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Submission from the Auckland Regional Public Health Service on the Outbreak Report Form Review Consultation Document

1. Thank you for the opportunity for the Auckland Regional Public Health Service to provide a submission on the Outbreak Report Form Review Consultation Document.
2. This submission represents the views of the Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS). ARPHS provides public health services for the three district health boards in the Auckland region (Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata District Health Boards), with the primary governance mechanism for the Service resting with Auckland District Health Board. This submission represents the views of ARPHS and does not necessarily represent the views of the three District Health Boards.
3. The Service understands that all submissions will be available under the Official Information Act 1982, except if grounds set out under the Act apply.
4. The primary contact point for this submission is:
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Introduction

5. ARPHS has a statutory obligation under the Health Act 1956, to improve, promote and protect the health of people and communities in particular for the Auckland region. ARPHS primary concern is to improve population health rather than deliver personal health services. It actively seeks to influence any initiatives or proposals that may affect population health in the Auckland region to maximise their positive impact and minimise possible negative effects on population health.
6. Auckland is the largest urban conurbation in New Zealand. ARPHS consistently investigates the largest number of outbreaks in New Zealand and the size of the conurbation and population makes effective public health response essential.

General Comments

7. ARPHS generally supports the review, as it is important to collect accurate and relevant data for outbreak surveillance.
8. While ARPHS understands that review of the current outbreak definitions is outside the scope of this consultation document, we would strongly suggest that a review of this definition is undertaken in the immediate future. The definition of an outbreak is integral to the surveillance process and determines when action is taken and information is collected. This definition should be applied consistently throughout New Zealand in order to allow for accurate data collection. If a single outbreak definition cannot be consistently applied nationwide, an alternative solution may be to allow for variation in definitions but retain some ability to differentiate between them – eg, enable some mechanism to code for household person-to-person outbreaks so that these can be separated out when national statistics are reported.
9. ARPHS is concerned that this review of the outbreak report form appears to be occurring in the absence of any review of the objectives of outbreak surveillance as a whole, and thereby consideration of the best means to meet these surveillance objectives. For instance, one problem with the outbreak report form as it currently stands is that the form attempts to capture information on all kinds of outbreaks, and with all levels of evidence, using the same form. As a result, the form is very long and lists general exposures instead of specific risk factors. An alternative approach may be to develop a simpler “triage” form to meet the immediate need to record that an outbreak has occurred, then follow this up with different forms (or other information collection methods) tailored to specific types of outbreaks (by category of pathogens) and to outbreaks investigated to differing levels of detail.
10. ARPHS has a number of answers to the questions posed in the covering letter, as well as some additional comments that relate to outbreak surveillance. These are found in the table below associated with the relevant proposed fields.

Reporting Authority

Form Section / Question	ESR Recommendations	ARPHS Comments
Outbreak number	Retain as is.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Officer responsible	Retain as is.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Date reported	Retain as is.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Report status	Include a "Not an Outbreak" category	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Date report finalised	Retain as is.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.

Disease and Implicated Pathogen, Toxin, Chemical

Form Section / Question	ESR Recommendations	ARPHS Comments
Name of pathogen, toxin, chemical	Renaming question as 'Causative Agent'.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Disease name*	Incorporate disease name into the ORF and to ensure that a clear relationship is created between the disease and the specific pathogen is maintained.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Other known pathogen	Retain as is.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Unknown pathogen	Retain as is.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Laboratory-confirmed case definition AND Other confirmed case definition AND Probable case definition	Combine 'laboratory confirmed' and 'other confirmed' case definition questions into a single 'confirmed case' definition. Retain the 'probable case' definition question.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.

Outbreak Demographics

Form Section / Question	ESR Recommendations	ARPHS Comments
Number of cases	Record the number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposed people • Confirmed cases • Probable cases, • Clinical consultations (i.e. GP visits)* • Hospitalisations • Deaths * data quality may be low, seek feedback via consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposed people - ARPHS suggests that if this field is to be retained, it should be clear that it is only to be used in conjunction with clearly defined epidemiological and/or microbiological proof of exposure to a source. This field is valuable in order to calculate an attack rate. ARPHS would suggest that this is more appropriate in the context of a wider epidemiological analysis which is performed on a relatively small number of outbreaks. • Confirmed cases - ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations. • Probable cases - ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations. • Clinical consultations – ARPHS suggests that this field would not provide a high quality of data and would be unlikely to provide a useful measure of the severity of the outbreak. As a result, we recommend that this field be removed. • Hospitalisations - ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations. • Deaths - ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Outbreak onset dates (first case and last case or ongoing)	Retain as is.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Age of cases	Retain as is.	ARPHS suggests that if this field is to be maintained that the information should be extracted automatically from case report forms attached to the outbreak.
Sex of cases	Remove question unless data is required by users.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendation to remove the field.

