



Infection Control Policy

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DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date	Author/Editor	Summary of Changes	Version No.
June 2007	Loran Easton	Original document	1
July 2008	Loran Easton	HIV/AIDS, Hep B & C Guidelines	2
October 2014	Robert Krawczyk	Reformatted to new corporate design. New Infection Control guidelines created	3
March 2019	Ashley Gray	Review	4
March 2022	Michele Cleland	Review	5

CONSULTATION AND RATIFICATION SCHEDULE

Name of Consultative Body	Date of Approval
Senior Management Team	March 2022

CROSS REFERENCE TO OTHER POLICIES/STRATEGIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with:	Detail
Policy 19	Health and Safety Policy
	Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
	Corporate Risk Strategy

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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's modern society all employees must be aware of the possible dangers and hazards they and the individuals they support, face from poor hygiene management control and healthcare associated infection (HAI). We all need to be aware as to how easily infections can develop and spread throughout both the work and home environment due to poor hygiene practices and standards. Associated with this is the need to be proactive in identifying the implementation of "best practice" guidelines, communication, monitoring and regular reviewing of an organisation's policy and procedures.

All employees must be made aware, through this Policy, Corporate Risk Management Strategy and processes, ongoing training and support through the supervision process, of the importance of maintaining their own personal hygiene standards and of those whom they support in order to meet effective Infection Control standards as established by NHS Scotland, the Scottish Government, the Care Inspectorate and local health trusts.

We must also ensure that appropriate levels of support, training and equipment are in place to enable staff to meet Infection Control practices. This will be achieved through accessing appropriate training, support, audit and monitoring systems, reporting procedures and personal practices.

Staff and volunteers must also read and maintain Risk Assessments and report any concerns over personal hygiene and Infection Control standards to the appropriate managers or, where available, Infection Control Key Workers.

As with all organisational Policies and Procedures, it is for Senior Managers to ensure that all staff are aware of this Policy, and that they attend the necessary training. It is also important that Managers lead by example and recognise their responsibility in ensuring and supporting any employees in respect to Infection Control.

This Policy and associated training will be implemented throughout the organisation and an Infection Control Group shall be created through selection and training of identified individuals throughout our services. The Infection Control Group shall be responsible for the overview of training, monitoring, audits, reviewing and the Quality Assurance processes of this new strategy. The Infection Control Group will also be responsible to compile an annual written report on the effectiveness, currency and implementation of the organisation's Infection Control Policy and Procedures.

2. PURPOSE

This policy is produced to describe management arrangements for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees in respect to Infection Control.

3. LEGISLATION

The general duties of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the specific duties of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply to any area related to Health and Safety. These require the identification of the hazards of the work, assessment of any significant risks involved, and devising and implementing safe working arrangements to ensure that the risks are either eliminated or adequately controlled.

The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002 are relevant to this policy and all staff must ensure they utilise the equipment accordingly to reduce the risk of further infection spreading within the workplace, workforce, service user group and the local community

4. MANDATORY

The NHS Code of Practice for the local management of hygiene and healthcare associated infection (HAI) is applicable throughout Scotland, including the independent and voluntary sector.

Primecare Health LTD will also adopt the Standard Infection Control Precautions (SICPS) as the NHS recommended best practice format to apply in respect of Infection Control practices.

Primecare Health LTD also recognises that the joint NHS/Care Inspectorate standards contain essential recommendations which it is required to attain in respect to Infection Control and Hygiene standards.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

Departmental Heads/Managers Responsibilities

Managers are responsible for:

The assessment of risk in relation to individual service users, the workplace and activities of their staff to identify potential hazards, plus communicate information and findings to others in relation to Infection Control.

- If an individual has already been identified as posing a potential risk, a review/assessment should be made to ensure that the risk is reduced as far as is reasonably practicable. In addition, arrangements for the individual's care and the protection of staff are agreed and put in place.

- Managers must ensure that the risks associated with Infection Control are considered at all times.
- Managers must ensure that a suitable supply of appropriate PPE is supplied and available for all employees within their services
- Local NHS policies and plans, in respect to Infection Control, will be available in each sector and managers will ensure that staff are aware of them, in support of the organisation's overall approach to reducing the risks from Infection.
- Managers are responsible to notify the Care Inspectorate of any infection outbreak
- Reviewing existing local arrangements for controlling and reducing Infection risks and implementing any additional measures that may be necessary.
- Ensuring that staff are informed on general issues relating to Infection Control.
- Ensuring all employees/volunteers undertake appropriate training and that staff training records are maintained.
- Monitoring and reporting of all accidents and incidents in respect of Infection control, within their areas of responsibility and act to reduce the risk of repetition of similar episodes.
- Communicating any developments or amendments on Infection Control which occur internally or externally.
- Ensure that local Infection Control Key workers are selected and supported.
- Ensure that effective outbreak plans are in place and communicated to all employees
- Ensure that effective contingency plans are created in the event of any outbreak, and that all staff are aware as to their individual responsibilities.

