

**Schedules:
1 January to 31 December 2026**

UKHSA Food and Water Microbiology External Quality Assessment Schemes



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 2026

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required Up to three sets of results can be reported
392	S0821 S0822	26/01/2026	06/03/2026	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
394	S0825 S0826	09/03/2026	17/04/2026	<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
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>

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

EUROPEAN 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 2026

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Food category	Examinations and enumerations required
EFL74	EFL220 EFL221 EFL222	26/01/2026	27/02/2026	Miscellaneous	According to the Food Safety or Process Hygiene Criteria
EFL75	EFL223 EFL224 EFL225	11/05/2026	12/06/2026	Meat	
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	

NON-PATHOGEN SCHEME

food microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 2026

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required Up to three sets of results can be reported
NP082	NP0219 NP0220	26/01/2026	13/03/2026	<i>Pseudomonas</i> spp. Yeasts Moulds Coliforms
NP083	NP0221 NP0222	11/05/2026	26/06/2026	<i>Enterobacteriaceae</i> <i>Escherichia coli</i> Enterococci Lactic acid bacteria
NP084	NP0223 NP0224	07/09/2026	23/10/2026	Aerobic colony count at 30°C 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 2026

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required
SF082	SF0172 SF0173	09/03/2026	10/04/2026	<i>Escherichia coli</i> MPN <i>Salmonella</i> spp. detection
SF083	SF0174 SF0175	06/07/2026	07/08/2026	
SF084	SF0176 SF0177	02/11/2026	04/12/2026	

PATHOGENIC *VIBRIO* SCHEME
food and water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 2026

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required
V074	V0188 V0189	09/03/2026	10/04/2026	Detection: <i>Vibrio cholerae</i> non-O1 and non-O139 strains <i>Vibrio vulnificus</i>
V075	V0190 V0191	06/07/2026	07/08/2026	
V076	V0192 V0193	02/11/2026	04/12/2026	Detection and enumeration: <i>Vibrio parahaemolyticus</i>

STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS ENTEROTOXIN SCHEME
food microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 2026

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 2026

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations required
ES40	ES0079 ES0080	09/03/2026	03/04/2026	<u>Enumeration of hygiene indicator organisms</u> Aerobic colony count <i>Bacillus cereus</i> <i>Escherichia coli</i> <i>Enterobacteriaceae</i> <i>Listeria</i> spp.
ES41	ES0081 ES0082	11/05/2026	05/06/2026	Relevant pathogen relating to outbreak details as provided on the request form – note the list below is not exhaustive <i>Bacillus cereus</i> <i>Campylobacter</i> spp. Coagulase-positive staphylococci <i>Escherichia coli</i> O157 <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> <i>Salmonella</i> spp.
ES42	ES0083 ES0084	07/09/2026	02/10/2026	<u>Enumeration of hygiene indicator organisms</u> Aerobic colony count <i>Bacillus cereus</i> <i>Escherichia coli</i> <i>Enterobacteriaceae</i> <i>Listeria</i> spp.
ES43	ES0085 ES0086	02/11/2026	27/11/2026	Relevant pathogen relating to outbreak details as provided on the request form – note the list below is not exhaustive <i>Bacillus cereus</i> <i>Campylobacter</i> spp. Coagulase-positive staphylococci <i>Escherichia coli</i> O157 <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> <i>Salmonella</i> spp.

SHIGA TOXIN-PRODUCING *ESCHERICHIA COLI* SCHEME

food microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 2026

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations required Samples can only be examined using molecular methods
STX19	STX037 STX038	26/01/2026	20/02/2026	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>
STX20	STX039 STX040	06/07/2026	31/07/2026	

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

Sample schedule for 2026

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations required Samples can only be examined using molecular methods
NHV018	NHV0035 NHV0036	09/03/2026	10/04/2026	Detection of Norovirus GI and GII and Hepatitis A Virus
NHV019	NHV0037 NHV0038	02/11/2026	04/12/2026	Optional: Quantification of Norovirus GI and GII and Hepatitis A Virus

