



Policy:

NCPS 005A - Infection Prevention & Control Standard Precautions - Prevention of Sharps Injuries & Prevention of Exposure to Blood & Body Fluids

Executive Director Lead	Executive Director of Nursing, Professions & Standards
Policy Owner	Executive Director of Nursing, Professions & Standards
Policy Author	Lead Nurse, Infection Prevention & Control

Document Type	Policy
Document Version Number	Use the version control agreed in the organisation
Date of Approval By PGG	09/11/2020
Date of Ratification	23/11/2020
Ratified By	Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)
Date of Issue	16/11/2020
Date for Review	31/12/2023

Summary of policy

This is version 3 of this policy and supersedes version 2 (March 2017).

This policy will be available to all staff via the Sheffield Health & Social Care NHS Foundation Trust Intranet and on the Trust's website. The previous version will be removed from the Intranet and Trust website and archived. Word and pdf copies of the current and the previous version of this policy are available via the Director of Corporate Governance.

Any printed copies of the previous version (V2) should be destroyed and if a hard copy is required, it should be replaced with this version.

Target audience	All Networks, SHSC staff and contractors
------------------------	------------------------------------------

Keywords	Exposure, Needlestick, Blood & body fluids
-----------------	--------------------------------------------

Storage & Version Control

Version 3 of this policy is stored and available through the SHSC intranet/internet. This version of the policy supersedes the previous version (V2 March 2017). Any copies of the previous policy held separately should be destroyed and replaced with this version.

Version Control and Amendment Log (Example)

Version No.	Type of Change	Date	Description of change(s)
1.0	Policy created	03/2013	New policy commissioned by EDG on approval of a Case for Need. New policy approved
2.0	Full policy review	01/2017	Full review in all sections. New Trust policy template introduced & adopted. Comments included where appropriate during consultation phase prior to ratification.
3.0	Policy Review, transferred to new policy template	12/2020	Full review completed as per schedule following PGG granting 6 month extension to submit review, due to the ongoing Covid Pandemic

Contents

Section		Page
	Version Control and Amendment Log	
1	Introduction	4
2	Scope	4
3	Purpose	5
4	Definitions	5
6	Duties	6
7	Procedure	9
8	Development, consultation and approval	19
9	Audit, monitoring and review	20
10	Implementation plan	21
11	Dissemination, storage and archiving (control)	21
12	Training and other resource implications	22
13	Links to other policies, standards, references, legislation and national guidance	22
14	Contact details	22
	APPENDICES	23
	Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment Process and Record for Written Policies	23
	Appendix B – New/Reviewed Policy Checklist	25
	Appendix C – PGG Summary Sheet for New/Reviewed Policies	26

1 Introduction

Providers of health and social care in England are required to provide services that are safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led. Providing services in this way meets the regulations and fundamental standards required by registration with the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Providing these services requires policies that will help to prevent and control infections, including policies for

- standard infection prevention and control precautions (abbreviated throughout this document to 'Standard Precautions' or SICP)
- safe handling and disposal of sharps
- prevention of occupational exposure to blood-borne viruses (BBVs), including prevention of sharps injuries
- management of occupational exposure to BBVs and post-exposure prophylaxis.

This document describes the Sheffield Health & Social Care Trust (SHSC) policy for each of these areas.

Contact with blood/body fluid may happen to clinical staff and non-clinical staff and by those handling contaminated waste, linen and including sharps. This type of contact has a potential to spread infection to staff and for clinical staff to spread infection between patients. Simple precautions used correctly and consistently will limit the risks of healthcare-associated infection for patients, while protecting health care workers (HCWs) from infection with disease-causing micro-organisms, including blood borne viruses.

The guidance in this policy will enable staff employed by SHSC to minimise the risks of:

- a) spread of infection between patients through appropriate use of protective clothing;
- b) unprotected exposure of staff to blood/body fluids
- c) sharps injuries and describes the procedure to follow for a staff member occupationally exposed to blood borne viruses e.g. through sharps injury.