Employees Responsibilities

- Employees have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work and to co-operate with the organisation in meeting its legal obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- Employees are responsible for complying with the organisation's policies and procedures including this policy and procedure for Infection Control.
- Employees are responsible to ensure their own and their colleagues and service users health and well-being by wearing the appropriate PPE where it is available
- Employees must ensure that they undertake all training provided for them by the organisation in relation to Infection Control and Food Hygiene, including regular refresher training.
- Employees must be aware that their behaviour and bad practices, can possibly increase risks associated to Infection.
- Any employee who is aware of a potential risk associated with an individual must inform their line manager so that preventative action may be taken and information shared appropriately.
- Employees are responsible for and encouraged to report all episodes, incidents and any areas of concern re individual health issues in respect of infection/communicable diseases.
- Staff who have been ill, from any form of communicable disease, should not be supporting service users, until they have been clear of symptoms for a 48 hour period. This is to ensure that any subsequent infection is not transferred to service users or work colleagues.

Infection Control Key Worker Responsibilities

- Promote Infection Control awareness at local levels.
- Act as a resource and role model for colleagues to contact.
- Assist/advise in the early detection of outbreaks.
- Alert management to changes in practice which impact on Infection Control Policies and Procedures and service delivery.
- Will require administrative time and support to meet the requirements of their role.
- Investigate and report any bad practices/Infection Control issues with/to the relevant manager and Infection Control Key Worker Group.
- Undertake monthly checks of compliance with good practice.
- Undertake 3 monthly statistical audits on local Infection Control issues, e.g. number of reported cases, actions taken, recommendations. Remembering that the organisation's Confidentiality policy applies at all times.
- Ensure service Infection Control workers record and return completed Infection Control audits.
- Ensure all services have locally, specific Infection Control plans in place which detail emergency/contingency plans and emergency contact numbers.
- Collaborate between management, services and local NHS Departments of Public Health, over any issues of Infection Control at a local level.
- Have access to all current and relevant legislation and advice relevant to Infection Control.

Infection Control Group Responsibilities

- Promote Infection Control awareness at local levels.
- Agree the terms of reference and accountability arrangements in respect of Infection Control.
- Will meet at least quarterly and report on all Infection Control audits.
- Will circulate minutes to all managers and teams, making them available to all staff and service users.
- Will draft a written annual report on the organisation's Infection Control Policy, recommending any amendments to the Infection Control Policy and Procedures as required.
- Provide advice and support to Infection Control Key Workers.
- Endorse the annual Infection Control Programme.

6. PROCEDURES

Further information on individual procedures can be found in the Primecare Health LTD Infection Control Guidelines. The Guidelines also contain information on the nine elements based upon the Standard Infection Control Precautions available from the Model Infection Control Policies issued in 2007 by the Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI) team of NHS Education, Scotland.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Training of all employees in Infection Control Awareness shall be delivered, monitored and evaluated by the Infection Control group.

The effectiveness and application of Infection Control procedures and systems will also be the responsibility of the Infection Control Group.

Infection Control Group will ensure regular audits, investigations and reports, in regard to Infection Control are implemented, maintained and communicated appropriately.

The Infection Control Group will report any legislation amendments, practice developments, quality assurance issues, to the Directors in a written annual report and ongoing regular audits.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

Primecare Health LTD seeks to reduce/control risks of infection through proactive risk management systems (risk assessments, workplace procedures) along with effective communications and appropriate, approved training.

During the risk assessment process it is important to include employees, as they are a valuable source of information and advice. This will also help to ensure that all relevant hazards have been identified and appropriate controls completed. The risk assessment process will also identify employees who may be at a higher risk from infection, such as: younger workers, expectant mothers or staff members with ill health etc. Once control measures have been implemented, checks should be made to ensure that they are used and the risk assessments reviewed periodically to ensure they are still adequate.

When a risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be carried out safely, arrangements for providing help or back up should be put in place. Where there is an identified risk of infection, the line manager should inform the organisation of any risks and the control measures that should be implemented, thereby proactively assessing the potential risk to staff and service users.

Risk assessments will also help to decide the right level of supervision and support required. Where high-risk activities are identified at least one other person may need to be present or be able to be contacted.

Where identified, all staff will utilise the correct Personal Protective Equipment and ensure that strict personal and environmental hygiene procedures are maintained, and recorded.

9. SAFE WORKING PRACTICES

Following the completion of the risk assessment the information collated in the process should be used to establish safe working arrangements for all employees and service users. These arrangements will meet organisational and local Policies and Procedures, to establish specific safe working practices in each area. Procedures should include limits on what can and cannot be done in respect of Infection Control. Once established the safe working practices must be readily available to staff, via supervision or team meetings.

