

# Infection Control Policy and Procedure

## Policy Statement

Infection control is the name given to a wide range of policies, procedures and techniques intended to prevent the spread of infectious diseases among staff, service users and communities. All of the staff working in a domiciliary care service are at risk of infection or of spreading infection, especially if their role brings them into contact with blood or bodily fluids such as urine, faeces, vomit or sputum. Such substances may well contain pathogens which can be spread if staff do not take adequate precautions.

Zenith Care Recruitment understands that adherence to strict guidelines on infection control is of paramount importance in ensuring the safety of both service users and staff. It also believes that cleanliness of premises and good, basic hygiene is the most powerful weapon against infection.

Communicable diseases refer to a range of diseases that can be spread from one person to another. Diseases are described as “healthcare-associated infections” where they are contracted as a result of care or treatment.

Communicable diseases are the responsibility of Public Health and are managed by local health protection teams.

Zenith Care Recruitment aims through this policy to ensure that:

* service users, their families and staff are as safe as possible from acquiring infections from any source
* all Zenith Care Recruitment care staff are aware of and put into practice the basic principles of infection control.

Adherence to strict guidelines on infection control is of paramount importance in ensuring the safety of service users and staff. Good, basic hygiene is the most powerful weapon against infection, particularly with respect to cleaning and handwashing.

Zenith Care Recruitment works in collaboration with all local infection control agencies to maintain the highest standards of infection control at all times and ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, service users and staff are protected from the spread of infection at all times.

## Legal Considerations

Zenith Care Recruitment will adhere to all relevant legislation, including:

* the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974
* the Public Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 1988
* the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)

Under the above legislation, and associated codes of practice, Zenith Care Recruitment understands its legal and moral duty to ensure the health and safety of both staff and service users and to protect them, wherever practicable, from dangerous substances in the workplace, including the risk of transmission of infections.

In addition to the above, the home must also comply with the Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). These place a duty on the care provider to report outbreaks of certain diseases as well as accidents such as needle-stick accidents.

## Guidance

Zenith Care Recruitment seeks at all times to comply with evidence-based best practice in infection control, particularly with the *Health and Social Care Act 2008 Code of Practice on the Prevention and Control of Infection and Related Guidance* published by the Department of Health and Social Care (the Hygiene Code).

Compliance with this guidance is an effective way to help it to meet its regulatory requirements with the Care Quality Commission under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, particularly the infection control provisions in Regulation 12: Safe Care and Treatment.

In addition, the agency will comply with all other relevant best practice infection control guidance.

For instance, applicable guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) includes:

* CG139: *Healthcare-associated Infections: Prevention and Control in Primary and Community Care* (updated February 2017)
* PH36: *Healthcare-associated Infections: Prevention and Control* (November 2011).

Specialist advice and support will be obtained from the local public health protection team.

## Infection Control Responsibilities

* Kechiyere Anyanwu is the infection control lead for Zenith Care Recruitment.
* Kechiyere Anyanwu is responsible for infection control risk assessment and staff training.
* Staff are required to make infection control a key priority and to act at all times in a way that is compatible with safe, modern and effective infection control practice.
* Service Manager and team leaders are responsible for ensuring that staff working in the homes of service users have access to sufficient facilities and supplies of appropriate equipment to ensure that they can implement effective infection control procedures and techniques.
* Any staff who do not feel they have access to sufficient facilities and supplies of appropriate equipment to ensure that they can implement effective infection control procedures and techniques have a duty to inform their line manager or supervisor.

## Covid-19 Infection and Prevention Measures

Zenith Care Recruitment will comply fully with all official public health guidance and restrictions introduced as part of the national response to the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic. Zenith Care Recruitment is aware that a range of infection prevention and control measures have been required. At various points in the pandemic these have included a requirement for infected persons to self-isolate themselves, increased hygiene measures and enhanced environmental cleaning, particularly the regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. In adult social care settings, due to the vulnerability of service users, there have also been additional requirements for the wearing of personal protective equipment (such as face masks), etc.

