

Appendix C: Standards for managing an outbreak

The standards for managing outbreaks are contained in the Communicable Disease Outbreak Management – Operational guidance (2014) and include the following steps:

Outbreak recognition	Initial investigation to clarify the nature of the outbreak begun within 24 hours
	Immediate risk assessment undertaken and recorded following receipt of initial information
Outbreak declaration	Decision made and recorded at the end of the initial investigation regarding outbreak declaration and convening of outbreak control team
Outbreak Control Team (OCT)	OCT held as soon as possible and within three working days of decision to convene
	All agencies/disciplines involved in investigation and control represented at OCT meeting
	Roles and responsibilities of OCT members agreed and recorded
	Lead organisation with accountability for outbreak management agree and recorded
Outbreak investigation and control	Control measures documented with clear timescales for implementation and responsibility
	Case definition agreed and recorded
	Descriptive epidemiology undertaken and reviewed at OCT. To include number of cases in line with case definition; epidemic curve; description of key characteristics including gender, geographic spread, pertinent risk factors; severity; hypothesis generated
	Review risk assessment considering evidence gathered
	Analytical study considered and rationale for decision recorded
	Investigation protocol prepared if an analytical study is undertaken
Communications	Communications strategy agreed at first OCT meeting and reviewed throughout the investigation
	Absolute clarity about the outbreak leads always with appropriate handover consistent with handover standards
End of outbreak	Final outbreak report completed within 12 weeks of the formal closure of the outbreak
	Report recommendations and lessons learnt reviewed within 12 months after formal closure of the outbreak