

More cases of antibiotic resistant gonorrhoea identified in England

These cases are in addition to [the case announced in December 2021](#).

A woman in her 20s in London and a heterosexual couple in their 20s based in the Midlands have recently been diagnosed with a strain of *N. gonorrhoeae* with resistance to the antibiotic ceftriaxone.

Ceftriaxone is the main antibiotic used to treat gonorrhoea in the UK and being infected with a ceftriaxone resistant strain means that this antibiotic will not easily treat the infection. Follow-up tests are still awaited to see if treatment has been successful in these 3 recent cases.

Further public health investigations are underway but there are currently no known connections between the cases in London and the Midlands.

Ceftriaxone resistance is most common in the Asia-Pacific region and is occasionally detected in the UK in people who have visited or who have moved to the UK from this region.

Dr Katy Sinka, STI Section Head at the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), said:

After a couple of years without any cases of this hard to treat form of gonorrhoea, we have now seen 4 cases in the last 2 months. It's too soon to say whether this will be the start of a longer-term trend, but we do know that STIs are on the rise in general.

Getting an STI isn't as simple as taking some medicine and moving on with your life – if not properly treated, they can have long term impacts on your and your partner's health. Adding antibiotic resistance into the mix makes the impact on your life even greater.

There are simple steps you can take to reduce your risk of gonorrhoea and other STIs. Use condoms consistently and correctly with all new or casual partners, test regularly for STIs and if you have any symptoms such as unusual discharge, don't have sex until you are tested.

STI testing is free and available through online self-sampling services or by contacting local sexual health services. UKHSA actively monitors, and acts on, the spread of antibiotic resistance in gonorrhoea and potential treatment failures and, when ceftriaxone resistant strains are identified, implements prompt public health action to limit further spread.

Typical symptoms of gonorrhoea include a thick green or yellow discharge from the vagina or penis, pain when urinating, pain and discomfort in the rectum

and, in women and other people with a uterus or ovaries, lower abdominal pain and bleeding between periods. However, often people infected with gonorrhoea will have no symptoms, especially for infections in the throat, vagina or rectum.

Treating gonorrhoea as soon as possible is very important as it can lead to serious long-term health problems; in women and other people with a uterus or ovaries, gonorrhoea can spread to the reproductive organs and cause [pelvic inflammatory disease \(PID\)](#).

PID can lead to long-term pelvic pain, [ectopic pregnancy](#) and [infertility](#). In men and other people with testes, it can cause a painful infection in the testicles and prostate gland, which may lead to reduced fertility in some cases.

You can read more about gonorrhoea on the [NHS website](#).

[Prosecution Outcome](#)

In February 2021, on two separate dates, the MMO became aware of actions being undertaken by Greenpeace which appeared to require a marine licence, and for which no licence had been granted. Taking into account of all relevant circumstances, the MMO decided to undertake enforcement action to investigate and subsequently to prosecute Greenpeace for these activities.

Both before, and during the proceedings, Greenpeace challenged the MMO's ability to take action in respect of these activities on the basis that the activities took place from a vessel flagged to a country other than the United Kingdom. If correct, their activities would be outside of the MMOs jurisdiction and no offence would be committed.

In December 2021 the Crown Court in Newcastle heard legal argument on these issues. In January 2022 the Crown Court rejected these arguments in their entirety and found as a matter of law that the MMO did in fact have the jurisdiction to enforce the law.

Following this judgement, the MMO has considered the following matters to be relevant to the case moving forward:

- The finding of law ensures the marine licensing regime can properly be enforced in the future,
- Since initiating the proceedings, Greenpeace have carried out no further unlawful unlicensed activity,

- The Learned Judge in this case made it clear in his judgment that Greenpeace are expected to comply with the marine licensing regime.

As a result, the MMO has decided not to continue with the prosecution. In doing so, the MMO fully expects that Greenpeace will, in accordance with the comments made by the Learned Judge, support and comply with the marine licensing rules in future.

