

Schedules

1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

UKHSA Food and Water Microbiology External Quality Assessment Schemes



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We aim to meet all the dates in this document you will be advised as soon as possible if any changes have to be made.

Please contact us if you do not receive your samples within seven days of the listed dispatch dates

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STANDARD SCHEME

food microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required Up to three sets of results can be reported
396	S0829 S0830	11/05/2026	19/06/2026	<i>Campylobacter</i> spp. detection <i>Campylobacter</i> spp. enumeration <i>Escherichia coli</i> O157 detection <i>Salmonella</i> spp. detection Aerobic colony count <i>Enterobacteriaceae</i> enumeration
398	S0833 S0834	06/07/2026	14/08/2026	Presumptive <i>Bacillus cereus</i> enumeration Coagulase-positive staphylococci enumeration <i>Listeria</i> spp. (including <i>L. mono</i>) enumeration <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> enumeration Aerobic colony count Coliform enumeration
400	S0837 S0838	07/09/2026	16/10/2026	<i>Cronobacter</i> spp. detection <i>Listeria</i> spp. (including <i>L. mono</i>) detection <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> detection <i>Clostridium perfringens</i> enumeration Aerobic colony count <i>Escherichia coli</i> enumeration
402	S0841 S0842	02/11/2026	11/12/2026	<i>Campylobacter</i> spp. detection <i>Campylobacter</i> spp. enumeration <i>Escherichia coli</i> O157 detection <i>Salmonella</i> spp. detection Aerobic colony count <i>Enterobacteriaceae</i> enumeration <i>Yersinia enterocolitica</i>
404	S0845 S0846	25/01/2027	05/03/2027	Presumptive <i>Bacillus cereus</i> enumeration Coagulase-positive staphylococci enumeration <i>Listeria</i> spp. (including <i>L. mono</i>) enumeration <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> enumeration Aerobic colony count Coliform enumeration
406	S0849 S0850	08/03/2027	16/04/2027	<i>Listeria</i> spp. (including <i>L. mono</i>) detection <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> detection <i>Salmonella</i> spp. detection <i>Clostridium perfringens</i> enumeration Sulfite-reducing <i>Clostridium</i> spp. Aerobic colony count <i>Escherichia coli</i> enumeration

Note for this scheme molecular methods can be used for pathogen examination or as a confirmation test

EUROPEAN FOOD MICROBIOLOGY LEGISLATION SCHEME
Regulation (EC) 2073/2005 Microbiological Criteria for Foodstuffs associated with
Regulation (EC) 852/2004 and subsequent amendments

food microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Food category	Examinations and enumerations required
EFL75	EFL223 EFL224 EFL225	11/05/2026	12/06/2026	Meat	According to the Food Safety or Process Hygiene Criteria
EFL76	EFL226 EFL227 EFL228	07/09/2026	09/10/2026	Dairy	
EFL77	EFL229 EFL230 EFL231	02/11/2026	04/12/2026	Ready to eat product	
EFL78	EFL232 EFL233 EFL234	25/01/2027	26/02/2027	Miscellaneous	

NON-PATHOGEN SCHEME

food microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required Up to three sets of results can be reported
NP083	NP0221 NP0222	11/05/2026	26/06/2026	<i>Pseudomonas</i> spp. Yeasts Moulds Coliforms
NP084	NP0223 NP0224	07/09/2026	23/10/2026	<i>Enterobacteriaceae</i> <i>Escherichia coli</i> Enterococci Lactic acid bacteria Aerobic colony count at 30°C
NP085	NP0225 NP0226	25/01/2027	12/03/2027	All the above enumerations are included for all samples. An option to register for PYM (<i>Pseudomonas</i> spp., yeasts and moulds only) is available

SHELLFISH SCHEME
food microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required
SF083	SF0174 SF0175	06/07/2026	07/08/2026	<i>Escherichia coli</i> MPN <i>Salmonella</i> spp. detection
SF084	SF0176 SF0177	02/11/2026	04/12/2026	
SF085	SF0178 SF0179	08/03/2027	09/04/2027	

PATHOGENIC VIBRIO SCHEME
food and water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required
V075	V0190 V0191	06/07/2026	07/08/2026	Detection: <i>Vibrio cholerae</i> non-O1 and non-O139 strains <i>Vibrio vulnificus</i>
V076	V0192 V0193	02/11/2026	04/12/2026	
V077	V0194 V0195	08/03/2027	09/04/2027	Detection and enumeration: <i>Vibrio parahaemolyticus</i>

STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS ENTEROTOXIN SCHEME
food microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations required
STA055	ST0109 ST0110	11/05/2026	12/06/2026	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> enterotoxin
STA056	ST0111 ST0112	07/09/2026	09/10/2026	

ENVIRONMENTAL SWAB SCHEME

environmental microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations required
ES41	ES0081 ES0082	11/05/2026	05/06/2026	<p>Relevant pathogen relating to outbreak details as provided on the request form – note the list below is not exhaustive</p> <p><i>Bacillus cereus</i> <i>Campylobacter</i> spp. Coagulase-positive staphylococci <i>Escherichia coli</i> O157 <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> <i>Salmonella</i> spp.</p>
ES42	ES0083 ES0084	07/09/2026	02/10/2026	<p><u>Enumeration of hygiene indicator organisms</u></p> <p>Aerobic colony count <i>Bacillus cereus</i> <i>Escherichia coli</i> Enterobacteriaceae <i>Listeria</i> spp.</p>
ES43	ES0085 ES0086	02/11/2026	27/11/2026	<p>Relevant pathogen relating to outbreak details as provided on the request form – note the list below is not exhaustive</p> <p><i>Bacillus cereus</i> <i>Campylobacter</i> spp. Coagulase-positive staphylococci <i>Escherichia coli</i> O157 <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> <i>Salmonella</i> spp.</p>
ES44	ES0087 ES0088	08/03/2027	02/04/2027	<p><u>Enumeration of hygiene indicator organisms</u></p> <p>Aerobic colony count <i>Bacillus cereus</i> <i>Escherichia coli</i> Enterobacteriaceae <i>Listeria</i> spp.</p>

SHIGA TOXIN-PRODUCING *ESCHERICHIA COLI* SCHEME

food microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations required
STX20	STX039 STX040	06/07/2026	31/07/2026	<p style="text-align: center;">Samples can only be examined using molecular methods</p> <p>Detection of the major virulence genes associated with <i>Escherichia coli</i> serogroups O157, O111, O26, O103, O145 and O104:H4 (STEC) Includes detection of <i>stx</i>-coding genes and the presence of the intimin-coding gene <i>eae</i></p>
STX21	STX041 STX042	25/01/2027	19/02/2027	

NOROVIRUS AND HEPATITIS A VIRUS SCHEME
(non accredited)
food and water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations required Samples can only be examined using molecular methods
NHV019	NHV0037 NHV0038	02/11/2026	04/12/2026	Detection of Norovirus GI and GII and Hepatitis A Virus
NHV020	NHV0039 NHV0040	08/03/2027	09/04/2027	Optional: Quantification of Norovirus GI and GII and Hepatitis A Virus

LEGIONELLA ISOLATION SCHEME

water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required per litre
G142	G142A G142B	13/04/2026	22/05/2026	Detection, enumeration and identification of <i>Legionella</i> spp.
G143	G143A G143B	01/06/2026	10/07/2026	
G144	G144A G144B	05/10/2026	13/11/2026	
G145	G145A G145B	04/01/2027	12/02/2027	

LEGIONELLA MOLECULAR SCHEME

water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and quantification required per litre Samples can only be examined using molecular methods
LM19	LM19A LM19B	03/08/2026	11/09/2026	Detection and quantification of <i>Legionella</i> spp.
LM20	LM20A LM20B	15/02/2027	26/03/2027	

RECREATIONAL AND SURFACE WATER SCHEME

water and environmental microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required
				<p><i>Salmonella</i> spp. per litre Colony count per 1mL All other counts are per 100mL</p>
S129	S129A S129B	13/04/2026	15/05/2026	<p><u>swimming pool / hydrotherapy pool waters:</u> Coagulase-positive staphylococci Coliform bacteria <i>Escherichia coli</i> Enterococci <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> Total staphylococci Colony count (37°C/24 hours) Colony count (37°C/48 hours)</p>
S130	S130A S130B	01/06/2026	03/07/2026	<p><u>river, lake or stream waters:</u> Coliform bacteria <i>Escherichia coli</i> Enterococci Faecal coliform <i>Clostridium perfringens</i> <i>Salmonella</i> spp. detection</p>
S131	S131A S131B	03/08/2026	04/09/2026	<p><u>marine (bathing beach) waters:</u> <i>Escherichia coli</i> Enterococci <i>Salmonella</i> spp.</p>
S132	S132A S132B	05/10/2026	06/11/2026	<p><u>swimming pool / hydrotherapy pool waters:</u> Coagulase-positive staphylococci Coliform bacteria <i>Escherichia coli</i> Enterococci <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> Total staphylococci Colony count (37°C/24 hours) Colony count (37°C/48 hours)</p>
S133	S133A S133B	04/01/2027	05/02/2027	<p><u>river, lake or stream waters:</u> Coliform bacteria <i>Escherichia coli</i> Enterococci Faecal coliforms <i>Clostridium perfringens</i> <i>Salmonella</i> spp.</p>
S134	S134A S134B	15/02/2027	19/03/2027	<p><u>marine (bathing beach) waters:</u> <i>Escherichia coli</i> Enterococci <i>Salmonella</i> spp.</p>