Key guidance for domiciliary care agencies in England includes:

* *Infection Prevention and Control for Seasonal Respiratory Infections in Health and Care Settings (Including SARS-CoV-2) for Winter 2021 to 2022*, UK Health Security Agency
* *COVID-19: How to Work Safely in Domiciliary Care* — a collection of guidance relating to the use of PPE
* *Coronavirus (COVID-19): Provision of Home Care* — general guidance, including infection prevention and control.

All Zenith Care Recruitment staff are required to comply with formal Covid-19 restrictions and to keep themselves updated with changes as they occur.

Zenith Care Recruitment believes that general adherence to high standards of infection prevention and control is the best way to prevent the person-to-person spread of pathogens such as coronavirus and maximise the safely of staff, service users and their families. To achieve this , Zenith Care Recruitment’s infection control policies and procedures will be implemented in full, especially those related to effective hand hygiene, sanitisation and environmental cleaning.

Service Manager and Team leaders will make sure that people:

* cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their sleeve (not their hands) when they cough or sneeze
* put used tissues in the bin immediately
* wash their hands with soap and water regularly for 20 seconds and use hand sanitiser gel (at least 60% alcohol) if soap and water are not available
* try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
* avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
* wear face coverings, masks and personal protective equipment (PPE) as required
* clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Staff should comply fully with hand sanitisation policies and procedures. Managers will ensure that policies are supported by the provision of appropriate resources such as hand sanitiser gels that contain at least 60% alcohol for home care staff.

The advice should be passed on to service users. It is important that care staff adhere to high standards of infection control practice while in services users’ homes and that they ask service users to do so too. Regular cleaning of frequently touched hard surfaces with a suitable disinfectant and cleanser should be carried out.

Zenith Care Recruitment will comply fully with all existing infection control and prevention guidance, including the Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of Practice on the Prevention and Control of Infections.

## Effective Handwashing

Zenith Care Recruitment believes that, consistent with modern infection control evidence and knowledge, handwashing is the single most important method of preventing the spread of infection.

The majority of cross-infection or infection spread in a care setting is caused by unwashed or poorly washed hands, which provide a transfer route for microorganisms.

*All staff* should therefore ensure that their hands are thoroughly washed and dried:

* between seeing every service user where direct contact is involved, no matter how minor the contact
* after handling any body fluids or waste or soiled items
* after handling specimens
* before putting on personal protective equipment (PPE) and after removing it
* after using the toilet
* after blowing their nose
* before handling foodstuffs.

Zenith Care Recruitment is aware that, hand washing can be difficult if staff are placed in a setting that lacks hygienic facilities. In such cases, managers must assess the risks and do the best they can to introduce adequate facilities which allow acceptable levels of hand hygiene.

## Antiseptic Alcohol Rubs and Gels

Ordinary soap is considered to be perfectly effective for routine use in removing dirt and reducing levels of transient microorganisms on the skin to acceptably safe levels. However, also available for additional hand hygiene use are antiseptic rubs and sanitiser gels.

Hand rubs are anti-microbial preparations and sanitising gels applied to the hands to reduce the number of viable microorganisms present. Hand rubs are usually alcohol-based and come in a variety of dispensers and tubes. Gels and rubs containing 60–80% alcohol are most effective in killing microorganisms.

Zenith Care Recruitment staff will be provided with portable alcohol hand rubs which they should take with them during any home visits. These should be used in situations where adequate handwashing facilities are unavailable. They can also be used for additional hand hygiene.

Additionally, hand gels will be provided in washrooms and at entrances and exits in the agencies’ offices.

Importantly, antiseptic hand rubs are less effective where hands are visibly soiled. If hands are soiled the dirt should be washed off first. After hand rubbing or handwashing staff should let their hands dry completely.

## Cleaning and Procedures for the Cleaning of Spillages

Staff must treat every spillage of body fluids or body waste as quickly as possible and as potentially infectious. They should wear protective gloves and aprons and use disposable wipes wherever possible. Eye protection should also be used if there is risk of splashing.

Staff should note that chlorine releasing disinfectants such as hypochlorite should never be used directly on urine spills as this can release irritant chlorine gas. Urine should be cleaned up using towels and the area cleaned with detergent before applying disinfectant.