2 Scope

The scope of this policy is to ensure staff members employed by SHSC are aware of the correct precautions to be taken when a) contact with blood/body fluid is anticipated and b) when handling and disposing of sharps; these are known as Standard Precautions. The policy has a preventive focus and will enable staff within SHSC to apply Standard Precautions effectively. Applying Standard Precautions effectively ensures that:

- personal protective equipment (PPE), most commonly disposable gloves and aprons, is worn for procedures where contact with blood/body fluid is anticipated
- PPE is removed after use with one patient and is not worn to provide care for other patients
- hands are cleaned effectively after removal of PPE and before contact with the next patient
- sharps are handled and disposed of safely. Together these minimise the likelihood of a) spread of healthcare-associated infection; b) unprotected exposure of staff to blood/body fluid; and c) sharps injury occurring.
- Due to Covid19 Pandemic an additional SICP has been developed regarding 2m social distancing.

The policy will also describe the procedure to follow if preventive measures fail and a staff member has an unprotected exposure of the mouth, nose, eyes or non-intact skin to blood/body fluid or sustains a sharps injury.

This policy does not cover exposure to sharps injuries contaminated with medicines, for this please seek advice from the Pharmacy Department.

3 Purpose

The purpose and objectives of this policy is:

- To prevent staff exposure to blood/body fluids within SHSC and minimise transmission of healthcare associated infection (HCAI) including blood borne viruses
- To prevent sharps injuries within SHSC and minimise transmission of blood borne viruses
- To ensure all staff are aware of safer sharps practice
- To ensure staff are aware of and adhere to the guidance issued in the prevention of sharps injuries policy and the actions to be taken following an exposure
- To ensure the appropriate first, 'first aid' interventions and procedures are employed when dealing with staff who have sustained a sharps injury.

4 Definitions

Patient – is used throughout this policy to refer to any individual to whom we, the Trust, provide care. It is interchangeable with the term service user, resident & client

In this policy the term “**blood/body fluid exposure incident**” is used to cover **all** the following:

- incidents where the mucous membranes of the mouth, nose or eyes, or broken skin (e.g. abrasions, cuts, eczema) have been contaminated by blood/body fluid. These exposures are also known as **mucoctaneous** exposures.
- Sharps injuries, where the skin has been visibly punctured by a needle or another sharp object contaminated with blood or other body fluid. These exposures are also known as **percutaneous** exposures and include human and animal bites.

The term **blood/body fluid** is used to mean:

- Blood or material visibly contaminated with blood
- Body fluids which may pose a risk of transmission of blood borne viruses if significant occupational exposure occurs
- Body fluids which may pose a risk of transmission of healthcare associated infection (HCAI) between patients and for staff if Standard Precautions are not applied effectively.

Blood-borne viruses (BBVs) are viruses which are transmitted in blood/blood stained body fluids which may cause disease in other people. The most common BBVs are Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

Sharps include syringes, needles, scalpels, administration sets, razor blades, broken glass, including bone and tooth or any other sharp implement with the potential to cause a penetrating injury if not handled in a safe manner

Safety Devices are devices that incorporate a built in safety feature which is intended to reduce the risk of a sharps injury

Transmission is the passing of a disease or infection from an infected individual to a previously uninfected individual.

Hepatitis B “e” antigen is a viral protein associated with Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infections. It is used as a marker of ability to spread the virus to other people (infectivity).

5 Duties

The Trust Board, via the Chief Executive will:

- Ensure there are effective and adequately resourced arrangements for complying with and is accountable for ensuring that suitable arrangements are in place for managing the Infection Prevention and Control Standard Precautions, Prevention of Sharps Injuries and Prevention of Exposure to Blood and Body Fluids within the Trust.
- Identify a board level lead for Infection Prevention and Control.
- Ensure that the role and functions of the Director of Infection Prevention and Control are satisfactorily fulfilled by appropriate and competent persons as defined by DH, (2008).