Should unlicensed activity occur in the future the MMO will continue to investigate and will, in appropriate circumstances, consider taking.

An MMO spokesperson said:

“The findings of law in this case made clear that the MMO had jurisdiction to prosecute, and that Greenpeace are expected to comply with the marine licensing regime. It is noted that since initiating proceedings, Greenpeace have not carried out any further unlicensed activity.

“The MMO has decided not to continue with the prosecution. In doing so, we fully expect that Greenpeace will, in accordance with the comments made by the Learned Judge, support and comply with the marine licensing rules in future.

“Should unlicensed activity occur in the future we will continue to investigate and will consider enforcement actions in line with our published compliance and enforcement strategy.”

[Jessica de Mounteney appointed GLD Director General](#)

News story

Jessica will be leading the Litigation with Justice and Security directorate



Jessica de Mounteney

Jessica de Mounteney has been appointed a Director General of GLD and will be leading the Litigation with Justice and Security directorate.

Jessica joins GLD from the Office of Parliamentary Counsel (OPC), bringing with her a wealth of experience and legal expertise.

Jessica was called to the bar in 1994 and has enjoyed an impressive Government Legal Profession (GLP) career, joining OPC in 1997 where she worked on a full range of legislative projects, including the original Government of Wales Act. She has been seconded to the Law Commission twice between 2003 and 2006 and 2015 and 2018, working on the NHS consolidation of 2006 and latterly as a senior drafter.

In 2020 Jessica was promoted to Director General Team Leader in OPC, leading the team with responsibility for drafting legislation for the Cabinet Office, Home Office, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defence, Scotland Office, Northern Ireland Office, and Wales Office.

On her appointment Jessica says:

“I am delighted to be seconded to GLD. I have always hugely admired and respected the professionalism and expertise of GLD colleagues and this is a fantastic opportunity to contribute to the work that they do at a very challenging time. I am also grateful for the chance to encourage even better relationships between OPC and GLD and mutual understanding of the work of both.”

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[Minister Iain Stewart welcomes ambitious plans for Falkirk Investment Zone](#)

UK Government Minister Iain Stewart has visited partners of the landmark Falkirk Growth Deal to hear how they intend to transform the region's economy by investing in innovative, sustainable industries.

The Falkirk Growth Deal Heads of Terms were signed at a virtual event on 21st December last year. This put in motion plans for £80m investment from the UK and Scottish governments, £45m from Falkirk Council, and £5.8m from Scottish Canals to create an Investment Zone for Falkirk and Grangemouth.

Over its lifetime, the Deal will work hand in hand with private sector partners including INEOS and Alexander Dennis Limited to bring in £1 billion of investment, create 2,000 jobs and put Falkirk and Grangemouth at the forefront of the UK's transition to a Net Zero economy.

The visit started at Grangemouth where he discussed plans for a Carbon Dioxide Utilisation Centre. The centre will support the development, manufacturing and use of low carbon technologies, which will help companies substitute their products and industrial processes with low carbon alternatives, using CO₂ as feedstock. The Centre will also be well situated to link in with hydrogen and wider Carbon Capture Use and Storage (CCUS) projects. Last month INEOS announced plans to construct a Low-Carbon Hydrogen Manufacturing Plant at Grangemouth.

Minister Stewart also heard about plans for a Bioeconomy Accelerator Pilot Plant (BAPP) at Grangemouth. Emerging biotechnologies have the potential to be more efficient and better for the environment than traditional chemical processes, such as those using oil. These could use Scotland's access to a wide range of potential renewable feedstocks, including whisky and food processing by-products, to produce many of the chemicals we need. The BAPP will create facilities which are not currently available in Scotland, the UK or Europe, to trial and develop new biotechnologies, and will benefit from the innovative companies and world-class academics located in Scotland.

