# UK Government to Expand Access to Naloxone to Combat Opioid Overdoses



In an effort to combat opioid overdoses, the UK government announced a plan to make naloxone, an emergency treatment for opioid overdoses, more widely available without a prescription. Health and Social Care Secretary Victoria Atkins highlighted the move as part of a broader 10-year strategy targeting the enhancement of drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services, announced on Monday.

Naloxone works by blocking opioid receptors in the body, countering the effects of opioids such as heroin, morphine, and fentanyl. Under new regulations, an array of professionals, including nurses, paramedics, police officers, and probation workers, will be authorized to distribute naloxone to individuals at high risk for opioid overdose, as well as to their families or associates.

This expansion also includes training around 400 prison staff at HMP Parc in Bridgend, South Wales, to use naloxone, following a series of suspected drug-related fatalities.

Justice Minister Edward Argar and Dame Carol Black, who led a significant drug review in 2020, endorsed the legislative changes. Black emphasized the life-saving potential of increased naloxone access. The government's plan further includes creating more training positions in addiction psychiatry and establishing accredited programs for peer support alongside drug and alcohol workers.