

# Healthcare Associated Infections 2020 Annual Report

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

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## About this release

This release is by Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infection (ARHAI) Scotland, part of NHS National Services Scotland (NSS).

This year the report includes analysis of hospital onset COVID-19 and the impact of COVID-19 on other Scottish National Surveillance systems. The global pandemic brought unique challenges during 2020. ARHAI Scotland within NSS have been a key part of the national COVID-19 response to the pandemic. They have developed data and intelligence; produced evidence and guidance; developed and delivered educational resources and supported health boards in their local pandemic responses.

Two COVID-19 monitoring and surveillance systems were developed at speed. They have provided vital intelligence to inform the Scottish nosocomial COVID-19 response. Rapid reviews of the ever emerging evidence base were undertaken. These informed development of national and United Kingdom (UK) guidance, essential to reducing risk of COVID-19 nosocomial transmission.

The report also reflects the work undertaken on other healthcare associated infection (HCAI) prevention and to contain antimicrobial resistance (AMR) during 2020. Data are provided for common HCAs, which are an important cause of severe illness, death, and higher treatment costs. The published data can be used to improve care of patients.

COVID-19 has impacted healthcare delivery in both hospital and community settings making comparisons with previous years difficult. These must be interpreted in the context of the pandemic and with due caution. ARHAI Scotland continue to regularly review HCAI surveillance in this context and work with NHS boards to interpret changes.

## Main Points

In relation to surveillance of HCAI:

- In 2020, there were 3,389 (2.6%) COVID-19 cases that were nosocomial (first positive COVID-19 sample taken on day 8 or more of a hospital in-patient stay). Rates of nosocomial infections throughout 2020 followed the waves of infection observed in the community.
- There has been a decrease in the annual incidence of *Escherichia coli* found in urine samples between 2019 and 2020.
- There has been an increase over the last four years in the annual incidence of healthcare associated *Escherichia coli* bacteraemias (ECB), whilst community has decreased.
- Annual incidence of *Clostridioides difficile* infection (CDI) in healthcare has remained stable over the last 5 years, whilst community has decreased. The annual incidence of healthcare associated CDI increased between 2019 and 2020.

- Rates of annual incidence have remained stable over the last five years for *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteraemias (SAB). The annual incidence of healthcare associated SAB increased between 2019 and 2020.
- In 2020, 136 non COVID-19 healthcare outbreaks and incidents were reported, compared to 208 in the previous year.

The intelligence obtained from outbreaks, incidents, and surveillance systems is used to develop a knowledge base to better prevent, prepare for and control outbreaks; reduce nosocomial infections; and contain AMR. In 2020:

- ARHAI Scotland continued to review and develop guidance documents for the prevention and control of infection across all care settings, including those in response to COVID-19.
- The [National Infection Prevention and Control Manual](#) was further developed during 2020 and 2021 with the addition of an [Infection Prevention and Control Manual for Older People and Adult Care Homes](#) and [COVID-19 Addenda for Acute Settings; Care Home Settings and Community Health and Care Settings](#).
- In response to COVID-19, ARHAI Scotland developed a new Outbreak Reporting Tool (ORT) to collect and analyse COVID-19 cluster data and other Healthcare Infection Incident Assessment Tool (HIAT) assessed incidents in Hospital settings.

## Background

The purpose of this report is to present the outputs of ARHAI Scotland programmes to reduce HCAI, including surveillance and development of guidance and tools. This report details the ARHAI Scotland's role in the national COVID-19 response to the pandemic as well as the progress made by ARHAI Scotland to support the reduction of HCAs in NHSScotland.

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## Further Information

Find out more in the [full report](#). The data from this publication is available to download from our web page along with a background information and metadata document.

The next release of this publication will be September 2022.



### ARHAI Scotland and Official Statistics

ARHAI Scotland, a division of NHS National Services Scotland, works at the very heart of the health service across Scotland, delivering services critical to frontline patient care and supporting the efficient and effective operation of NHSScotland. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics. [Further information about our statistics.](#)