NEW CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES IN THE NORTH WEST OF ENGLAND TO HELP KEEP ANTIBIOTICS WORKING

- It is estimated that 5,000 deaths are caused every year in England because antibiotics no longer work for some infections - that’s 13 people every day\(^1\)
- Inappropriate use of antibiotics is causing a global epidemic of antibiotic resistance
- One in four people in the North West has never heard of antibiotic resistance\(^2\)

Today Public Health England launches a new campaign in the North West of England informing people that antibiotics don’t work for everything and stressing the importance of taking their doctor’s advice about whether they need them. Taking antibiotics unnecessarily causes dangerous bacteria to become resistant which means they may not work when they are really needed.

It is estimated that 5,000 people die each year in England as a result of antibiotics no longer working for some infections – that’s 13 people every day.\(^1\) In around 30 years we could see 60,000 people die every year because antibiotics have stopped helping them - that’s around 160 deaths a day.\(^3\)

However, despite the dangers posed by antibiotic resistance, one in four people in the North West (23%) has never heard of the issue.\(^2\) Furthermore, 40% of people in the North West don’t realise that if someone has taken antibiotics in the last year, any infection they get is more likely to be antibiotic resistant.\(^2\) If someone takes antibiotics unnecessarily they are less likely to work when needed. They can also pass on antibiotic resistant bacteria to loved ones.

Antibiotics are an important tool for doctors and healthcare professionals to help treat serious bacterial infections, such as pneumonia, meningococcal meningitis and
sepsis and to help ward off infections during chemotherapy, caesarean sections and other surgery. However, antibiotics are being used for everyday viral infections, such as colds or flu, where they are not effective.

In conjunction with the campaign, a powerful film has been released by Public Health England which highlights the possible consequences of failing to take action on antibiotic resistance – showing a world where treatable common infections, minor injuries and routine operations might kill once again.

**Paul Cosford, Medical Director at Public Health England, said:**

“The level of inappropriate antibiotic use in England, and across the globe is deeply worrying. Not only are these drugs ineffective against the common cold and other viruses, but taking them incorrectly may risk your health and potentially the health of those closest to you.

“It is estimated that 5,000 deaths are caused every year in England because antibiotics no longer work for some infections. This campaign aims to warn people of the huge dangers of antibiotic resistance and help people better understand the best treatment for them.”

**Actress, singer and celebrity mum Suzanne Shaw, who is from Bury, comments:**

“As a mum, I know how hard it is to see your child suffering with a cold or flu, and previously my first point of call would have been the doctor’s surgery to request, sometimes quite forcibly, antibiotics!

“Since learning that these drugs won’t work against viral infections and the very real dangers taking these antibiotics unnecessarily can cause my children and those around them, I now listen much more carefully to my doctor or pharmacist’s advice, and urge other parents to do the same.”

**Dr William Welfare, Consultant in Health Protection, Public Health England North West, comments:**

“Incorrectly taking a course of antibiotics or taking them when you don’t need them will not only diminish the chance of you beating your infection but will actually work against you, as the antibiotics will be less effective in fighting the next bacterial infection you get. To keep antibiotics working for you and your family, always take your healthcare professionals advice; this can be your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.”
The campaign will run in the Granada region on TV, radio, press and will be supported by local GP surgeries and pharmacies, social media and PR. For further information on antibiotic resistance please search NHS Antibiotics or visit nhs.uk/keepantibioticsworking.

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Notes to Editors

- For more information, please contact claire.roach@phe.gov.uk / 0344 225 0562 option 5 / 07827 954 768
- The campaign will be supported with local advertising, partnership activity and will run from Monday 13th February in the North West region for a total of eight weeks.
- The North West was chosen because it is an area with a high prescribing rate. The results of the campaign will be used to assess the impact of potential activity across England in the future.
- Further statistics from the research conducted in the North West for the launch of the campaign include:
  - Almost half (46%) don’t know that bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics are spread easily from person to person.
  - Over half of people (51%) accept that there is something individuals can do to prevent antibiotics becoming less effective at treating diseases
- For further information on antibiotic resistance please visit nhs.uk/keepantibioticsworking or search NHS Antibiotics online
- Please use the following link to download the film: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/v2ajhobr15th552/AACU631WPnxhHXniB8RwMQOIl a?dl=0
- PHE exists to protect and improve the nation’s health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. It does this through advocacy, partnerships, world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health. For more information on PHE visit www.gov.uk/phe or follow us on Twitter @PHE_uk

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2 Research conducted by Opinium Research in February 2017. 504 online interviews with North West adults,