Incubation period	Remove question unless required for local use.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendation to remove the field.
Duration of illness	Remove question unless needed for local use	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendation to remove the field.
Outbreak name*	Include additional field but restrict view to owning PHS only (to ensure confidentiality)	ARPHS would not use this field as part of our workflow. Identifying information for an outbreak is contained elsewhere in the form.

Circumstances of Exposure/Transmission

Form Section / Question	ESR Recommendations	ARPHS Comments
How was outbreak recognised and links among cases established	Focus question on how the outbreak was first detected and remove the section regarding how the cases were linked.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations and suggests that clearly defined categories be used to aid analysis.
Type of outbreak	Remove question.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Cases part of well defined group	Retain as is.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Date/Range of Exposure(s)	Remove, unless used for local analysis	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Setting of exposure transmission or where contaminated food/water was prepared	Separate the question into two different questions 1. Setting of exposure transmission 2. Setting where contaminated food/water was prepared.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Name of setting	Permit the association of a named setting with each setting identified and use standard national lists of settings and geocoding of addresses to improve quality.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Geographic location where exposure / transmission occurred	Amend to use DHB instead of Health District. Retain ability to record TA. Changed wording of question to focus on "where exposure occurred"	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations. We would further suggest that the geo-coded address from the name of setting should be used to automatically population TA and DHB fields to improve accuracy.
Mode of transmission	Allow users to indicate a primary mode of transmission and 1 or more secondary modes of transmission. Associate the level of evidence that led to each mode being identified, (see Evidence for mode of transmission)	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Vehicle/source of common source outbreak	Include the question of 'evidence implicating this vehicle/source' Suggest the inclusion of standard food, water and environmental categorisations with the ability to include a free text description of the specific vehicle/source. (e.g. Vehicle/source category was 'shellfish', the specific food was Oysters, and the level of evidence that led to	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations and suggests that this list is standardized to match FoodNet once the FoodNet review is completed.

	this conclusion was level 2b, (see Evidence for mode of transmission)	
Vehicle/source linked to commercial premises	Remove question.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Evidence for mode of transmission	Remove questions and associate evidence with each response for 'mode of transmission' and 'vehicle/source', (see Evidence for mode of transmission)	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.

Factors Contributing to the Outbreak

Form Section / Question	ESR Recommendations	ARPHS Comments
Foodborne outbreak factors	Risk factors are detailed in section 5.2.4 – Factors contributing to the outbreak	Please see comments in section 5.2.4 – Factors contributing to the outbreak
Waterborne outbreak factors	Risk factors are detailed in section 5.2.4 – Factors contributing to the outbreak	Please see comments in section 5.2.4 – Factors contributing to the outbreak
Person to person outbreaks	Risk factors are detailed in section 5.2.4 – Factors contributing to the outbreak	Please see comments in section 5.2.4 – Factors contributing to the outbreak
Environmental outbreaks.	Risk factors are detailed in section 5.2.4 – Factors contributing to the outbreak	Please see comments in section 5.2.4 – Factors contributing to the outbreak
Evidence for a contributing factor.	Remove question and allow each risk factor identified to have a level of evidence associated with it. Change evidence responses to “Suspected” or “Confirmed”.	ARPHS agrees with ESR’s recommendations.
Action taken to control the outbreak	Seek feedback from PHS. Current questions are detailed in 5.2.5 – Management of outbreak/control measures undertaken	Please see comments in section 5.2.5 – Management of outbreak/control measures undertaken – ARPHS suggests that this section be removed.
Comments	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR’s recommendations.
Written outbreak report prepared	Question should be changed to ‘please attach copy of the written outbreak report, if prepared’.	ARPHS agrees with ESR’s recommendations.

