



UK Health Security Agency

Briefing Note

Serial Number: 2025/033

Date: 04/08/2025

Event: Outbreak of *Burkholderia stabilis* ST480 linked to non-sterile alcohol-free skin cleansing wipe products – Update, new joint UKHSA & MHRA press release for action

Notified by: James Elston and Sarah Milligan, Incident Directors

Authorised by:

Renu Bindra, Deputy Director - All Hazards Public Health Response
Derren Ready, Deputy Director - Public Health Microbiology, Reference Services
Katie Spence, Regional Deputy Director
Jack Gordon-Brown, Senior Communications Officer
Gemma Fear, Communications Incident Response Lead

Contact: HCAIAMR.IOIG@ukhsa.gov.uk

IRP Level: Standard

Incident Lead: James Elston, Consultant in Public Health, AMR & HCAI Division

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. UKHSA regional teams are asked to cascade to their DIPC, microbiology and laboratory networks.
 - Deputy Directors in Regions Directorate
- UKHSA Lab Management Teams
- UKHSA Regional Communications
- DHSC CMO
- **NHS National Operations Centre** to cascade to GP practices, NHS Trusts in particular to infection prevention and control teams, clinical teams managing patients with indwelling intravascular devices e.g. haematology, oncology, infectious disease, emergency, intensive care, medical, surgical, maternity, paediatric, neonatal and radiology services, and microbiology departments. Also, for cascade to ICBs for distribution to community nursing and other relevant community services e.g. those accessing intravenous devices for outpatient parenteral antimicrobial therapy (OPAT).
- **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)
- **CPHIs / UKHSA microbiologists** to cascade to NHS Trust infection leads



UK Health Security Agency

- **NHS labs/NHS infection leads/NHS microbiologist/NHS infectious disease specialists** to cascade to clinical teams and managers of services. This may include but is not limited to emergency, intensive care, medical, surgical, maternity, paediatric, neonatal and radiology services.

Summary:

This is an update to Briefing Note 2025/025 (issued 26 June 2025). A press release has been issued on 04 August 2025: '[Public advised to stop using certain non-sterile alcohol-free wipes - GOV.UK](#)'. Information, advice and guidance is provided on products affected, reinforcing good practice regarding use of sterile wipes on broken skin and following medical advice for intravenous line care.

Key Updates:

- UKHSA and MHRA have issued a joint press release which can be accessed [here](#).
- There have been four new confirmed cases of *Burkholderia (B.) stabilis* (ST480) since the previous Briefing Note 2025/025.
- Targeted product testing undertaken by the UKHSA food, water and environmental laboratory has recovered *B. stabilis* (ST480) from several non-sterile alcohol-free skin cleansing wipe products:
 - 'ValueAid Alcohol Free Cleansing Wipes';
 - 'Microsafe Moist Wipe Alcohol Free';
 - 'Steroplast Sterowipe Alcohol Free Cleansing Wipes'.
- Isolates from products and cases are closely related by whole genome sequencing consistent with a hypothesis of a common source.
- In addition, testing conducted during outbreak investigation has also identified contamination of 'Reliwipe Alcohol free Cleansing Wipes' with *Burkholderia cepacia complex* (Bcc). However, this is distinct from the outbreak strain and no cases sharing this sequence type have been identified in the UK.
- Implicated products are not available to order through NHS Supply Chain supply frameworks, however they may have been purchased through alternative channels and may be found in clinical areas and in the workplace (e.g. in first aid kits).
- Healthcare professionals, and the public are advised to immediately stop using, and to dispose of these products. Information, advice and guidance is provided in the press notice to reinforce good practice regarding use of sterile wipes on broken skin and following medical advice for intravenous line care.

UKHSA Key Recommendations:

1. Health and care providers are advised to check their procurement does not include affected products listed above, to check contents of first aid kits where appropriate, and if identified then to dispose of these products.
2. Health and care professionals are asked to support cascade of the joint UKHSA and MHRA press release and the key recommendations within it.
3. Laboratories are reminded to refer all new *Burkholderia cepacia complex* (Bcc) isolates to the Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infection Reference Unit for identification and sequencing.
4. UKHSA previously issued a [National Patient Safety Alert](#) regarding the potential contamination of non-sterile alcohol-free skin cleansing wipes with *Burkholderia* species. The contents of this alert remain valid.



Background and Interpretation:

For background on the Bcc and the *B. stabilis* (ST480) outbreak investigation please see Briefing Note 2025/025.

As of the 4 August 2025, there are 51 confirmed cases and 3 probable cases in the outbreak cluster in the UK and 1 confirmed case in the Republic of Ireland. Cases comprise individuals across a wide age range (0 – 93 years, median 44 years), 55% are female. Specimen dates are between June 2018 and June 2025. 41 (75%) case isolates were isolated from normally sterile body sites (including 62% from blood). Information from trawling questionnaires (returned for 42 cases) indicates that cases included clinically significant infections (69% cases). Cases included individuals with significant co-morbid illness, including 36% with malignancy, and 39% with conditions associated with immunosuppression (11/28 cases where information was available). No cases were reported to have had cystic fibrosis. There are no known attributable deaths to date.

Targeted product testing has been undertaken by the UKHSA food, water and environmental laboratory as part of this investigation. Findings are summarised in 'Key Updates' above.

The wipes affected do not hold the appropriate authorisation for medical use. These products, which may have been used for 'skin cleansing' and cleaning in or around wounds, have been withdrawn from sale but may still be found in some first aid kits in the workplace and in patient's homes. Non-sterile alcohol-free wipes should not be routinely used in clinical settings/for clinical purposes.

Implications & Recommendations for UKHSA Regions:

UKHSA regional teams are asked to be aware of this incident and to use their DIPC, microbiology and laboratory networks to share information in this briefing note for further cascade. New cases potentially linked to this outbreak should be notified to HCAIAMR.IOIG@ukhsa.gov.uk

Implications & Recommendations for UKHSA Sites and Services:

UKHSA Consultants in Public Health Infection (CPHI) and UKHSA microbiologists are asked to support cascade to NHS and other non-UKHSA labs, as well as NHS Trust IPC Leads.

Clinical laboratories are requested to refer all new isolates of *Burkholderia cepacia complex* (Bcc) to the [Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infection Reference Unit](#) (AMRHAU) for identification and sequencing.

Implications & Recommendations for NHS:

NHS and Independent Laboratories



UK Health Security Agency

NHS and Independent laboratories are requested to submit any new isolates of Bcc to the AMRHA reference laboratory.

IPC Teams

IPC teams are asked to share information in this briefing note with procurement teams, service providers and managers of facilities to facilitate the below:

- Health and care providers are advised to check their procurement does not include affected products listed above and or make arrangements for their disposal, and to ensure contents of first aid kits on site are checked and that their contents are appropriate.

IPC teams are also asked to support cascade of this briefing note to clinical teams managing patients with intravenous lines outside of hospital and to facilitate cascade of information to relevant patient groups.

Front-Line Clinicians and Practitioners

Healthcare providers, clinicians and practitioners are asked to review contents of the press release, support appropriate cascade of information to patients, and are reminded to follow actions specified in the previously issued [National Patient Safety Alert](#).

If you have concerns about incidents in relation to use of medicinal products, please report via the MHRA Yellow Card Scheme.

Implications and recommendations for Local Authorities:

None

References/ Sources of information:

- [Public advised to stop using certain non-sterile alcohol-free wipes - GOV.UK](#)
- [National Patient Safety Alert](#)