I am writing to express my full support for the Department of Health and Social Care’s outstanding effort, led by the Chief Medical Officer, Dame Sally, in driving actions to tackle the growing threat that antimicrobial resistance poses to the treatment and control of infections in human and animal health. We recognise the importance of tackling AMR and are fully committed to continue to lead the global fight against antimicrobial resistance.

We set out cross-Government action to address antimicrobial resistance at national and global levels, when the Government published the UK five-year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy in September 2013. The Review on Antimicrobial Resistance led by Lord O’Neill highlighted the huge scale of the challenge ahead of us. In response, Defra made further commitments which went beyond the current AMR strategy.

It is important to maintain momentum in the fight against AMR. The new UK AMR Strategy provides the opportunity to do so. One of the primary ways we can help address antimicrobial resistance is to reduce the need to use antibiotics in the first place. As set out in our Health and Harmony consultation we are keen to work with the livestock industry, the veterinary profession and others to achieve a significant reduction in endemic disease and improve animal health. Measures in the Agriculture Bill, to be published imminently, will support the delivery of this work and help to reduce the need to use antibiotics in a way that safeguards the health and welfare of our farmed animals.

With every good wish,

Michael Gove

September 2018