



# UK Health Security Agency

**Serial number**      **BN2026/003**

**Date**      **05/02/2026**

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**Event:** Update – Outbreak of *Burkholderia stabilis* ST480 linked to non-sterile alcohol-free skin cleansing wipe products – urgent public health message and press release issued.

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David Pearce, Regional Deputy Director  
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**IRP Level:** Routine

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**Incident Leads:** James Elston, Consultant in Public Health, AMR & HCAI Division  
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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. 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
  - **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.
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### Summary:

This is an update to Briefing Note 2025/033 (issued 04 August 2025) on the continuing outbreak of *Burkholderia stabilis* ST480 linked to non-sterile alcohol-free wipes.

UKHSA previously issued a [National Patient Safety Alert](#) (NatPSA, 26 June 2025) and a joint press release with MHRA (04 August 2025).

### Key updates:

- UKHSA have issued an [urgent public health message](#) and an updated [press release](#) on 05 February 2026.
- 7 additional cases have been identified with a specimen date after the issue of the NatPSA and the prior press release. These have included some clinically significant and severe infections and one attributable death.
- The total number of cases in the UK linked to this outbreak is now 62 (59 confirmed).

### UKHSA Key Recommendations:

UKHSA is reiterating recommendations previously communicated, to mitigate risk.

During outbreak investigations in 2025, the following products were found to be contaminated with *Burkholderia*. These four products should not be used under any circumstances:

- ValueAid Alcohol Free Cleansing Wipes
- Microsafe Moist Wipe Alcohol Free
- Steroplast Sterowipe Alcohol Free Cleansing Wipes
- Reliwipe Alcohol free Cleansing Wipes (testing revealed contamination with a *Burkholderia* strain not related to the outbreak cases).

These products, previously used for 'skin cleansing' and wound cleaning, have been withdrawn from sale but may still be in homes and first aid kits.

- Health and care providers should advise all patients, especially those with intravenous lines, to check their homes and first aid kits for the affected products listed above, stop using and dispose of them.
- Providers should check all first aid kits in use and remove and dispose of any affected products listed above.
- Patients should be reminded that non-sterile alcohol-free wipes, of any type or brand, should not be used for first aid, applied on broken or damaged skin and should never be used for cleaning intravenous lines.
- Health professionals are asked to be aware of recommendations as issued in the NatPSA- see recommendations for front-line clinicians and practitioners below.
- Professionals are asked to support the cascade of the [urgent public health message](#).

- Laboratories should continue referring all new *Burkholderia cepacia* complex (Bcc) isolates to the Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infection Reference Unit for identification and sequencing.
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## **Background and Interpretation:**

As of 05 February 2026, there are 59 confirmed cases and 3 probable cases in the outbreak cluster in the UK (62 total).

Cases comprise individuals across a wide age range (0 – 93 years, median 44 years), 54% are female. 45 (73%) case isolates were isolated from normally sterile sites (including 62% from blood). Cases have predominantly comprised individuals with co-morbidity (39/50, 78% where information was available), including malignancy (19/50, 38%) and conditions associated with immunosuppression (14/50, 28%). No cases were reported to have had cystic fibrosis. Most cases were reported to have clinically significant infections (25 (74%) of 34 cases where information was available). There has been 1 attributable death to date.

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

UKHSA regional teams are asked 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](mailto:HCAIAMR.IOIG@ukhsa.gov.uk)

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## **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](#) (AMRHAI) for identification and sequencing.

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

### NHS and independent laboratories

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

### IPC teams

IPC teams are asked to support cascade of the [urgent public health message](#) 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 urgent public health message, support appropriate cascade of information to patients, and to be aware of recommendations in the [National Patient Safety Alert](#) (26 June 2025), in particular:

1. For intravascular access device care: ensure local guidance and practice reflects [National Evidence-Based Guidelines for Preventing Healthcare-](#)

[Associated Infections in NHS Hospitals in England \(EPIC3\)](#). Non-sterile alcohol-free wipes are not suitable for this purpose.

2. Ensure that patients in the community with intravascular devices are aware to only use wipes if instructed to by their clinical team. These patients should only use wipes provided or recommended by their clinical team in accordance with (1). Non-sterile alcohol-free wipes are not suitable. All patients with intravascular devices need this information even if they have not been instructed to access their line. Incorporate this into local guidance, patient education and information.
3. Community healthcare providers should advise patients to only use wipes marked as sterile on any broken skin including wounds. Ensure that local guidance, practice and patient information reflects [NHS guidance](#).

Please ensure that both new and established patients with longstanding intravascular devices are aware of the updated advice: [Public advised to stop using certain non-sterile alcohol-free wipes](#)

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

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**Implications and recommendations for Local Authorities:**

None

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**References/ Sources of information:**

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