



Health Protection Agency

Water EQA

Newcastle Laboratory

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Dear Sirs

### Re: Transfer of HPA Water EQA Schemes to the Centre for Infections

I am writing to advise you that the Health Protection Agency's Executive Group has made a decision to transfer the organisation of the Water EQA Schemes from our Newcastle laboratory to the Agency's Centre for Infections (Cfi) in London. The decision was influenced by a number of factors, the most significant of which is that the Newcastle HPA laboratory has to relocate to new premises during 2009. This change will affect both the EQUAL Scheme and the Surface Water Scheme and will take effect on **5 January 2009**.

Both schemes will be organised by Cfi's Food and Environmental Proficiency Testing Unit (FEPTU), under the leadership of my colleague, Julie Russell, who has many years experience in organising EQA schemes and is currently responsible for all the HPA's food microbiology EQA schemes, as well as the Water EQA Scheme for *Legionella* Isolation. The Scheme Manager will be Dr Nicola Lang who worked in the fields of food, water and environmental microbiology for many years before joining the HPA in 2005.

Until you are advised otherwise, all your correspondence should continue to be addressed to the Newcastle laboratory. In the meantime, HPA staff in Newcastle and FEPTU will work together to ensure these management changes do not impact on the quality of the schemes. Discussions are already in progress with the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) to ensure that the EQUAL scheme remains accredited throughout the transfer process.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the all Newcastle staff who contributed to providing this internationally renowned service over the past 17 years. The HPA and its stakeholders will continue to benefit from the expertise of our current EQA team as they will be working to develop a wider range of HPA reference materials, in collaboration with the National Collection of Type Cultures (NCTC).

Yours sincerely

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