

# Improving Staff Safety

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## Situation

- During November 2022 and February 2023 Microbiology submitted 4 RIDDOR reports under Dangerous Occurrences – biological agents
- All were exposures to *Neisseria meningitidis*.
  - History of Health Safety Executive (HSE) investigation
- Confined to two Regional hub laboratories.

## Actions

- Proactively contacted the HSE for advice
  - Upsurge in this type of report which is associated with use of mass spectrometry for identification.
  - No need to continue to report exposures to this organism however there would be a requirement should staff develop disease from an exposure.
  - Requirement to continue to eliminate this type of exposure.
- Undertook investigations to identify root cause analysis and share learning outcomes and mitigating actions across the network.
- Temporary mitigations put in place while investigations in progress.

# Themes

## Staff

- Staff knowledge, experience and confidence
- Availability and dependence of Band 6 staff with specialist knowledge
- Unknown vaccination status of staff

# Mitigations

## Staff

- Emphasising the importance of continued adherence to universal precautions.
- Continued utilisation of trained and competent staff
- Specific training and education of staff to highlight when to suspect that *Neisseria meningitidis* might be present
- Raising awareness of common misidentifications
- Plan for paper regarding vaccination data sharing within microbiology

## Technology

- Technology identifying the exposure

## Technology

- Installation of additional microbiological safety cabinet at containment level 2.

## Process

- Not allowing staff to make mistakes safely

## Process

- Use of microbiological safety cabinet in processes when *Neisseria meningitidis* can be reasonably suspected.
- No longer requires reporting to HSE, unless staff unwell

