

Welcome to the May 2026 Newsletter! This month we covers: **Outbreak management/ Reporting and Hantavirus.**

OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

IN ADULT SOCIAL CARE SETTINGS

Working together to protect the people we support, our staff and our community.



 <p>1. WHAT IS AN OUTBREAK?</p> <p>Two or more linked cases of illness occurring within a similar time period and setting.</p> 	 <p>2. RECOGNITION</p> <p>Increase in similar symptoms.</p> <p>Occurrence of infectious illness.</p> <p>Identification of potential clusters.</p> 	 <p>3. REPORTING</p> <p>Follow local reporting procedures.</p> <p>Inform appropriate stakeholders.</p> <p>Use established communication channels.</p> 	 <p>4. MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Follow organisational policies.</p> <p>Apply infection prevention and control measures.</p> <p>Align with national guidance.</p> 
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Reporting steps and Contact Details

Step 1: Seek UKHSA (Health Protection Team) Advice

Email (general enquiries):
london.region@ukhsa.gov.uk
Email (Patient Identifiable Information (PII) only): phe.london.region@nhs.net
Telephone: 0300 30 30 450

Step 2: Notify NEL ICB IPC Team
Contact the North East London Integrated Care Board (NEL ICB) Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Team for local support and coordination

Email: nelondonicb.ipc@nhs.net

Step 3: Ongoing Communication and Updates

- Maintain regular communication with both UKHSA and the NEL ICB IPC Team as the situation evolves
- Provide updates on case numbers, control measures, and any challenges
- Escalate any deterioration in the situation promptly

Reporting Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) Outbreaks

Care homes should report outbreaks of acute respiratory infection via the Care OBRA digital reporting platform. This ensures timely public health advice and support.

👉 Report here:

[Report an outbreak of acute respiratory infection in an adult social care setting – Report an outbreak](#)

Outbreak Reporting

Timely outbreak reporting is essential to protect residents, staff, and visitors, and to ensure appropriate public health support is provided.

- An outbreak should be suspected and reported when two or more residents or staff experience similar symptoms within a short period, particularly where cases are linked by time, place, or exposure.
- Care homes should report suspected outbreaks promptly to their local Health Protection Team (HPT) and IPC team. Follow local escalation processes. Reporting should not be delayed while awaiting laboratory results.
- Early notification enables access to public health advice, including infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance, testing, treatment options, and staffing support.
- Care homes should maintain clear and accurate records of affected residents and staff, including symptoms, onset dates, actions taken, and outcomes.
- Effective communication with staff, visiting professionals, residents, and families is essential throughout the outbreak period.
- Early recognition and prompt reporting help to limit transmission, reduce harm, and support safe and effective outbreak management.

Hantavirus (Andes Virus) – Awareness Information for Adult Social Care Settings

Summary of the Current Situation

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has reported an outbreak of Andes virus (ANDV) linked to the cruise ship MV Hondius. As of 7 May 2026, there have been 8 identified cases including 5 confirmed cases of hantavirus infection with 3 reported deaths.

Twenty-two British nationals remain on board, and repatriation plans are underway. Andes virus is a rare hantavirus that can cause Hantavirus Cardiopulmonary Syndrome (HCPS) and is classified in the UK as an airborne High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID). Although transmission is mainly associated with rodents and their droppings, limited person-to-person transmission has also been reported following close contact.

Healthcare professionals should remain alert for individuals presenting with symptoms and a relevant travel or exposure history within 45 days before illness onset.



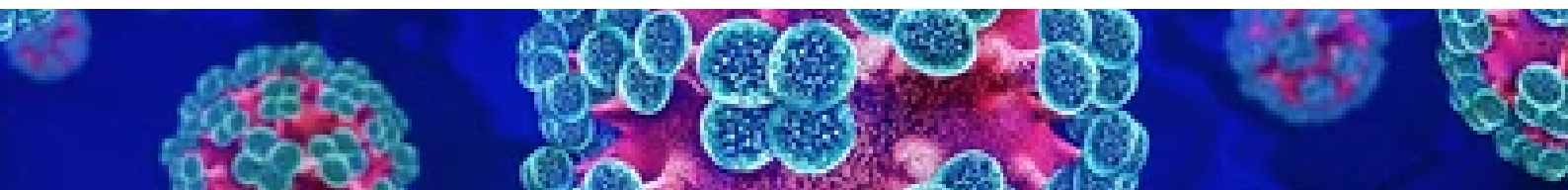
What is Hantavirus?

Hantavirus is a rare but serious viral infection spread mainly through contact with infected rodents, their urine, droppings or saliva. Symptoms can initially resemble flu-like illness but may progress rapidly to severe respiratory complications.

Common Signs and Symptoms

- Fever and chills
- Headache and muscle aches
- Fatigue and weakness
- Nausea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
- Cough and shortness of breath
- In severe cases, breathing difficulties, low blood pressure, and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS)

The average incubation period is n=18 days but has been reported as ranging from n=4 days up to n=40 days post exposure. There is no specific antiviral treatment available and management is supportive. The reported case fatality rate is 32-50%.



Infection Prevention and Control in Adult Social Care

Care homes and adult social care providers should continue to maintain robust infection prevention and control practices, including:

- Effective hand hygiene
- Appropriate use of PPE
- Good environmental cleaning and safe waste management
- Prompt reporting and management of rodent infestations
- Early escalation of any suspected cases to clinical and IPC teams

Early recognition and prompt reporting are important to reduce the risk of transmission and support timely management.

All healthcare workers must be familiar with the principles of standard infection control precautions (SICPs) and transmission based precautions (TBPs) for preventing the spread of infection in healthcare settings.

Below is a list of guidance to support the application of these measures:

- [NHS England » Addendum on high consequence infectious disease \(HCID\)_personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#).
- [HCID printable resources \(HCID training website\)](#).

IPC Team contact details
Generic email for advice: nelondonicb.ipc@nhs.net

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Infection
Prevention
& Control

References:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/infection-prevention-and-control-in-adult-social-care-settings/infection-prevention-and-control-resource-for-adult-social-care#managing-infection>
- NHS England » National infection prevention and control manual (NIPCM) for England
- NHS England » Addendum on high consequence infectious disease (HCID) personal protective equipment (PPE)