



Dear Colleagues

Further Update on Standards on Healthcare Associated Infections

In February 2023, [DL \(2023\)06](#) was issued informing Health Boards that the previous healthcare associated infection (HCAI) standards and antibiotic use indicators originally due to expire in 2022, were extended to 2024. Since this letter, an objective to review the HCAI standards and indicators was included in the current two-year HCAI [Strategy](#) 2023-2025.

Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infection (ARHAI) Scotland were commissioned and in their response, outlined a range of options based on the analysis of the current targets and trends, as well as stakeholder engagement.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care considered the recommendations and has approved that the standard **should be no increase in the incidence (number of cases) of *Clostridioides difficile* infection (CDI), *Escherichia coli* bacteraemia (ECB), and *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteraemia (SAB) by March 2026 from the 2023/2024 baseline.**

ARHAI Scotland will provide Boards with the 2023/2024 baseline number of CDI, ECB and SAB cases to enable local monitoring.

The national HCAI surveillance programme in Scotland is under review with the recommendations due to Scottish Government by November 2025 (a deliverable within the HCAI Strategy). The surveillance review will consider new standards once the direction of the national mandatory HCAI surveillance programme has been set. Further communications on the surveillance programme will be shared at a later date.

From:

Interim Chief Nursing Officer,
Anne Armstrong

27 March 2025

DL (2025) 05

Addresses

For action

NHS Scotland Chairs,
NHS Scotland Chief Executives,
Chief Officers Health and Social Care Partnerships
Local Authorities
HR Directors,
Medical Directors,
Nurse Directors,
Primary Care Leads,
Directors of Pharmacy,
Directors of Public Health,
Directors of Dentistry,
Optometric Advisors,
All Independent Contractors (Dental, Pharmacy, General Practice and Optometry),
Infection Control Managers
Infection Control Doctors
Infection Control Nurses

Enquiries

Scottish Government
Directorate for Chief
Nursing Officer
Email: cno@gov.scot

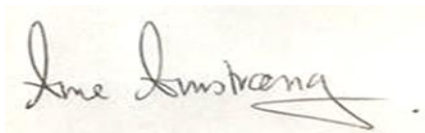


We recognise the hard work that Health Boards have undertaken to work towards these targets in challenging circumstances and we expect Health Boards to maintain standards and continue to prioritise reductions in CDI, ECB and SAB.

Finally, the [UK AMR National Action Plan \(NAP\)](#) sets out renewed UK-wide antibiotic use targets – namely the ambition to, by 2029, reduce total antibiotic use in human populations by 5% and to achieve 70% of total use of antibiotics from the Access category across the human healthcare system. Both targets are set against a 2019/20 baseline. The Scottish Government is currently working with the Scottish Antimicrobial Prescribing Group on a set of supplementary antimicrobial prescribing targets to support the high level NAP goals across both primary and secondary healthcare settings. Further details on these supplementary targets in a further communication in due course.

If you have any questions about the content of this publication, please contact the HCAI/Antimicrobial Resistance Team at HAI-AMR_Policy_Unit@gov.scot.

Yours sincerely,



ANNE ARMSTRONG
INTERIM CHIEF NURSING OFFICER