## Review of action effectiveness

Nov 22 – RIDDOR Reportable

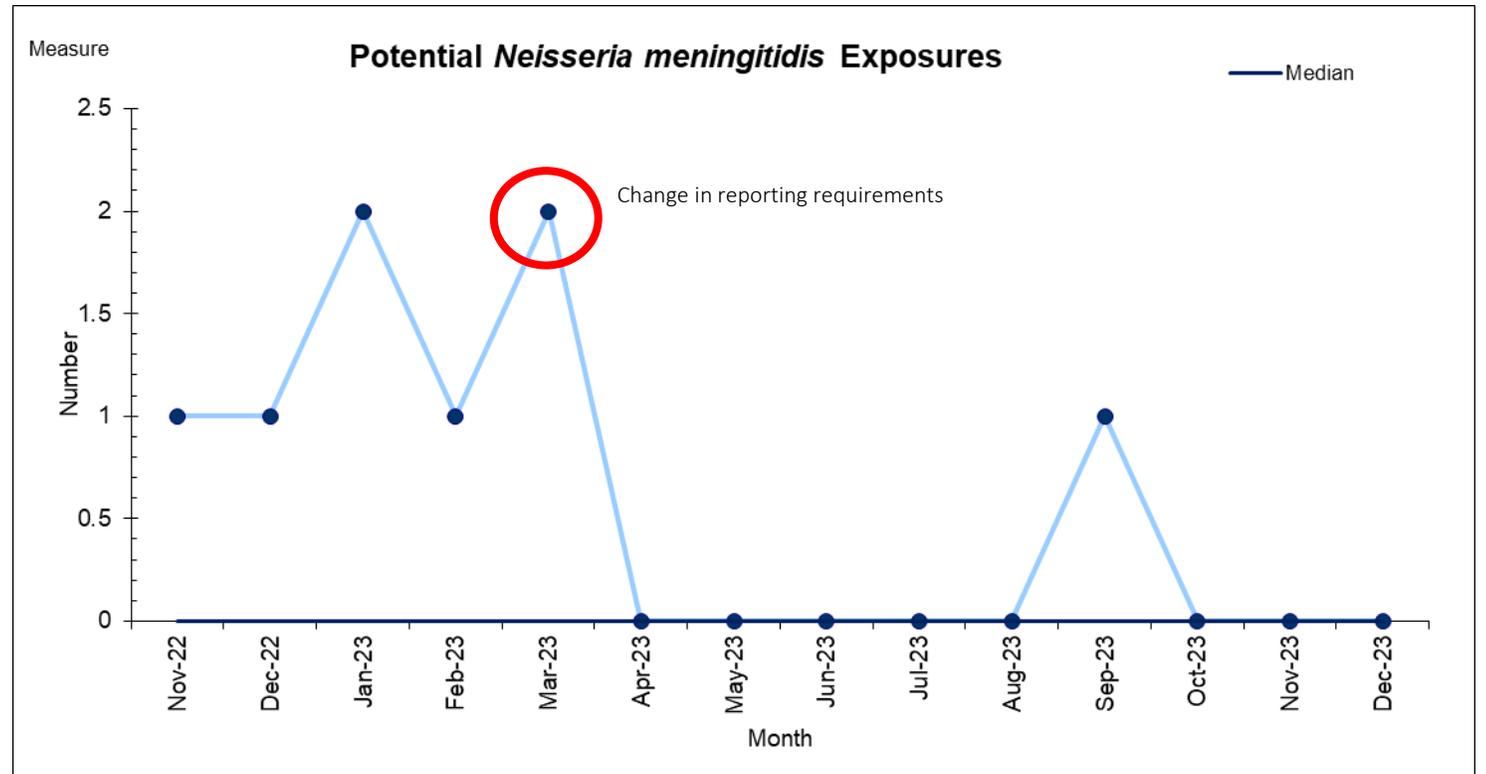
Dec 22 – RIDDOR Reportable

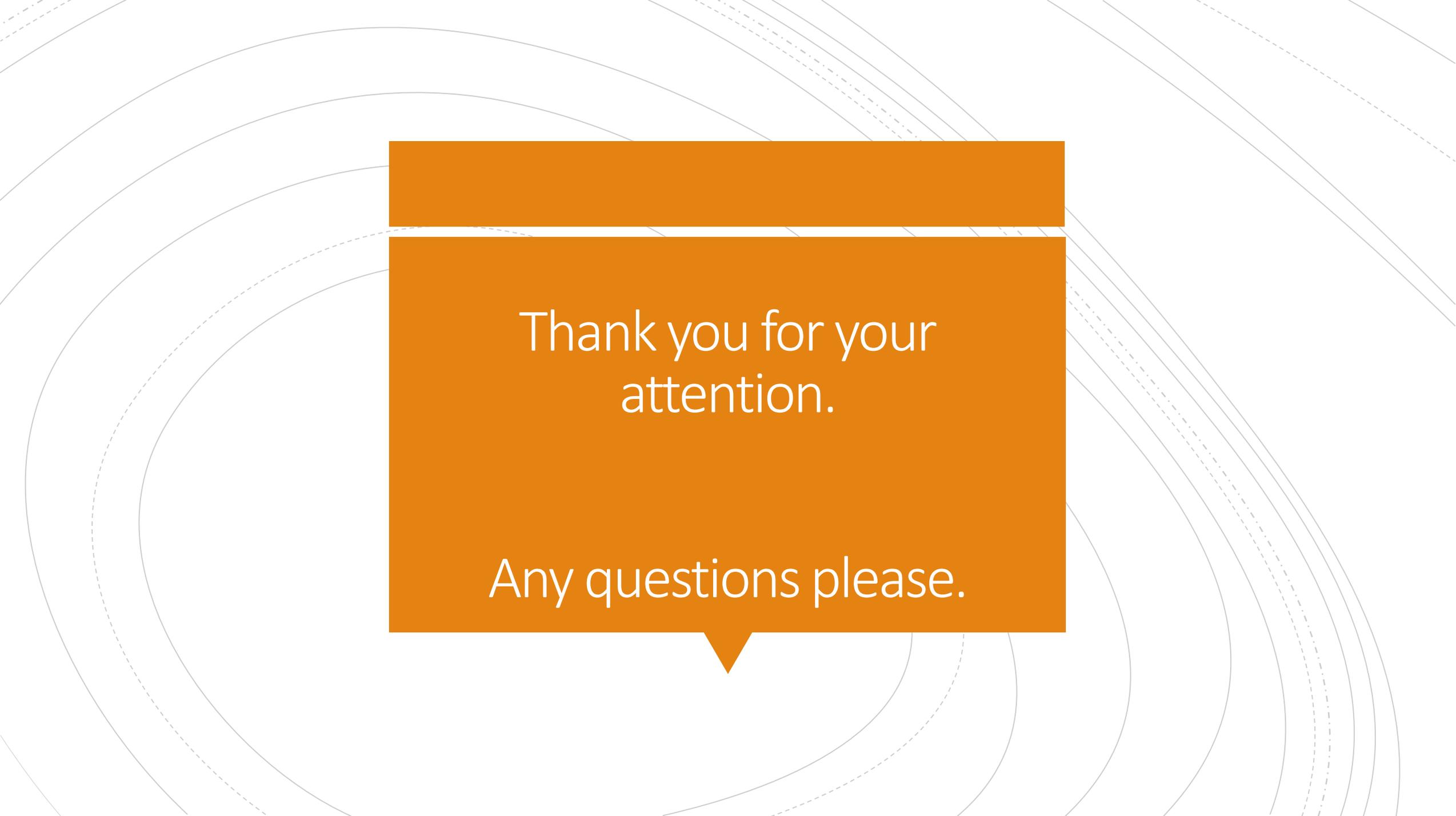
Jan 23 – 1 x RIDDOR Reportable, 1 x Near Miss

Feb 23 – RIDDOR Reportable

Mar 23 – Nil RIDDOR Reportable

Sep 23 – Nil RIDDOR Reportable



The background features a series of concentric, overlapping circles in light gray, some solid and some dashed, creating a ripple effect. In the center, there is a large orange callout box with a downward-pointing arrow at its bottom center. The text is white and centered within the box.

Thank you for your  
attention.

Any questions please.