The visit concluded with a stop off at Alexander Dennis Limited (ADL) to hear about their vision for the world's first public transport net zero technology cluster, led by ADL in collaboration with other industry partners, which will focus on the cost-effective decarbonisation of public transport. Plans include a campus that boasts an R&D centre of excellence, a high-tech incubator, and flexible carbon neutral manufacturing space. ADL is the UK's largest bus and coach manufacturer and a global leader in double deck design and production, and plan to lead the sector in the design and build of zero emission vehicles, not only for the UK market but for existing and new export markets as well.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

It has been fascinating to hear about these ambitious plans, which will create thousands of jobs and opportunities for Falkirk's residents, while making it a powerhouse of the UK's Net Zero economy.

The UK is levelling-up communities right across Scotland with more than £1.7 billion of support for regional projects and initiatives.

Falkirk Council has also secured £20 million from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund for the development of Westfield Roundabout, which will significantly improve travel for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

Cllr Cecil Meiklejohn, Leader of Falkirk Council said:

The Growth Deal will unlock many opportunities for economic growth, investment and employment locally. Working with both UK and Scottish Government along with local industry means we can really forge ahead with our ambitious plans for the area.

Paul Davies, ADL President & Managing Director, said:

As we continue on the road to net zero, we are excited to build upon nearly a century of manufacturing history in Falkirk with our plans for a new technology centre of excellence for the zero-emission age. We look forward to working with Falkirk Council, the UK and Scottish Governments, Scottish Canals and other stakeholders in progressing our plans and shaping the future of our economy right here in Falkirk and Grangemouth.

Andrew Gardner, CEO INEOS FPS said:

We were pleased to add our support to Falkirk Council as they hosted a visit by Iain Stewart, MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland. Mr Stewart was in the Forth Valley to learn more about the region's Growth Deal and the benefits this will bring economically and socially to all of us who live and work here. We took the opportunity to chat with the Minister and update him on the progress of our Road Map to net zero. This included the recently announced investment in a low-carbon hydrogen plant as well as a number of other projects that are underway at Grangemouth that will deliver on our commitment to be a net zero emitter by 2045.

As part of the Falkirk Growth Deal the UK Government is investing £9 million in each of the CDU Centre, BAPP and net zero tech cluster, with the Scottish Government also contributing £1 million to each.

The UK Government is also investing £10 million in Strategic Innovation Sites, and both governments are contributing £3 million each to the £51 million Falkirk Arts Centre to drive regeneration in the town centre.

The Scottish Government has committed £21m in a Sustainable Transport Hub at Falkirk Grahamston and a Green Corridor connecting communities. Further details on the Deal and its proposed projects are available in the [Heads of Terms Agreement](#).

Businesses encouraged to have their say on future of customs

News story

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has published a call for evidence and is inviting businesses, traders, and the public to feedback on the customs system.



The government is asking businesses, traders, and the public to give their opinion on how the customs system is working and what improvements they would like to see.

Today (7 February 2022), HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and HM Treasury published [a call for evidence on GOV.UK](#) to allow stakeholders to feedback on key areas.

The Rt Hon Lucy Frazer QC MP, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said:

Our aim is for the UK to have the world's most effective border by 2025. We're taking this forward across a number of long-term programmes, including the Single Trade Window, which will streamline how traders share information with government. This call for evidence complements that by giving traders and the wider border industry the opportunity to have their say on what's going well and where things could be improved.

I would encourage as many people as possible to respond to this call for evidence via GOV.UK, so we can ensure we have a customs system that makes the UK the best place in the world to do business.

Over a twelve-week period, HMRC and HM Treasury will be asking businesses to share their thoughts and get involved in helping to shape long-term customs policy.

Government will be asking businesses and the border industry for their suggestions on:

- improvements to help traders access a quality customs intermediary sector
- how the benefits of the Simplified Customs Declarations Process (SCDP) can be expanded
- how the Transit facilitation can be improved

The call for evidence will run until Monday 2 May 2022.

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