Soft furnishings (eg carpets) may be damaged by disinfectant products such as sodium hypochlorite. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recommends that contaminated carpets that cannot tolerate chemical disinfection should be cleaned using a detergent and steam cleaned.

When using chlorine releasing agents, staff should always follow the manufacturer’s guidelines. Zenith Care Recruitment, all such procedures should be subject to an appropriate COSHH risk assessment.

Mops and buckets should never be used for cleaning up body fluid spills.)

## The Handling and Disposal of Clinical and Soiled Waste

1. All clinical waste should be disposed of in such a way that is compliant with the law and with locally agreed arrangements and protocols.
2. Waste that may be hazardous, such as sharps and clinical waste, should not be disposed of in standard waste.
3. Non-clinical waste should be disposed of in normal black plastic bags.

## The Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Clothing

1. Adequate and suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing is provided.
2. All staff should who are at risk of coming into direct contact with body fluids or who are performing personal care tasks must use disposable gloves and disposable aprons.
3. The responsibility for ordering and ensuring that supplies of gloves and aprons are readily available and accessible lies with the Service Manager
4. Any member of staff who suspects that they or a service user might be suffering from an allergic reaction to the latex gloves provided should stop using them immediately and inform their line manager. They should then consult their GP.

Zenith Care Recruitment, during the Covid-19 pandemic, all use of PPE for infection prevention and control purposes will be based on the latest guidance from the UK Health Security Agency, *Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Resource for Care Workers Delivering Domiciliary Care During Sustained COVID-19 Transmission in England*. The guidance states that:

* when within two metres of the client and carrying out direct personal care or domestic duties, staff should wear disposable gloves, a disposable apron, a single use fluid-repellent surgical mask (Type IIR) and eye protection — the guidance states that the recommendations apply whenever within two metres of anyone (including the client or household members) irrespective of whether they have Covid-19 symptoms or have tested positive
* when more than two metres from a client undertaking domestic duties and not delivering personal care, staff should wear disposable gloves and a Type I, II or Type IIR surgical mask — a disposable apron and eye protection should be worn where there is a risk of splashing of body fluids or contamination to the eyes (for example, when someone coughs, sneezes or spits).

All Zenith Care staff must read our policy and procedure for using PPE safely and effectively.

## The Handling and Storage of Specimens

1. Specimens should be collected only if ordered by a GP.
2. All specimens should be treated with equally high levels of caution.
3. Specimens should be labelled clearly and packed into self-sealing bags before being taken to the doctors.
4. Non-sterile gloves should be worn when handling the specimen containers and hands should be washed afterwards.

## The Disposal of Sharps (eg Used Needles and Ampoules)

1. Zenith Care Recruitment complies fully with the Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013 and associated guidance from the HSE, according to which the unnecessary use of medical sharps should be avoided wherever possible.
2. Where sharps are used, “safer sharps” are employed wherever possible, such as safer syringes, etc.
3. Sharps, typically needles or blades are disposed of in proper, purpose-built sharps disposal containers complying with BS 7320.
4. Sharps are never disposed of in ordinary or clinical waste bags.
5. Staff should never resheath needles.
6. Boxes should never be overfilled.
7. When full, boxes should be sealed, marked as hazardous waste and clearly labelled with the service user’s details.
8. Staff should never attempt to force sharps waste into an overfilled box.
9. Used, filled boxes should be stored securely until collected for incineration according to individual arrangements.

In the event of an injury with a used or potentially contaminated needle:

1. staff should wash the area immediately and encourage bleeding if the skin is broken
2. staff should report the injury to their line manager immediately and ensure that an incident form is filled in
3. staff should make an urgent appointment to see a GP or, if none is available, Accident and Emergency
4. managers should record and investigate the incident and ensure that the member of staff is offered appropriate “post-exposure prophylaxis” and counselling as required.

## Preventing and Controlling Cross-Contamination from Electronic Device Handling

With the increasing use of key-board based computers and portable electronic devices such as smart phones and touch pads as care practice tools, research shows that there is a relatively low but identifiable risk of cross-infection from the collection and transmission of bacteria and micro-organisms on and from these devices that require risk assessing and controlling. There will be clearly greater risks of cross-contamination from their use in environments where the risks of contamination are also higher such as with incidence of infectious illness, for example.

