



UK Health
Security
Agency

Harrow Council Health & Wellbeing Board

5. Health Protection Update

17 January 2023

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Overview

- Group A Strep
- Acute respiratory infections
- Avian influenza
- Diphtheria
- M-Pox
- Polio
- +/- *Other relevant updates*

Group A Strep (GAS)

Harrow notifications Sept 2022-Jan 2023:

- 17 SF OBs reported – all in school/nursery
 - 13 of 17 in Dec
- 4 iGAS cases in Harrow residents
 - 3 adults (2 ICU), 1 child death 9yo

- Scarlet fever and GAS infections remain high
 - [National news story here](#)
- 37,068 notifications of scarlet fever 19 Sept-8 Jan
 - Compares to 4,490 at the same point in the year during the last comparably high season in 2017-2018
- Invasive group A strep (iGAS) infections remain rare but are currently higher than we see in a typical year
 - So far this season (Sept-Jan):
 - 305 cases in children <10y
 - 190 deaths across all age groups, 30 in children <18y
 - Compared to the entire 2017-2018 season:
 - 311 cases in children <10y
 - 355 deaths across all age groups, 27 in children <18y

Group A Strep guidance

- [Stakeholder communications pack](#) – key messages, digital assets for social media, links to guidance and advice
- [Campaign Resource Centre](#) – awareness raising assets, including translated materials and information for those working in education settings
- [Blog here](#) – can be used to help support parental concerns
- [National Health Protection Report](#) – case figures available on regional rather than local authority level, updated Thurs
- [Management of close contacts of iGAS cases](#) – guidance for community settings, with additional groups now recommended for antibiotic prophylaxis
- [Management of scarlet fever outbreaks in schools, nurseries and other childcare settings](#) – guidance to help health protection teams control outbreaks
- [Interim clinical guidance on management of GAS infection](#) – diagnosis and treatment during current increase

Acute Respiratory Infection

Harrow notifications Sept 2022-Jan 2023:

- **14 covid-19 OBs** reported
 - 10 care home (1 SEND respite), 2 school, 1 hosp
- **16 flu-like OBs** reported
 - 6 care home, 10 school/nursery (1 SEND)

- [Back to school blog](#) – 5 things to help manage winter illness
- [Campaign Resources Centre](#) – ‘Stay well this winter’
- Flu and COVID-19 vaccination booster campaign continues
 - Encouraging stakeholders to continue using channels to help with the uptake of the vaccines for the eligible
 - Help get the message out by:
 - Support the flow of credible information through sharing via various channels – social media, newsletters, interviews, and visits
 - Engage with stakeholders to reinforce the importance of taking up offers of vaccination this winter, and encourage the cascading of messages to their networks
 - Re-post digital content from the UKHSA, DHSC, NHS UK and NHSE social media channels
- [Stakeholder pack](#) – includes a range of digital and printable resources as well as key messages share

National flu and COVID-19 surveillance reports

- Flu positivity decreased to 12% in week 1, compared with 25% in week 52 – highest positivity in 5-14y at 17%
- Flu outbreaks in care homes decreased with 49 in week 1, compared with 88 in week 52
- Covid-19 outbreaks in care homes increased with 133 in week 1 compared with 53 in week 52

Arrivals testing from China at London Heathrow

- New COVID-19 surveillance sequencing positive PCR tests from up to 20% of arrivals from selected flights from China
- Aims to help strengthen the UK’s ability to rapidly detect potential new variants circulating in Chi
- [Latest blog](#) – explains more about the testing

Avian influenza

- Winter 2021-2022: record number of cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAV) – ‘bird flu’ – confirmed across UK in wild and captive birds
- Epidemic continued over Spring and summer – normally decreases during this time – particularly in ducks, geese or other large swimming birds and sea birds
- Further increases going into winter 2022-2023, both wild and captive bird flocks
- 162 confirmed cases of HPAI H5N1 in UK since Oct 2022
- 278 cases of HPAI H5N1 in England since the H5N1 outbreak started in October 2021
- Defra put in place [Avian Influenza Prevention Zone \(AIPZ\)](#)
- More information available on the [Defra website](#)
- On Tues 13 Dec, Defra launched a new [online reporting system](#) to be used by the public to report dead wild birds
- [Avian influenza: guidance, data and analysis](#) – symptoms, diagnosis, management and epidemiology of bird flu
- [PHE national polio guidelines](#) – surveillance, investigation and management of suspected polio cases and response
- [Bird flu \(avian influenza\): how to spot and report it in poultry or other captive birds](#) – signs of bird flu and how to report
- [Blog here](#) – update on avian flu
- Check [bird flu disease zone on the map](#)

Diphtheria: cases among asylum seekers

Enhanced National Incident

- Increase in diphtheria caused by toxigenic *C. diphtheriae* in migrants in Europe and the UK since June 2022
 - 2021 = 3 toxigenic *C. diphtheriae* in England
 - 2022 = 50 toxigenic *C. diphtheriae* in the UK
- Predominantly cutaneous lesions in young adult males, but respiratory disease also reported
- [Public health control and management of diphtheria in England: 2022 guidelines](#)
 - Investigation and management of cases and contacts
- [Supplementary guidance for cases and outbreaks in asylum seeker accommodation settings](#)
 - Management of cases in asylum seeker settings
 - Incl. IPC, cleaning, linen, PPE, letter templates, etc.
- All new arrivals at a setting should (ideally) have clinical review with high index of suspicion for diphtheria infection

Figure 1: Total number of toxigenic *C. diphtheriae* cases in asylum seekers by month of reporting, February to 25 November 2022

