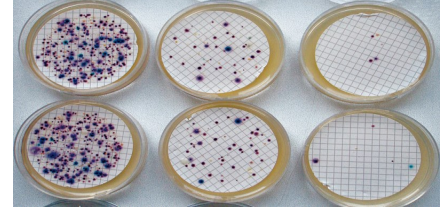
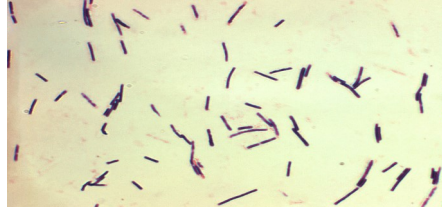




# Drinking Water Scheme



This microbiology scheme provides proficiency testing (PT) samples to laboratories that examine drinking waters routinely. This scheme challenges the accurate enumeration of low levels of micro-organisms. Drinking water can contain many different bacteria that can be a risk to health, it is essential that all water intended for drinking is properly treated and routinely effectively monitored for safe consumption.

This PT scheme helps you to identify gaps in your processes, highlighting where quality improvements can be made. It also provides an opportunity to improve staffs knowledge and experience with organisms not frequently encountered.

UHSA's Drinking Water Scheme focuses on raising awareness of:

- the challenges associated with enumerating samples containing low levels of organisms
- variations in the methods used which can highlight differences in results obtained
- issues with confirmatory tests carried out on isolates
- updates in local guidelines or policies

**Examinations for this scheme are:**

- Coliform bacteria
- Escherichia coli*
- Enterococci
- Clostridium perfringens*
- Pseudomonas aeruginosa*
- Colony count 37°C/48 hours and 22°C/72 hours

Up to three sets of results can be returned for any examination.

**Six distributions available per year, each containing two samples**



Your laboratory's personalised report will contain information such as:

- the contents and the levels of the sample
- performance data for each examination for you to compare your performance against other laboratories
- your on-going performance over a year which demonstrates your commitment to quality to clients and colleagues
- where relevant actions to take to ensure that your laboratory retains high standards
- educational information on difficult and challenging samples

For your investigation repeat samples are provided free of charge and further expertise can be provided by our panel of renowned food and water microbiologists

**Satisfactory performance with your PT provides assurance that your laboratory is compliant with testing standards, thereby meeting and maintaining accreditation requirements.**

**Contact the Food and Environmental Proficiency Testing Unit:  
Tel: +44(0)20 8327 7119 email: [foodeqa@ukhsa.gov.uk](mailto:foodeqa@ukhsa.gov.uk)**



# Assisting laboratories world wide in maintaining standards of excellence



Food, water and environmental laboratories play a vital role in protecting the public's health by helping to ensure that food is safe to consume, waters are safe to drink and that environmental and recreational waters do not make people ill.

Proficiency testing or external quality assessment provides laboratories with an independent external assessment of their performance. Regular participation in proficiency testing schemes is an important part of laboratories quality procedures and helps to ensure that the results of their tests are accurate.

With over 25 years of experience, UK Health Security Agency's Food and Environmental Proficiency Testing Unit is a world leader in providing microbiology proficiency testing schemes to food, water and environmental laboratories both in the UK and in over 70 countries internationally.

Our dedicated team of experts has unrivalled professional, scientific and technical expertise in proficiency testing. Participants also have the additional advantage of drawing on the full scientific resources of UK Health Security Agency

## Benefits of participating in UK Health Security Agency's food and water proficiency testing schemes:

- Unique schemes provided:
  - that support both EU and non-EU legislation
  - inclusion of organisms such as *Mycobacterium* spp. in endoscope and cardiac cooler waters
  - Molecular scheme for Shiga-toxin producing *Escherichia coli*
  - *Vibrio cholerae* testing
  - *Staphylococcus aureus* Enterotoxin
  - Norovirus and Hepatitis A virus
- Free of charge repeat samples
- Access to expert food and water microbiologists
- Bespoke schemes reports provided
- UKHSA and z-scores provided in some scheme reports
- Ability to make extremely low level samples
- On-going performance assessment in the reports
- Samples provided in easy to use formats

## PT Schemes available include:

Environmental Swab  
European Food Microbiology Legislation  
Standard Scheme  
Non-Pathogen  
Norovirus and Hepatitis A virus\*  
Pathogenic *Vibrio*  
Shellfish  
Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli*  
*Staphylococcus aureus* enterotoxin  
Bottled and Mineral Water  
Dialysis Water  
Drinking Water  
Endoscope Rinse Water  
Hospital Tap Water  
*Legionella* Isolation  
*Legionella* Molecular  
Recreational and Surface Water  
*Mycobacterium* spp. in Water

**Schemes are accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS)  
to the international standard ISO/IEC 17043:2010 \*not accredited**