LEGIONELLA ISOLATION SCHEME

water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 2026

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required per litre
G141	G141A G141B	05/01/2026	13/02/2026	Detection, enumeration and identification of <i>Legionella</i> spp.
G142	G142A G142B	13/04/2026	22/05/2026	
G143	G143A G143B	01/06/2026	10/07/2026	
G144	G144A G144B	05/10/2026	13/11/2026	

LEGIONELLA MOLECULAR SCHEME

water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 2026

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required per litre Samples can only be examined using molecular methods
LM18	LM18A LM18B	16/02/2026	27/03/2026	Detection and quantification of <i>Legionella</i> spp.
LM19	LM19A LM19B	03/08/2026	11/09/2026	

RECREATIONAL AND SURFACE WATER SCHEME

water and environmental microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 2026

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required
				<i>Salmonella</i> spp. per litre Colony count per 1mL All other counts are per 100mL
S127	S127A S127B	05/01/2026	06/02/2026	<u>river, lake or stream waters:</u> Coliform bacteria <i>Escherichia coli</i> Enterococci Faecal coliforms <i>Clostridium perfringens</i> <i>Salmonella</i> spp.
S128	S128A S128B	16/02/2026	20/03/2026	<u>marine (bathing beach) waters:</u> <i>Escherichia coli</i> Enterococci <i>Salmonella</i> spp.
S129	S129A S129B	13/04/2026	15/05/2026	<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)
S130	S130A S130B	01/06/2026	03/07/2026	<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
S131	S131A S131B	03/08/2026	04/09/2026	<u>marine (bathing beach) waters:</u> <i>Escherichia coli</i> Enterococci <i>Salmonella</i> spp.
S132	S132A S132B	05/10/2026	06/11/2026	<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)

DRINKING WATER SCHEME

water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 2026

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
W224	W224A W224B	05/01/2026	06/02/2026	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)
W225	W225A W225B	16/02/2026	20/03/2026	
W226	W226A W226B	13/04/2026	15/05/2026	
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	

BOTTLED AND MINERAL WATER SCHEME

water and food microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 2026

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
BMW40	BMW40A BMW40B	05/01/2026	30/01/2026	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)
BMW41	BMW41A BMW41B	13/04/2026	08/05/2026	
BMW42	BMW42A BMW42B	03/08/2026	28/08/2026	

WASTEWATER SCHEME

(non accredited)

water and environmental microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2026

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required
				<i>Salmonella</i> spp. per 1L SARS-CoV-2 per 1mL All other counts are per 100mL
WW002	WW002A WW002B	16/02/2026	20/03/2026	<i>Escherichia coli</i> Total coliforms Faecal coliforms Enterococci
WW003	WW003A WW003B	03/08/2026	04/09/2026	<i>Salmonella</i> spp. detection SARS-CoV-2 detection or enumeration

HOSPITAL WATERS

ENDOSCOPE RINSE WATER SCHEME

water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 2026

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
EW41	EW41A EW41B	05/01/2026	30/01/2026	Total viable counts (28°C - 32°C for 5 days) <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> Selected distribution: Yeasts/moulds (EW41)
EW42	EW42A EW42B	13/04/2026	08/05/2026	
EW43	EW43A EW43B	03/08/2026	28/08/2026	

MYCOBACTERIUM SPP. IN WATER SCHEME

water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 2026

Distribution number	Sample numbers	Dispatch date	Date results due by	Examinations and enumerations required
				All levels are per 100mL
MY026	MY026A MY026B	05/01/2026	13/03/2026	Heater cooler water
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

HOSPITAL TAP WATER SCHEME

water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 2026

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
HTW35	HTW35A HTW35B	16/02/2026	13/03/2026	<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> Selected distribution: <i>Mycobacterium</i> spp. (HTW37)
HTW36	HTW36A HTW36B	01/06/2026	26/06/2026	
HTW37	HTW37A HTW37B	05/10/2026	30/10/2026	

DIALYSIS WATER SCHEME

water microbiology examinations

Sample schedule for 2026

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
DW38	DW38A DW38B	16/02/2026	13/03/2026	Total viable counts (17°C - 23°C for 7 days)
DW39	DW39A DW39B	01/06/2026	26/06/2026	
DW40	DW40A DW40B	05/10/2026	30/10/2026	

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