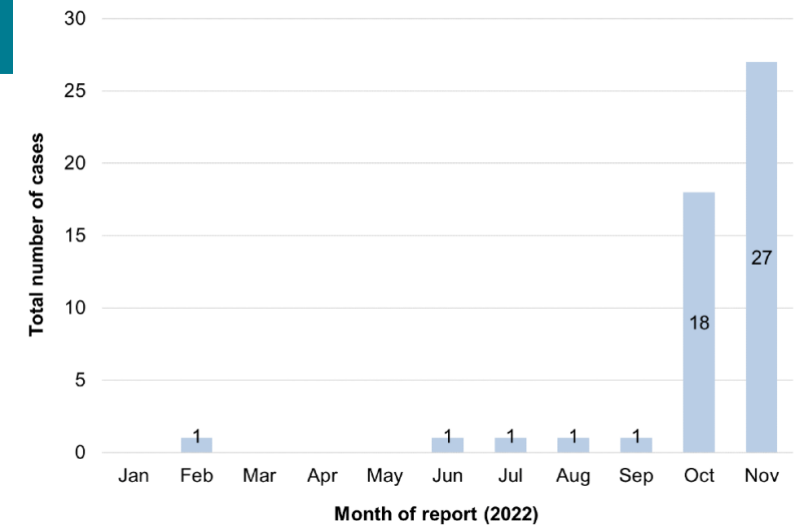
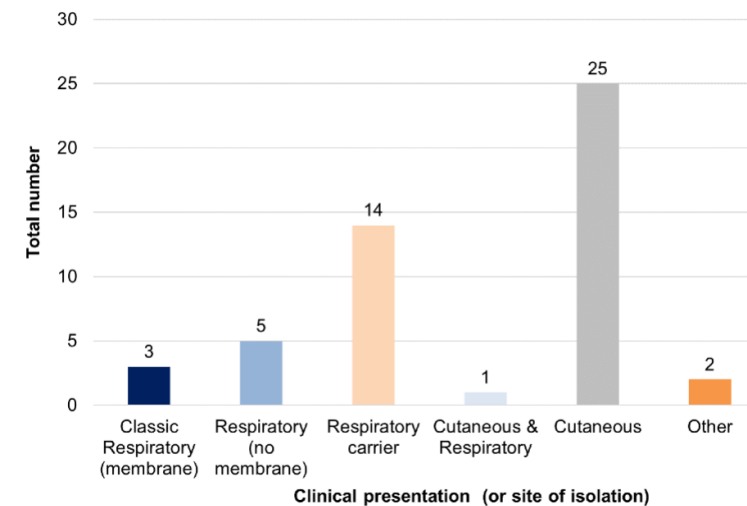


Figure 3: Clinical presentation of toxigenic *C. diphtheriae* cases in asylum seekers, England, February to 25 November 2022



[Diphtheria: cases among asylum seekers in England, health protection report \(data to 25 November 2022\)](#)

Mpox: name change and UK strategy published

- Referring to monkeypox as mpox in line with WHO guidance
- 2018-2021: 7 cases of mpox in the UK – 4 imported, 2 in HH contacts, 1 in HCW involved in care of imported case – no evidence of community transmission
- 2022 (as of 30 Nov): 3,725 confirmed and highly probable mpox cases in the UK – 1st case detected 6 May
- Number of new cases peaked at 350 per week in July and has now reduced significantly to 5 per week (as of 6 Dec)
- Almost all cases in networks of GBMSM, small number of cases in women (predominantly still result of sexual contact)
- [Latest mpox epidemiological overview published 1 Nov](#)
- [UK Strategy for Mpox Control 2022-23](#) published – outlines 8 key actions underway to reduce harm from the virus
- Inequalities in SH remain major public health issue
- Mpox outbreak highlighted the challenges of effectively reaching and engaging with those at greatest at risk
- Community based, voluntary sector organisations are best placed to engage with underserved populations
- [£200,000 UKHSA mpox and SH \(STI and HIV\) outreach and engagement activity fund](#) launched
- Up to £30,000 to community based, voluntary sector organisations to develop and deliver work to address health inequalities in affected LGBT+ groups – see [guidance](#)
- [Mpox Stakeholder and Partner Communications Pack](#) – contains information, assets, Q&As and links
- [Blog here](#) – answering questions on mpox

Polio

- Feb-June 2022: vaccine-like type 2 poliovirus detected in multiple sewage samples from London Beckton Sewage Treatment Works – genetically related isolates
- UK stopped using live oral polio vaccine (OPV) in 2004, but several countries continue to use, incl Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria
- Likely a recently vaccinated individual entered UK in Feb 2022 from a country where OPV has been used – virus is shed in stool for a few weeks after vaccination
- The virus detected in London is genetically linked to poliovirus detected in Israel and the US
- WHO has formally confirmed that the UK has a ‘circulating’ vaccine-derived type 2 poliovirus (VDPV2)

Actions taken

- [National Polio Guidelines](#) outline public health actions
- Polio sewage [surveillance expanded](#) to areas outside London
- [Inactivated Polio Vaccine \(IPV\) Booster campaign](#) launched in London targeting children aged 1-9y
- Primary care and school aged imms providers should:
 - opportunistically check that patients are up to date with their polio-containing vaccines and provide catch-up
 - check imms status of newly registered children and adults – particular emphasis on new migrants, asylum seekers and refugees – and bring up to date with UK schedule at the earliest opportunity

Other relevant updates

- Verbal



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Thanks for listening

Any questions?