

Press release: New media guidance issued to all court staff

- Guidance developed alongside media representatives published
- Move designed to protect and maintain principle of open justice
- Lucy Frazer MP to chair media roundtable next month

The [guidance](#), developed by a working group involving media representatives, is part of a wider effort to build stronger working relationships between courts and the press and maintain the principle of open justice as we increasingly digitise court services.

Guidance has been split into an overall summary and more detailed jurisdictional advice, so staff can find exactly what they are looking for in a more timely and straightforward manner, making it easier for journalists to cover court proceedings and access listings.

[The HMCTS staff guidance](#) has also, for the first time, been made public and will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Susan Acland-Hood, HMCTS CEO, said:

Open justice is a fundamental part of our court system and impartial media reporting of the work of our courts and tribunals is an important way of maintaining public confidence.

This reshaped guidance, which we are publishing for the first time, is designed to give our staff easily accessible information so they can support all those reporting on proceedings in courts across the country. I'm incredibly grateful to everyone who helped put it together.

We will continue to work closely with stakeholders to promote good working relationships between HMCTS and regional media. Their insight and expertise will ensure our ongoing programme of reform not only maintains but, wherever possible, enhances open justice.

Santha Rasaiah, News Media Association:

Open Justice is vital to the rule of law and is achieved, in practice, by press reporting of courts and tribunals to the wider public. That depends not just on the legal framework, but the day to day practicalities of journalistic access and reporting.

The NMA therefore warmly welcomed both the opportunity to work with HMCTS on this new guidance and its wider publication. A ready reference, providing common guidance, will assist court, press and

public alike. We hope that it will promote further constructive co-operation, court reporting and public understanding of the work of our justice system.

Ian Murray, Executive Director of the Society of Editors commented:

This is an important initiative and the Society is delighted to have been able to assist in helping to reinforce these guidelines to court staff and journalists.

If the public is to have faith in the justice system it must see it in action and that means ensuring journalists have access to courts and the necessary information to do their jobs. At the same time court staff need to have simple guidelines as to what is permissible.

There is more to do but the work carried out so far is extremely important.

The existing working group is now being reshaped to consider how the reform programme can support and enhance media access while playing a pivotal role in maintaining and developing open justice.

This includes a roundtable discussion to be chaired by Courts Minister Lucy Frazer next month, which will bring together a range of representatives from newspapers, broadcasters and online media platforms to discuss ways of enhancing court access.

Notes to editors

The HMCTS working group was made up of the following:

- Ed Owen (Chair) – Director of Communications, HMCTS
 - Kate Briden – Director of the Royal Courts of Justice Group, HMCTS
 - Laura King – Operational Contracted Services Manager, HMCTS
 - Alice Booth – Ministry of Justice Senior Press Officer, Courts desk
 - Stephen Ward – Head of News and External Communications, Judicial Office
 - Mike Dodd – Press Association
 - Ian Murray – Society of Editors
 - Santha Rasaiah – News Media Association
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Press release: Sales of veterinary antibiotics at their lowest in 25 years

The [Veterinary Antimicrobial Resistance Sales and Surveillance \(VARSS\) report](#) shows that sales of antibiotics for use in food-producing animals dropped by 18% between 2016 and 2017 to reach a low of 37 mg/kg. Sales have also dropped by 40% between 2013 and 2017.

For the first time, the annual report presents data on the use of antibiotics in beef, trout and salmon in addition to usage in the poultry, pig, dairy, gamebird and egg-laying hen industries.

Antimicrobial Resistance occurs when the micro-organisms that cause infection survive exposure to a medicine that would normally kill them or stop their growth. It poses a major threat to modern medicine and is estimated to [cost £66 trillion in lost productivity to the global economy](#).

In 2013 the [UK government launched a strategy](#) to reduce the development and spread of antibiotic resistance in animals and humans. As part of this it provided advice to the food-producing animal industry and veterinary professions, encouraging more responsible use of antibiotics to protect medicines for the future.

Lord Gardiner, Minister for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity, said:

These results show an encouraging reduction of antibiotic use in beef, pigs, poultry and other food-producing animals. I hope that the results will set a further example for our food and farming sectors to tackle the threat of antimicrobial resistance. As we know, good farm management, biosecurity and animal husbandry systems are crucial to achieving this.

The UK's Chief Veterinary Officer, Christine Middlemiss, said:

A 40% drop in sales of antibiotics for use in food-producing animals between 2013 and 2017 is an excellent achievement. This is the result of year-on-year improvement in training, stewardship, stockmanship and disease control.

I praise the industry for their commitment to successfully deliver responsible use of antibiotics and reductions. We must continue to champion infection prevention and disease control to ensure high animal health standards and the optimised use of antimicrobials.

