



Serial number **BN2025/003**

Date **17 January 2025**

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**Event**

Pause to UKHSA *Helicobacter pylori* isolation and Antimicrobial Sensitivity Testing Service

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**Notified by**

Derren Ready, Deputy Director of Public Health Microbiology Division

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**Authorised by**

William Welfare, Incident Director  
Derren Ready, Deputy Director of Public Health Microbiology Division  
Sarah Anderson, Deputy Director Regional Specialist Services

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**Contact**

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Incident: [incident044.nrc@ukhsa.gov.uk](mailto:incident044.nrc@ukhsa.gov.uk)

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**Incident Lead**

Will Welfare, [incident044.nrc@ukhsa.gov.uk](mailto:incident044.nrc@ukhsa.gov.uk)

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**Instructions for Cascade**

- UKHSA Private Office Groups who cascade within Groups.
- UKHSA Regions Directorate
  - UKHSA Field Services
  - UKHSA Health Protection Teams including UKHSA Regional Deputy Directors
  - Deputy Directors in Regions Directorate
- UKHSA Lab Management Teams
- UKHSA Regional Communications
- Generic inbox for each of the devolved administrations
- DHSC CMO
- National NHSE EPRR
  
- **Devolved Administrations** to cascade to Medical Directors and other DA teams as appropriate to their local arrangements.
- **Regional Deputy Directors** to cascade to Directors of Public Health
- **UKHSA microbiologists** to cascade to non-UKHSA labs (NHS labs and private)
- **UKHSA microbiologists** to cascade to NHS Trust infection leads.
- **NHS labs/NHS infection leads/NHS microbiologist/NHS infectious disease specialists** to cascade to gastroenterologists.
- **NRC** to cascade to **British Society of Gastroenterology**

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**Summary:**

This briefing note provides details of pausing the testing services for *Helicobacter pylori* isolation, identification and antimicrobial sensitivity testing from clinical specimens (gastric biopsy) at the reference laboratory until 31 March 2025.

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**Background and Interpretation:**

As a result of increasing volumes of specimens received, exceeding capacity, the UKHSA Gastrointestinal Bacteria Reference Unit (GBRU) are pausing the routine



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delivery of *Helicobacter pylori* isolation and identification from clinical specimens (gastric biopsy) and antimicrobial sensitivity testing by Etest.

Samples already received will be processed but there will be an extended turn-around time.

The situation will be actively reviewed throughout this period and an updated Briefing Note issued as appropriate. Existing customers will also receive email updates as appropriate.

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### **Implications & Recommendations for UKHSA Regions**

No implications. This is a clinical service provided to NHS and other healthcare providers.

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### **Implications & Recommendations for UKHSA sites and services**

UKHSA sites and services should continue to refer other samples to the Gastrointestinal Bacteria Reference Unit (GBRU) for confirmation and further characterisation as normal.

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### **Implications & Recommendations for NHS**

If biopsy samples have already been collected, we will accept the submission of gastric biopsy specimens for *Helicobacter pylori* although there will be an extended turn around time.

No new samples should be collected for submission to this service at present.

Interim guidance published at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/interim-guidance-for-the-management-of-helicobacter-pylori-cases>

### **Implications and recommendations for Local Authorities**

None

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### **References/ Sources of information**

Updated Guidance published at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/interim-guidance-for-the-management-of-helicobacter-pylori-cases>

The BRD User Manual listing services and turnaround times is available [here](#).

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