Prevention of infection requires knowledge of the chain of infection, and as to how to prevent infections spreading through the application of agreed standards of best practice.

Identifying and maintaining good personal hygiene standards are important in protecting both vulnerable service users and staff.

Suitable wound dressings, disposable gloves (none latex), hand washes and disinfectant solutions (to clean wounds) will be made available with all first aid supplies. Spillage kits will also be made available, along with laundry bags to reduce the risk of infection.

The organisation will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all services produce clear local guidelines, relevant to special needs and resources, detailing how the Infection Control policy will be implemented within that service area, including specific guidelines on service delivery practices.

10. BLOOD-BORNE VIRUSES

Primecare Health LTD recognises that there is concern amongst employees about communicable diseases which are blood borne, such as HIV, Aids and Hepatitis B & C. The only danger from blood borne diseases is by direct blood to blood contact.

When there is or has been a blood spillage then adequate precautions must be taken to prevent blood to blood contact in accordance with the organisation's Infection Control Policy and guidance document.

The organisation recognises that employees and none- employees may be carriers of these viruses or have the full blown disease.

Therefore Primecare Health LTD recommends that all employees involved in direct care support recognise that immunisation is a sensible precaution. Immunisation will be undertaken at no cost to the employee.

Virus Carriers

Primecare Health LTD recognises that any employee or member of the public may be a virus carrier of blood borne disease viruses such as the AIDS disease virus, HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) or Hepatitis 'B' virus. For this reason the organisation will not discriminate in any way against such virus carrier who may let it be known that they have been confirmed as being a carrier of such a virus.

Primecare requires that a confidential counselling service be provided for any employee who is concerned about AIDS, Hepatitis 'B' or related matters. This includes referral to adequate medical services if specialised medical advice is sought by the employee.

Disease Sufferers - Employees

Primecare recognises that employees contracting AIDS may require special consideration whereas any employee contracting Hepatitis 'B' will be adequately catered for within the existing arrangements for sickness absence.

The normal procedures for determining medical fitness on recruitment, through consideration by Occupational Health services for all post applicants, will operate and other applicants who are deemed to be medically fit at the time of interview will not have an offer of work withdrawn because they have HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis B or C

Primecare will not require those with AIDS to inform the organisation.

Any employee developing a blood borne disease may be off work during periods when affected by an opportunistic infection. Between infections the employee will not be prevented in any way from returning to work.

If the employee is not capable of returning to a particular work situation then redeployment will be considered in the same way as for any employee in a similar situation due to some other medical disability.

Primecare will ensure that a confidential counselling service is available for any employee concerned in any way with their personal involvement with either disease, or indeed any other medical/social/personal problem.

Disease Sufferers - Non-Employees

Primecare recognises that special arrangements require to be made for categories of employees most likely to come into contact with AIDS or Hepatitis 'B' disease sufferers.

Primecare recognises that there is a requirement to educate employees in both AIDS and Hepatitis 'B' particularly those employees who may be in contact with disease sufferers.

Hepatitis B

The Hepatitis B virus is a highly infectious virus and has the potential to cause acute illness to those whom contract it. In a few cases liver failure will develop. It can also result in the infected individual becoming a carrier of the virus which can consequently infect their close relations, and in the occupational environment transmit the virus to persons with ASD or work colleagues through infected blood and other body fluids.

Primecare is aware that at present there is no immunisation against the AIDS virus but there are effective preventive treatments possible against Hepatitis 'B'. These are through a range of genetically engineered vaccines which have few potential side effects and have an excellent safety record.

All direct care staff will be advised to consult their own General Practitioner for appropriate vaccination, at no cost to themselves.

New employees who have previously had a Hepatitis B vaccination will, with, their consent, either have their vaccination details sought from their previous employer, or be asked to provide proof of vaccination from their own General Practitioner.

Should staff fail to respond satisfactorily to a Hepatitis vaccine, they would still be allowed to continue in their chosen field, but would be counselled at this point in respect of the procedures to be adopted if they were found to be infected by Hepatitis B. The organisation will also review their circumstances on an individual basis to enable that person to function successfully in an alternative role. In a few cases, it might not be possible to consider an

alternative and after carefully considering avenues for redeployment, consideration might have to be given, through advice from HR, as to termination of employment on the grounds of medical disability.

11. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required.

Important Links

https://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/standards_and_guidelines/standards/ipc_standards.aspx

<https://www.nipcm.scot.nhs.uk/>

<https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/news/get-the-guidance-in-your-pocket/>

Important Contacts

West Lothian and Edinburgh Health Protection Team

Office hours - 0300 790 6264

Out of hours - 0131 536 1000

Email - health.protection@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk