



# BEYOND LIMITS

Beyond the limits of conventional support

## Infectious Diseases and Control Policy

This policy sets out the organisation's approach to preventing, identifying and managing infectious diseases. Its aim is to protect the health, dignity and wellbeing of the people we support, staff, families and visitors while enabling the people we support to live meaningful lives with minimal disruption wherever possible.



## INTRODUCTION

**The Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of consistent infection control practices. It highlighted how quickly infections can spread in community settings and how essential early action, clear communication and personal responsibility are in keeping people safe. This policy reflects those lessons while focusing on person-centred practice.**

## SCOPE

**This policy applies to:**

- **All employees (permanent, casual and agency)**
- **Volunteers**
- **Visitors and professionals attending the homes of people we support and our office premises**

## PRINCIPLES OF INFECTION CONTROL

1. **PREVENTION FIRST** – it is far easier to prevent the spread of infection than to control it once established
2. **PROPORTIONATE ACTION** – Measures should balance risk with quality of life and avoid unnecessary restrictions
3. **DIGNITY AND RIGHTS** – Infection control measures must protect choice, privacy, and autonomy
4. **LEARNING FROM COVID-19** – Clear communication, rapid response and consistency of practice help protect everyone
5. **SHARED RESPONSIBILITY** - Every person has a role in reducing infection risks

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### ORGANISATION

- **Provide policies, training, and equipment for safe practice**
- **Maintain procedures for reporting and managing infectious incidents**
- **Communicate updates promptly to staff, people supported and families**



## LEADERS

- **Ensure staff follow infection control procedures**
- **Maintain records of training, audits, and incidents**
- **Coordinate responses to outbreaks or confirmed cases**

## STAFF

- **Follow all infection prevention protocols**
- **Report symptoms, risks or concerns immediately**
- **Promote good hygiene and safe practices with the people we support**

## GENERAL INFECTION CONTROL PRECAUTIONS

These universal precautions apply at all times, not just during outbreaks:

### HAND HYGIENE

**Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before/after direct care, after bathroom use, after touching and working with bodily fluids and before food preparations. This [video](#) provides comprehensive guidance on the correct procedure for washing hands.**

**Use alcohol-based hand sanitiser when handwashing is not immediately available.**

### PERSONAL HYGIENE

**Ensure good standards of personal hygiene**

**Keep all cuts and abrasions covered with a waterproof dressing**

**Ensure razors, toothbrushes, flannels are not shared and that they are regularly changed/renewed**

**If you consider you have contracted an infectious disease, report it to your line manager.**

### RESPIRATORY HYGIENE

**Encourage coughing/sneezing into tissues or elbows. Dispose of tissues immediately and perform handwashing.**



## **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)**

**Use PPE appropriate to the task (gloves, aprons, masks if required)**

**Follow proper procedures for putting on and removing PPE. See guidance [here](#)**

## **CLEANING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE**

**Regular cleaning of high-touch surfaces (door handles, switched, taps etc)**

**Ensure all surfaces likely to come into contact with potentially infected materials are regularly cleaned and thoroughly disinfected**

**Routine deep cleaning in line with organisational schedules (always follow the working policy and safety assessments)**

**Always use approved disinfectants**

**Use disposable cloths and use separate cloths for kitchen, bath/shower, toilet**

## **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

**Dispose of clinical or contaminated waste in appropriate bags/containers.**

**Double bag where appropriate**

**Always follow local authority guidance for disposing of sharps, dressings and infectious materials. For more details see Appendix One at the end of this policy.**

## **LAUNDRY**

**Handle used laundry carefully; avoid shaking items**

**Wash items at the highest appropriate temperature**



## VACCINATION AND IMMUNISATION

**Vaccination and immunisation play a vital role in protecting both staff and the people we support from infectious diseases. We work closely with people who may be older, clinically vulnerable or those who might be living with long-term conditions, meaning even common infections can have serious consequences.**

**Staying up to date with recommended vaccines reduces the likelihood of becoming unwell ourselves, limits the chance of passing infections between people and helps maintain safe and consistent support. As such Beyond Limits encourages all staff to receive seasonal vaccinations (e.g. Flu and Covid-19 when advised) as this helps to contribute to a safer working environment for everyone.**

