

News story: NHS to partner with Commonwealth nations to stop superbugs

The new Commonwealth Partnerships for Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) scheme is funded by the UK Department of Health and Social Care's Fleming Fund.

The scheme will send up to 12 volunteer NHS pharmacists and specialist nurses to Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia to work with local health workers against AMR.

It will see NHS and national teams work together to help to keep antibiotics working better for longer and stop the emergence of superbugs. They will do this by:

- improving the detection and monitoring of resistant infections at hospital level
- taking measures to reduce infection
- putting steps in place to use antibiotics effectively

It will be delivered in collaboration with the Commonwealth Pharmacists Association (CPA) and the Tropical Health Education Trust (THET), an international NGO with expertise in delivering global health partnerships.

AMR occurs when micro-organisms survive exposure to a medicine that would normally kill them, such as antibiotics, antimalarials and antivirals. These micro-organisms are often referred to as 'superbugs'.

The [independent review on antimicrobial resistance](#) estimated that at least 700,000 deaths globally each year are from drug-resistant infections such as bacterial infections, malaria and HIV/AIDS.

The review also estimated that deaths from AMR could increase to 10 million each year by 2050 and cost the global economy up to \$100 trillion US dollars.

It is thought that 5,000 deaths are already caused every year in the UK alone by antibiotics no longer working for some infections. If we do not find a solution, everyday procedures such as caesarean sections, cancer therapy, and hip replacements will become extremely dangerous.

Chief Medical Officer for England, Professor Dame Sally Davies, said:

I am delighted that UK aid – provided through the government's Fleming Fund – will enable these vital partnerships between our fantastic NHS staff and their counterparts overseas to take place.

AMR poses a risk to us all, wherever we call home – collaboration of this kind with our friends and neighbours internationally will be all the more important if we are to tackle this challenge together.

This scheme will play a crucial role in allowing specialists to share expertise and strengthen approaches to antimicrobial stewardship in hospitals both at home and abroad.