Zenith Care Recruitment adopts a common-sense approach to the prevention and control of possible cross infection from the use of electronic devices in the course of daily work, which is consistent with other infection control measures. These are:

1. To ensure effective handwashing procedures are followed, which will reduce the risk of contamination on to the device.
2. To keep the device suitably covered when not in use with either an easily disposable plastic cover or cover that can be easily wiped after each use or similar protective materials, depending on the type of device used. (Here it should be noted that any cover could also run the risk of contamination).
3. Regular eg daily cleaning of the device, or after use in high risk situations, usually by wiping with a suitable cloth, which is usually sufficient, or such as an alcohol based wipe — taking into account the vulnerability of the product to be damaged by the cleaning methods adopted, and always following many manufacturer’s instructions.
4. Where necessary, eg in high risk situations the device user will be encouraged to set alerts to remind them of the necessity to keep their devices clean.
5. All staff will be expected to keep their devices and equipment used in service delivery as clean and free from infection as possible in line with this policy.
6. In very high risk situations and circumstances, Zenith Care Recruitment might stop the use of electronic devices to help deliver care to cut out any contribution they might make to the spread of any infections or infectious illnesses; though this measure is likely to be rare.

## Reporting

RIDDOR requires an organisation to report the outbreak of notifiable diseases to the HSE. Notifiable diseases include: cholera, food poisoning, smallpox, typhus, dysentery, measles, meningitis, mumps, rabies, rubella, tetanus, typhoid fever, viral haemorrhagic fever, hepatitis, whooping cough, leptospirosis, tuberculosis and yellow fever.

Records of any such outbreak must be kept, specifying dates and times and a completed disease report form must be sent to the HSE.

* In the event of an incident, the Service Manager is responsible for informing the HSE.
* RIDDOR forms are kept here at Zenith Care Recruitment, 119 Ivyhouse Ropad Dagenham RM9 5RP
* In the event of the suspected outbreak of an infectious disease, the local public health protection team should be contacted immediately.

The HSE has clarified its position regarding RIDDOR reports associated with the coronavirus pandemic. HSE states that the reporting requirements relating to cases of illness or deaths from Covid-19 under RIDDOR apply only to occupational exposure, that is, as a result of a person’s work. There is no requirement under RIDDOR to report incidents of disease or deaths of members of the public, patients, care home residents or service users from Covid-19.

## Infection Control Training

All staff will be trained in basic infection prevention and control measures in line with this policy and best practice guidance.

Staff with specific infection control responsibilities are provided with the relevant training for their role, duties and levels of responsibility.

All new staff will be expected to complete induction training which complies with the Care Certificate Framework developed by Skills for Care/Skills for Health.

All training is updated as required by changes of legislation, policy and guidance.

## Related Policies

This policy should be read and used in relation to several others dealing with specific infection control issues, including:

* [AIDS/HIV](https://app.croneri.co.uk/topics/healthcare-associated-infections/aidshiv-policy#DCAM-1337858)
* [Clostridium Difficile](https://app.croneri.co.uk/topics/healthcare-associated-infections/clostridium-difficile-care-homes-england-policy#DCAM-5158143)
* [MRSA in Domiciliary Care](https://app.croneri.co.uk/topics/healthcare-associated-infections/mrsa-domiciliary-care-policy#WKID-201807100732270722-97723031)
* [Staff Vaccinations and Immunisations in Home Care](https://app.croneri.co.uk/topics/infection-prevention-and-control-procedures/staff-vaccinations-and-immunisations-domiciliary#WKID-201806220401080390-32645581)
* [Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies](https://app.croneri.co.uk/topics/healthcare-associated-infections/transmissible-spongiform-encephalopathies-residential-care#DCAM-5206801).

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## Review

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| Signed: | \_\_\_\_\_\_Kechiyere Anyanwu\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Date: | \_\_\_\_\_\_31st December 2021\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Policy review date: | \_\_\_\_\_\_31st March 2022\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |