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Exploring
perceptions of
bacteriophage
use in the UK

Response 3: National Institute
for Health and Care Research

09 July 2025

Dear Irene, Daisy and Lucky,

Thank you for contacting the NIHR and sharing your report. We have passed your report onto colleagues at the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) funds research on health and social care through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health and care. These applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality.

NIHR has provided programme funding for research into the use of bacteriophages to develop sustainable antibacterial medical devices, specific to *Staphylococcus aureus*^[1]. NIHR also funds research through its investment into research infrastructure. NIHR Biomedical Research Centres (BRCs) bring together academics and clinicians to translate early scientific breakthroughs into potential new treatments, diagnostics and health technologies. The NIHR Leicester BRC Respiratory and Infectious Diseases theme is home to the Centre for Phage Research and is dedicated to looking at alternatives to antibiotics – specifically the potential use of phages to fight bacterial infections^{[2][3]}. Additionally, the NIHR Sheffield BRC is also investigating the use of bacteriophages for the treatment of diabetic foot ulcers.

DHSC works closely with NIHR and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to monitor the research and clinical trial pipeline for antimicrobials and alternative therapies. Where new research opportunities are identified, NIHR can engage researchers to encourage and support funding applications. The UK National Action Plan for antimicrobial resistance 2024 to 2029 has set out the government's research priorities, which including innovation of new products for tackling AMR such as bacteriophages.

I hope you find this information useful. Please feel free to let me know if I can help further.

Best wishes,

Kate

[1] Next Generation Antibacterial Medical Devices – NIHR Funding and Awards

[2] Becky Mayer Centre for Phage Research | Research Centres | University of Leicester

[3] Pioneering centre is making a difference one year after officially opening – NIHR Leicester Biomedical Research Centre