Director of Infection Prevention and Control (DIPC):

The DIPC reports directly to the Chief Executive and the Trust Board. The DIPC duties are:

- Corporate responsibility for IPC throughout the Trust
- To promote IPC considerations in other operational and development decisions of the Trust Board
- Overseeing local control of IPC policies and standard operating procedures, guidance and protocols and their implementation in conjunction with the IPC team.
- Challenging inappropriate clinical practice as well as antibiotic prescribing decisions.
- Assessing the impact of all existing and new policies and plans on infection and make recommendations for change.
- Have the authority to set and challenge standards of cleanliness
- Be a full member of the IPC Team and antimicrobial stewardship committee and regularly attend infection control committee meetings
- Being an integral member of the organisation’s clinical governance and patient safety teams and structures.
- Produce & present an annual report on the state of IPC in the Trust & release it publicly.
- Produce & present quarterly reports and an assurance framework to the Trust Board on the organisations performance in relation to IPC
- Provide leadership to the IPC team & IPC programme in order to ensure a high profile for IPC throughout the organisation.

The Medical Director is accountable for the Risk and Healthcare Governance Department.

The Director of Human Resources is accountable for the Occupational Health Service contract, from whichever provider the Trust is currently contracting its service from.

Consultant Microbiologist:

- Provides relevant expert advice on a daily basis and supports the IPC Team.
- Advises & supports outbreak control and management as necessary
- Contributes to the review and update of policies and standard operating procedures, guidance or protocols including antimicrobial prescribing policy.
- Involvement in service specification including building and engineering works and purchase of medical or therapeutic devices/equipment.

Medical Devices Safety Officer:

The key purpose of this role is to promote reporting & learning and safe use of medical devices across the organisation and be the main expert resource in this practice area.

Lead Nurse Infection Prevention & Control:

Supports the DIPC and Deputy DIPC and is responsible for:

- Acting as a specialist resource for all health care workers, service users and relatives providing advice on the prevention and control of infection
- Strategic lead of educating staff on matters relating to IPC
- Identifying infection hazards and ensuring measures are taken to reduce those risks
- Monitoring IPC decontamination procedures
- Developing, implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of IPC policies and standard operating procedures, guidance and protocols.
- Managing outbreaks of infection and collecting/analysing mandatory & voluntary surveillance data
- Monitoring, identification and investigation of preventable infection
- Maintaining partnership working with other IPC specialists
- Production of an annual work programme for IPC and quarterly reports of progress towards objectives set in the programme
- Assessing the risk of infection and advising on allocation of resources or actions required to reduce the risk
- Providing timely information to staff on effective control of infection measures
- Producing an annual report and quarterly reports on behalf of the DIPC
- Reporting relevant healthcare associated infections to the Public Health England (PHE) as directed by the Department of Health
- Provide specialist advice on new build projects and renovation, linen and waste within the Trust
- Facilitates an annual audit programme in regards to IPC

Clinical & Service Directors/Assistants, Heads of Service, Ward Managers, Managers, Team Leaders

Have responsibility for local performance management with regard to IPC and are responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy and the Trust IPC policy and standard operating procedures ensuring that advice and recommendations given by IPC team is followed
- Establishing a cleanliness culture across their areas of responsibility ensuring the Environmental Domestic Cleaning Schedule is followed.
- Ensure every area has a written Departmental Cleaning schedule detailing the reusable equipment & devices which require decontamination between patient use

- Challenging poor practice and bring to the attention of the IPC team and Infection Control committee situations where significant risks have been identified and where local control measures are considered to be potentially inadequate.
- Individual management teams will be responsible for ensuring that staff attend IPC core mandatory and mandatory update training and adhere to Trust IPC policies and procedures.
- Identifying individual staff members to act as a local resource for IPC within each area (Link Workers).
- Facilitating feedback of information related to surveillance data
- Fully engage with the IPC audit process by developing and taking ownership of action plans to address areas of practice where improvement is required
- Ensuring IPC is a standing agenda item on all locally held governance meetings

All Staff, Contractors, Agency, Apprentices, Secondees, Volunteers

- Have a duty to adhere to infection control policies and associated guidelines. This responsibility to be explicit in all job descriptions and included as part of the annual appraisal system and personal development plans as appropriate. All staff are obliged to:
 - Undertake IPC training relevant to their role
 - Maintain effective implementation of IPC policies in their area of work
 - Report infection control incidents and risks to their line manager, raise incidents via the Risk Department and contacting the IPC Team as necessary.