Further information:

- The UK Veterinary Antibiotic Resistance and Sales Surveillance (VARSS) report is published annually by Defra's Veterinary Medicines Directorate. The report provides the previous years' data on the quantity of authorised antibiotics for use in animals sold throughout the UK, and results from surveillance programmes looking at antibiotic resistance in animals.
- For the first time, antibiotic usage data from the beef cattle, salmon and trout industries are included in the report.
- For the first time the report presents harmonised outcome indicators on antibiotic resistance, as recommended by the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, [European Food Safety Authority and European Medicines Agency](#).
- The rates of resistance in healthy pigs at slaughter have remained relatively stable between 2015 and 2017 for most antibiotics tested; however, a decline has started to be observed in E. coli coinciding with a reduction in antibiotic use in pigs.
- As well as the overall reduction, the report shows a further drop in sales of the highest priority antibiotics that are critically important for human health. This includes a 94% reduction, compared to 2016, in the use of colistin, an antibiotic of last resort for use in people. Colistin use is now at 0.001 mg/kg, putting it considerably below the European Medicines Agency's target of using less than 1 mg/kg.

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[Press release: UK seizes more than £2 million of fake medicines as part of international crackdown](#)

The seizures were part of Interpol's globally coordinated [Operation Pangea](#) initiative involving 116 countries.

Between 9-17 October the MHRA and UK partners found falsified and unlicensed medicines and medical devices in the UK including diazepam, modafinil and dermal fillers.

Using intelligence, MHRA enforcement officers raided a semi-detached property and a small lock-up unit in connection with the illegal supply online of potentially harmful medicines. This led to one arrest.

Raids on the properties in the north of England involved local police and forms part of an international response coordinated through Interpol to the growing illegal trading in online medicines and medical devices. Worldwide, Operation Pangea led to 859 arrests and yielded items worth in the region of £10.9 million.

As well as the property raids, the team also targeted airports and mail delivery centres. During the searches, officers found numerous packages containing illegal consignments of medicines and medical devices including many hidden within other innocent items such as video games and clothing.

The team also targeted websites on the open and dark web that offer falsified and unlicensed medical products. Our action has led to 123 websites being shut down and the removal of 535 online adverts.

MHRA Head of Enforcement Alastair Jeffrey, said:

Criminals who sell medicines over the internet have absolutely no regard for your health and taking medicine which is either falsified or unlicensed puts you at risk of serious harm.

Our intelligence-led enforcement operations have seized millions of counterfeit and unlicensed medicines and devices in the UK. This is just the tip of the iceberg, and we will continue to take action against known criminals – working with our international partners to stop illegal medicines from entering the UK.

To protect your health, visit your GP, get a correct diagnosis and buy medicines from a legitimate high street or registered pharmacy which can trade online with a distance selling logo.

The MHRA has also issued the following safety advice when buying medicines:

Be careful when buying medicines online

Be careful buying medicines online – criminals are known to exploit vulnerable people by supplying medicines through unregulated websites and stealing their credit card details.

Do not self-prescribe

Self-diagnosis and self-medication can be very dangerous. If you have a concern about your health, visit your GP, get a correct diagnosis and if medicines are prescribed, buy them from a legitimate source.

Report it!

If you have any knowledge of criminal activity relating to the medicines offences then you should report this to us to our case referrals email address: CaseReferrals@mhra.gov.uk.

If you wish to report a website, you can do so on [our page](#)

You may also provide information anonymously through 0800 555111 or [Crimestoppers](#)

Separately, we [recently worked with law enforcement agencies in India](#) to prevent unlicensed medicines entering the UK.

Ends

Notes to Editor

1. Types of medicines seized include: epilepsy, asthma, acne, narcolepsy, breast cancer, cholesterol reduction, erectile dysfunction, analgesics, hair loss, weight loss, painkillers, fertility, breast/prostate cancer, anxiety/insomnia, skin lightening, anti-depressants, diabetes, premature ejaculation, tanning, pain management, anti-inflammatory, steroids, anti-viral, eye drops, bacterial infection, eczema, eyelash hair growth, depression, hormones, dental equipment, and fake condoms.
2. Operation Pangea is an international initiative to target the illegal internet trade in medicines. It was instigated by the MHRA in April 2006 and started as the UK Internet Day of Action (IDA). There were 116 countries participating in Op Pangea XI.
3. The annual operation is the largest internet based enforcement action of its kind to date and was coordinated by INTERPOL, together with the World Customs Organization (WCO), the Permanent Forum of International Pharmaceutical Crime (PFIPC), the Heads of Medicines Agencies Working Group of Enforcement Officers (WGE0), Europol and the Pharmaceutical Security Institute (PSI), and supported by the Center for Safe Internet Pharmacies (CSIP) and private sector companies including LegitScript, Google, Mastercard, Visa, American Express and PayPal.
4. Prescription only medicine should only be taken in consultation with a GP or other healthcare professional. These people have access to patient

health records and can take into account the risks and benefits associated with every medicine as well as providing on-going monitoring of the treatment.

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