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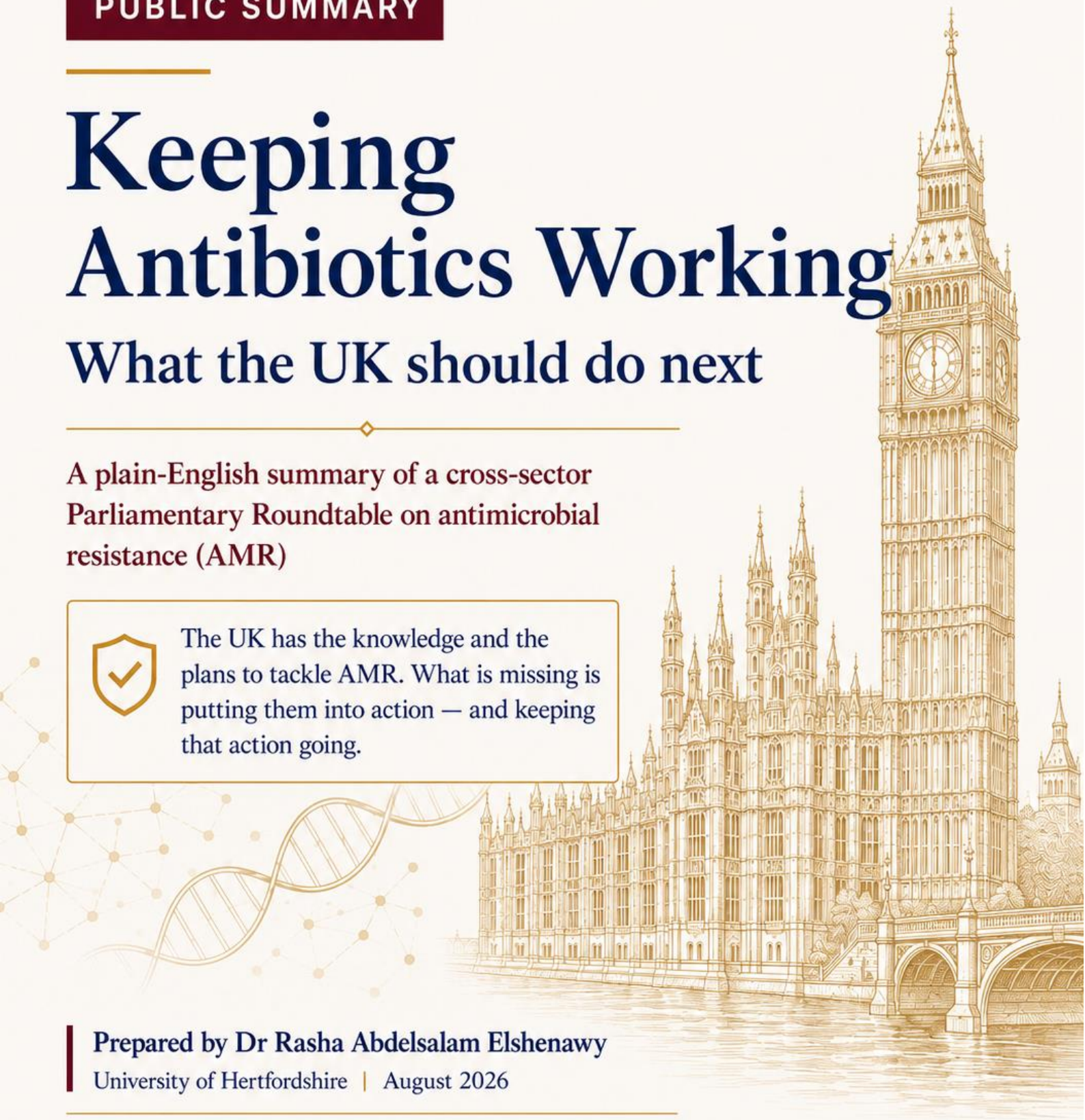
PUBLIC SUMMARY

Keeping Antibiotics Working

What the UK should do next

A plain-English summary of a cross-sector Parliamentary Roundtable on antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

The UK has the knowledge and the plans to tackle AMR. What is missing is putting them into action — and keeping that action going.



Prepared by Dr Rasha Abdelsalam Elshenawy
University of Hertfordshire | August 2026

Following a Parliamentary Roundtable on Antimicrobial Resistance, Westminster, 18 May 2026

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Keeping antibiotics working: what the UK should do next

The problem, in a sentence

The medicines we rely on to treat infections — antibiotics and similar drugs — are slowly losing their power, because the germs they target are learning to survive them. This is called antimicrobial resistance, or AMR.

Why it matters

When antibiotics stop working, common infections become harder to treat and everyday medical care — operations, cancer treatment, childbirth — becomes riskier. Worldwide, infections that resist treatment were linked to an estimated 5 million deaths in a single year, and the trend is getting worse.

The key message

The UK has the knowledge, the science and the plans to tackle AMR. What is missing is putting them into practice. We do not need more evidence — we need to act on what we already know, and to keep that action going over time.

What we are asking decision-makers to do: five priorities

- **Make careful antibiotic use part of every health professional's everyday job,** not a specialist extra — and keep the new pharmacist prescribing role safe.
- **Join up human, animal, food and environmental health,** because resistance spreads across all of them (the 'One Health' approach).
- **Give the NHS fast tests and joined-up data** so antibiotics are used only when they are truly needed — and use AI only with strong safeguards.
- **Keep investing in new antibiotics and treatments** — and make sure they are used responsibly so they last.
- **Create a lasting link between researchers, Parliament and frontline staff,** with patients and the public involved, so good evidence keeps turning into action.

What you can do

- **Take antibiotics only when prescribed** by a health professional, and exactly as advised.
- **Don't expect antibiotics for coughs, colds and flu,** which they do not treat.
- **Never share antibiotics** or use leftover ones.
- **Help prevent infections** through good hygiene and by keeping up with recommended vaccinations.
- **Talk about it** — help others understand why keeping antibiotics working matters.

Who produced this

Prepared by Dr Rasha Abdelsalam Elshenawy, Principal Investigator, University of Hertfordshire.
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Read more

The full policy brief and supporting evidence report are published alongside this summary through the University of Hertfordshire Research Information System.

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