



**Community Infection Prevention and Control  
Policy for Domiciliary Care staff**

# Outbreaks of communicable infection

**OUTBREAKS OF COMMUNICABLE INFECTION**

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Organisation: .....

Signed: .....

Job Title: .....

Adoption Date: .....

Review Date: .....

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# OUTBREAKS OF COMMUNICABLE INFECTION

## 1. Introduction

**Where personal care is provided by a domiciliary care provider to a person in their own home it is unlikely this Policy will be applicable. However, this Policy will apply if the domiciliary care provider provides personal care to a group of service users in a supported living or sheltered housing complex.**

It is designed to support staff in recognising and reporting outbreaks or incidents, which may have significant public health implications. Examples include outbreaks of food poisoning, scabies, viral gastroenteritis. Each outbreak or incident will be unique, requiring specific measures to deal with individual circumstances. Domiciliary Care staff may be responsible for recognising and reporting outbreaks and for implementing control measures.

**When caring for service users in relation to any new or emerging infection, staff should refer to national infection prevention and control guidance.**

## 2. Key personnel

Responsibility for responding to outbreaks of communicable infection occurring in the community lies with the Consultants in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC). The CCDCs are based at regional offices of the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA).

Local Community Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Teams deal with day-to-day advice and support, to a wide range of community settings where infection control is important and, on occasions, support the local UKHSA Team in responding to outbreaks.

## 3. Recognising the problem

Effective control depends on early recognition and timely intervention. Staff should be aware of symptoms **amongst both service users and staff**, which may indicate a possible outbreak, for example:

- Cough and/or fever may indicate influenza
- Diarrhoea and/or vomiting may indicate viral gastroenteritis or food poisoning
- Skin lesions/rash may indicate scabies

If there is cause to suspect a problem, contact your local Community IPC or UKHSA Team.

#### Definition of an outbreak

- Two or more cases of service users or staff with the same infection or symptoms linked in time or place.
- A greater than expected rate of infection compared with usual background levels for the place and time where the outbreak has occurred.
- A suspected, anticipated or actual event involving microbial or chemical contamination of food or water.

Suspected outbreaks must be notified to the local Community IPC or UKHSA Team at the earliest opportunity.

## 4. Declaration of an outbreak

Locally confined outbreaks will usually be recognised and declared by the CCDG. Where appropriate, this will be following consultation with a Consultant Microbiologist or senior Environmental Health Officer.

Advice will be provided by the local Community IPC or UKHSA Team regarding the outbreak control measures required. This will be specific to the type of outbreak and care setting.

## 5. Declaring the end of an outbreak

The decision to declare the end of an outbreak will be taken with the local Community IPC or UKHSA Team.

## 6. Infection Prevention and Control resources, education and training

The Community Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Team have produced a wide range of innovative educational and IPC resources designed to assist your Domiciliary Care service in achieving compliance with the *Health and Social Care Act 2008: code of practice on the prevention and control of infections and related resources* and CQC registration requirements.

These resources are either free to download from the website or available at a minimal cost covering administration and printing:

- 24 IPC Policy documents for Domiciliary Care staff
- Preventing Infection Workbook: Guidance for Domiciliary Care staff

- IPC audit tools, posters, packs, leaflets and factsheets
- IPC Bulletin for Domiciliary Care staff

In addition, we hold IPC educational training events in North Yorkshire.

Further information on these high quality evidence-based resources is available at [www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk](http://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk).

## 7. References

Department of Health and Social Care (Updated December 2022) *Health and Social Care Act 2008: code of practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance*

Department of Health and Health Protection Agency (2013) *Prevention and control of infection in care homes – an information resource*

Hawker et al (2019) *Communicable Disease Control and Health Protection Handbook 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*

Public Health England (Updated October 2019) *Infection Prevention and Control: An Outbreak Information Pack for Care Homes “The Care Home Pack”*

UK Health Security Agency (Updated 2024) *Notifiable diseases and causative organisms: how to report*

UK Health Security Agency (Updated 2023) *Communicable Disease Outbreak Management Operational guidance*