DRINKING WATER SCHEME

water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required
				Colony count per 1mL All other counts are per 100mL
				Up to three sets of results can be reported
W226	W226A W226B	13/04/2026	15/05/2026	Coliform bacteria <i>Escherichia coli</i> Enterococci <i>Clostridium perfringens</i> <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> Colony count (37°C/48 hours) Colony count (22°C/72 hours)
W227	W227A W227B	01/06/2026	03/07/2026	
W228	W228A W228B	03/08/2026	04/09/2026	
W229	W229A W229B	05/10/2026	06/11/2026	
W230	W230A W230B	04/01/2027	05/02/2027	
W231	W231A W231B	15/02/2027	19/03/2027	

BOTTLED AND MINERAL WATER SCHEME

water and food microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required
				Sporulated sulphite-reducing anaerobes per 50mL Colony count per 1mL All other counts are per 250mL
BMW41	BMW41A BMW41B	13/04/2026	08/05/2026	Coliform bacteria <i>Escherichia coli</i> Enterococci <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> Sporulated sulphite-reducing anaerobes Colony count (37°C/24 hours) Colony count (22°C/72 hours)
BMW42	BMW42A BMW42B	03/08/2026	28/08/2026	
BMW43	BMW43A BMW43B	04/01/2027	29/01/2027	

WASTEWATER SCHEME

(non accredited)

water and environmental microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required Per 100mL unless otherwise specified
WW003	WW003A WW003B	03/08/2026	04/09/2026	<i>Escherichia coli</i> Total coliforms Enterococci
WW004	WW004A WW004B	15/02/2027	19/03/2027	<i>Salmonella</i> spp. per litre SARS-CoV-2 per 100mL

HOSPITAL WATERS

ENDOSCOPE RINSE WATER SCHEME

water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required
				All counts are per 100mL Up to three sets of results can be reported
EW42	EW42A EW42B	13/04/2026	08/05/2026	Total viable counts (28°C - 32°C for 5 days) <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> Selected distribution: Yeasts/moulds (EW44) (optional)
EW43	EW43A EW43B	03/08/2026	28/08/2026	
EW44	EW44A EW44B	04/01/2027	29/01/2027	

MYCOBACTERIUM SPP. IN WATER SCHEME

water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required
				All counts are per 100mL
MY027	MY027A MY027B	13/04/2026	19/06/2026	Endoscope rinse water
MY028	MY028A MY028B	01/06/2026	07/08/2026	Heater cooler water
MY029	MY029A MY029B	05/10/2026	11/12/2026	Endoscope rinse water
MY030	MY030A MY030B	04/01/2027	12/03/2027	Heater cooler water

HOSPITAL TAP WATER SCHEME

water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required
				All counts are per 100mL Up to three sets of results can be reported
HTW36	HTW36A HTW36B	01/06/2026	26/06/2026	<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>
HTW37	HTW37A HTW37B	05/10/2026	30/10/2026	Selected distribution: <i>Mycobacterium</i> spp. (HTW37 optional) *
HTW38	HTW38A HTW38B	15/02/2027	12/03/2027	*For this examination only result due by 11/12/2026

DIALYSIS WATER SCHEME

water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required
				All counts are per mL Up to three sets of results can be reported
DW39	DW39A DW39B	01/06/2026	26/06/2026	Total viable counts (17°C - 23°C for 7 days)
DW40	DW40A DW40B	05/10/2026	30/10/2026	
DW41	DW41A DW41B	15/02/2027	12/03/2027	

HYDROTHERAPY POOL WATERS – Please select distributions S129 and/or S132 from Recreational and Surface Water Scheme (see page 8)