**We understand there may be very credible reasons why someone would choose not to receive vaccinations. We encourage anyone with any issues to seek out their line manager at the earliest opportunity to enable a dialogue to take place with a view to reaching an amicable resolution.**

**All staff should be aware that refusal to participate in a vaccination scheme may mean it is not possible to carry on working in your current service. This might be because the person you are working with is clinically vulnerable and the risk would be too great. At these times, we would endeavour to find work for you in another service but if this is not possible, you should be aware that your employment may be terminated.**

## IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING INFECTIOUS DISEASE RISKS

Staff must report the following immediately to their manager or any other senior colleague:

- Fever, persistent cough, vomiting, diarrhoea, rashes or any unexplained illness in any of the people receiving support
- Any confirmed infectious disease in a household or visiting relative
- Staff illness that may indicate infectious disease (e.g. Flu, Covid-19, Norovirus)



Line managers may seek further advice from:

GP or NHS 111

**Public Health England/UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)**

**Local Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) teams**

**For more details see Appendix One at the end of this policy**

## WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF AN INCIDENT OR OUTBREAK

### INITIAL RESPONSE

1. Isolate the risk – support the person to remain in their room or a separate area if appropriate and in line with the person’s working policy/safety assessment
2. Use PPE – staff must wear the required PPE when providing care and support
3. Increase hygiene measures – enhanced cleaning of all shared areas and high-touch surfaces
4. Monitor symptoms – record temperature, oxygen levels (if applicable) and note any changes

### COMMUNICATION

**Inform the Registered Manager immediately – [Kathleen.griffiths@beyondlimits-uk.org](mailto:Kathleen.griffiths@beyondlimits-uk.org)**

**Notify family/next of kin if the person receiving support becomes unwell (Always follow the working policy with regards to communicating with family contacts)**

**Follow all guidance received from UKHSA regarding reporting requirements for notifiable diseases**



## **TESTING (IF RELEVANT)**

**Follow current national or local guidance for infection testing (e.g. Covid-19, Flu, Norovirus)**

**Support individuals to test only in line with their consent or in line with best interest decisions if a person lacks capacity**

## **PEOPLE WE SUPPORT TESTING**

**Maintain comfort, dignity and emotional support**

**Continue to do meaningful activities where safe to do so**

**Avoid unnecessary restrictions – isolation should be proportionate and regularly reviewed**

## **STAFF MANAGEMENT**

**Symptomatic staff must not attend work**

**Any return to work should be in line with guidance from NHS or UKHSA guidance and our own internal processes**

**Staff working across teams and agency staff should be restricted from moving between households during outbreaks**

## **ENDING AN INCIDENT OR OUTBREAK**

**An outbreak may be ended when:**

- **A defined period has passed with no new cases (as per UKHSA guidance)**
- **The affected person has recovered and no longer poses a risk**
- **Cleaning and decontamination have been completed**

**Managers should:**

- **Think about the need for a debrief – was there anything that could have been done differently**
- **Make any changes to safety assessments, working policies etc**
- **Communicate to staff, people supported and families**



## TRAINING AND COMPETENCY

### All staff will receive training on

- Hand hygiene
- PPE use
- Recognising signs of infection
- Cleaning and waste disposal

Refresher training will be provided annually or following major updates or changes to guidance.



## APPENDIX ONE

**Public Health England: [Public Health England - GOV.UK](#)**

**UK Health Security Agency: [UK Health Security Agency - GOV.UK](#)**

**For guidance on Winter vaccinations and winter health see [here](#)**

**Infection Control in Plymouth is managed by the Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust, specifically through their '[Infection Prevention and Management team](#)'. They can be contacted on 01752 432115**

- **Infection Prevention and Control for Devon – [Click Here](#)**
- **Infection Prevention and Control for Cornwall – [Click Here](#)**
- **Infection Prevention and Control for Somerset – [Click Here](#)**
- **Infection Prevention and Control for Dorset – [Click Here](#)**

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