Setting where transmission occurred

Categorisation (new)	Setting of Exposure (Current)	Setting of Exposure (Recommendation)	ARPHS Comments
Home	Home	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Food premises	Restaurant / café	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Takeaway	Remove	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Supermarket/delicatessen	Remove	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
		Include fair, market, festival, other temporary / mobile service* e.g. sausage sizzle	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
		Franchised fast food restaurant* (including chains that are likely to share common ingredients and/or practices)	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations however a clear, standardised definition of a "franchised fast food restaurant" should be included.
	Caterers	Remove	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Other food outlet	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Institutions	Hostel / boarding house	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Hotel / motel	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Rest home	Long Term Care facilities e.g. rest homes, continuing care facilities	ARPHS recommends that the Rest home and Hospital (continuing care) fields be combined into a single Long Term Care facilities field.
	Hospital (continuing care)	Long Term Care facilities e.g. rest homes, continuing care facilities	ARPHS recommends that the Rest home and Hospital (continuing care) fields be combined into a single Long Term Care facilities field.
	Hospital (acute care)	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Prison	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Camp	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	School	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Childcare centre	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Tangi / Hui	Marae	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
		Other institution (please specify)*	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.

Workplaces	Workplace	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with this recommendation however suggests that a clear definition of “workplace” be developed as many outbreak settings can potentially be classed as workplaces.
	Farm	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR’s recommendations.
	Abattoir/meat processing plant	Remove	ARPHS agrees with ESR’s recommendations.
Community	Swimming/spa pool	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR’s recommendations.
		Petting Zoo*	ARPHS agrees with ESR’s recommendations.
	Community /church gathering	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR’s recommendations.
Other		Cruise ship / Airline / Tour bus*	ARPHS agrees with ESR’s recommendations.
	Other setting (please specify)	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR’s recommendations.
Unknown	Unknown	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR’s recommendations.

Setting where contaminated food/beverage was prepared

Categorisation (New)	Setting of Contamination (Current)	Setting of Exposure (Recommendation)	ARPHS Comments
Home	Home	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Food premises	Restaurant / café	Restaurant / Café / Bakery	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Takeaway	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Supermarket/delicatessen	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
		Include fair, market, festival, other temporary / mobile service* e.g. sausage sizzle	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
		Franchised fast food restaurant* (including chains that are likely to share common ingredients and/or practices)	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations however a clear, standardised definition of a "franchised fast food restaurant" should be included.
		Overseas manufactured foods*	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
		Commercial Food Manufacture* e.g. those premises that manufacture and sell their produces off site.	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Caterers	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Other food outlet	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Institutions	Hostel / boarding house	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Hotel / motel	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Rest home	Long Term Care facilities e.g. rest homes, continuing care facilities	ARPHS recommends that the Rest home and Hospital (continuing care) fields be combined into a single Long Term Care facilities field.
	Hospital (continuing care)	Long Term Care facilities e.g. rest homes, continuing care facilities	ARPHS recommends that the Rest home and Hospital (continuing care) fields be combined into a single Long Term Care facilities field.
	Hospital (acute care)	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Prison	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Camp	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	School	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.

	Childcare centre	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Tangi / Hui	Marae	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
		Other institution*	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Workplaces	Workplace	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with this recommendation however suggests that a clear definition of "workplace" be developed as many outbreak settings can potentially be classed as workplaces.
	Farm	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Abattoir/meat processing plant	Remove	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Community	Swimming/spa pool	Remove	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Community /church gathering	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Other		Cruise ship / Airline *	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	Other setting (please specify)	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Unknown	Unknown	Retain as is	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.

Evidence for mode of transmission

Level of Evidence		Recommendation evidence criteria	ARPHS Comments
1		Elevated relative risk or odds ratio AND laboratory evidence	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations however suggest that the elevated risk or odds ratio should be statistically significant
2	a	Elevated relative risk or odds ratio with 95% confidence intervals not including 1	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	b	Laboratory evidence, same organism and sub type detected in both cases and vehicle (to the highest level of identification).	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
3	a	Compelling evidence, symptomatology attributable to specific organism e.g. scombrotoxin, ciguatoxin etc	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	b	Other association, i.e. organism detected at source, but not linked directly to the vehicle or indistinguishable DNA or PFGE profiles	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
	c	Raised but not statistically significant relative risk or odds ratio	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
4		No evidence found, but logical deduction given circumstances	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.

Factors contributing to the outbreak

Risk factor type	Question	ARPHS Comments
Foodborne	Inadequate reheating of previously cooked food	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Foodborne	Improper storage prior to preparation	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Foodborne	Inadequate thawing	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Foodborne	Preparation too far in advance	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Foodborne	Undercooking	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Foodborne	Improper hot holding	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Foodborne	~ Inadequate or slow cooling or refrigeration	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Foodborne	~ Cross contamination due to improper handling or storage	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Foodborne	~ Cross contamination from an infected food handler	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Foodborne	Chemical contamination	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Foodborne	Use of ingredient from an unsafe source	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Foodborne	Use of untreated water in food preparation	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Foodborne	Consumption of unpasteurised milk	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Foodborne	Consumption of raw food	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Foodborne	Other factors (specify)	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Waterborne	~ Surface water of normal condition but inadequate treatment	ARPHS does not support the inclusion of this field as it is currently worded. "Water of normal condition" is not a clear category and required specific definition.
Waterborne	* Roof water of normal condition but inadequate treatment	ARPHS does not support the inclusion of this field as it is currently worded. "Water of normal condition" is not a clear category and required specific definition.
Waterborne	* Groundwater (non-secure) of normal condition but inadequate treatment	ARPHS does not support the inclusion of this field as it is currently worded. "Water of normal condition" is not a clear category and required specific definition.
Waterborne	* Source water of worse than usual condition: please specify	ARPHS does not support the inclusion of this field as it is currently worded. "Water of worse than usual condition" is not a clear category and required specific definition.
Waterborne	Treatment process failure	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Waterborne	* Inadequately treated water supply	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.

Waterborne	Untreated water supply	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Waterborne	Post treatment contamination	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Waterborne	* Recent or ongoing treatment failure	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Waterborne	~ Contamination of water storage	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Waterborne	Specify the implicated supply zone	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Person to Person	Inadequate vaccination coverage	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Person to Person	Inadequate vaccination effectiveness	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Person to Person	Exposure to infected person	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Person to Person	Poor hygiene of cases	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Person to Person	Excessively crowded living conditions	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Person to Person	Unprotected sexual activity	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Person to Person	* Compromised immune system (definition as per MoH seasonal influenza criteria)	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Environmental	~ Exposure to contaminated land	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Environmental	* Exposure to contaminated air (including ventilation)	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Environmental	* Exposure to contaminated built environments (including dwellings)	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Environmental	Exposure to infected animals or animal products	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Environmental	~ Exposure to contaminated water (recreational water)	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Environmental	~ Exposure to contaminated water (swimming / spa pools)	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Other	Other risk factor (specify)	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.

Risk factor questions to be removed

Risk factor type	Question	ARPHS Comments
Foodborne	Unknown factors	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Waterborne	Other factors (specify)	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Waterborne	Unknown factors	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Person to Person	Needle / syringe reuse by injecting drug users	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Environmental	Exposure to inadequately maintained swimming pool	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.
Other	Unknown factors	ARPHS agrees with ESR's recommendations.

Management of outbreak/control measures undertaken

Categorisation	Setting of Exposure (Current)	ARPHS Comments
Source	Closure (specify)	ARPHS suggests that this field is removed.
	Modification of procedure (specify)	ARPHS suggests that this field is removed.
	Cleaning, disinfection (specify)	ARPHS suggests that this field is removed.
	Removal (specify)	ARPHS suggests that this field is removed.
	Treatment (specify)	ARPHS suggests that this field is removed.
	Exclusion (specify)	ARPHS suggests that this field is removed.
	Isolation (specify)	ARPHS suggests that this field is removed.
	Health education and advice (specify)	ARPHS suggests that this field is removed.
	Health warning (specify)	ARPHS suggests that this field is removed.
Vehicle and vectors	Removal (specify)	ARPHS suggests that this field is removed.
	Treatment (specify)	ARPHS suggests that this field is removed.
Contacts and potential contacts	Chemoprophylaxis (specify)	ARPHS suggests that this field is removed.
	Vaccination (specify)	ARPHS suggests that this field is removed.
	Health education and advice (specify)	ARPHS suggests that this field is removed.
Other control measures (specify)		ARPHS suggests that this field is removed.