towns, villages and rural areas in the Vale of York. It is led by Accountable Officer, Phil Mettam. The Clinical Chair is Dr Nigel Wells.