The Infection Control Committee:

- Receiving a quarterly report from the Lead Nurse to include outbreaks of infection MRSA and Clostridium difficile data
- Monitor Trust compliance with externally set targets i.e. CCG Quality Account
- Monitoring progress against the rolling IPC programme
- Receive, review and endorse the annual IPC report
- Considers national guidelines and their subsequent impact upon the Trust
- Review and endorse Trust policies and standard operating procedures for the prevention and control of infection and monitor implementation ensuring that such policies reflect legislation and published professional guidance including best practice.
- Ensuring that there is an annual programme of Audit in relation to IPC
- Discusses, amend and endorse plans for the management of outbreaks in the Trust
- Advise on the most effective use of resources
- Disseminating information and advice on prevention and control of infection to all Directorates and the Trust Board as appropriate.
- Promote and facilitate education of all grades and disciplines of staff in procedures for the prevention and control of infection.

Health & Safety Committee

The Committee's role is to promote co-operation between the Trust and its employees, instigating, developing and carrying out measures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and other people in connection with the Trust's activities.

The Risk & Governance Department

- monitor incidents of an exposure type and share lessons learned
- share information and good practice
- support relevant investigations and reviews as required
- participate in specialist risk related groups as required
- provide advice to ensure compliance with statutory requirements

Occupational Health Service via Contract – HR Responsibility to Monitor

The Occupational Health Service provided via external contract by a Provider will have designated responsibility for the management of SHSC employees and others sustaining blood/body fluids exposure incidents. The Clinical Director of the Occupational Health Service will have overall clinical responsibility for providing the service, but may delegate day to day responsibility for the management of these incidents to other medical and nursing staff within the Occupational Health Service Provider.

Occupational Physicians managing staff potentially exposed to blood borne viruses will seek appropriate advice from other clinicians including virology, microbiology, infectious diseases, genitourinary medicine and public health medicine when necessary.

The Occupational Health Service provided by a Provider will advise managers and staff on the management of blood exposure incidents, including sharps injuries sustained at work and in cases where entitlement to NHS or industrial injuries benefits is under consideration as a consequence of these incidents.

Information, counselling and psychological support will be made available to any SHSC employee who reports an exposure with the potential to cause blood borne virus infection. This will include encouragement to provide a baseline sample for storage and follow up samples for testing as appropriate for HIV, HBV or HCV infection. Follow up samples are taken to exclude the possibility of transmission of these infections. Pre-test discussion will reflect the importance of any test procedure and the implications of the results. Discussion after the tests will provide the necessary support.

The designated Occupational Physicians will maintain awareness of the latest developments in post-exposure prophylaxis including the use of hepatitis B immunoglobulin and hepatitis B vaccine and the use of anti-retroviral drugs following occupational exposure to HIV infection.

The Occupational Health Service Provider will provide cover outside normal working hours to advise and treat SHSC staff who sustain significant occupational exposures. It is the responsibility of the HR Department to communicate what systems/procedures are in place from the Provider which are available to all SHSC employees.

The HR Department will monitor the effectiveness of the Occupational Health Contract through contract meetings.

6 Procedure

SECTION A – PREVENTION

Preventing Incidents

The Medical Devices Group, Medical Devices Safety Officer and Procurement Department adheres to the following principles as per EU Sharps Directive.

- Integrated and passive safety features, which are likely to have the greatest impact on preventing sharps injuries
- The integrated safety feature should be part of the basic design of the device – it cannot be removed and is not an accessory feature

- The device should provide a barrier between hands and needle after use
- The device should require worker's hands to remain behind the needle at all times
- The device should have safety features that cannot be deactivated and remain protective throughout disposal to protect downstream workers
- The device should be simple and self-evident to operate; in addition training will be provided where required to ensure effective use
- The device should be appropriate to the procedure to be undertaken and be chosen following risk assessment.

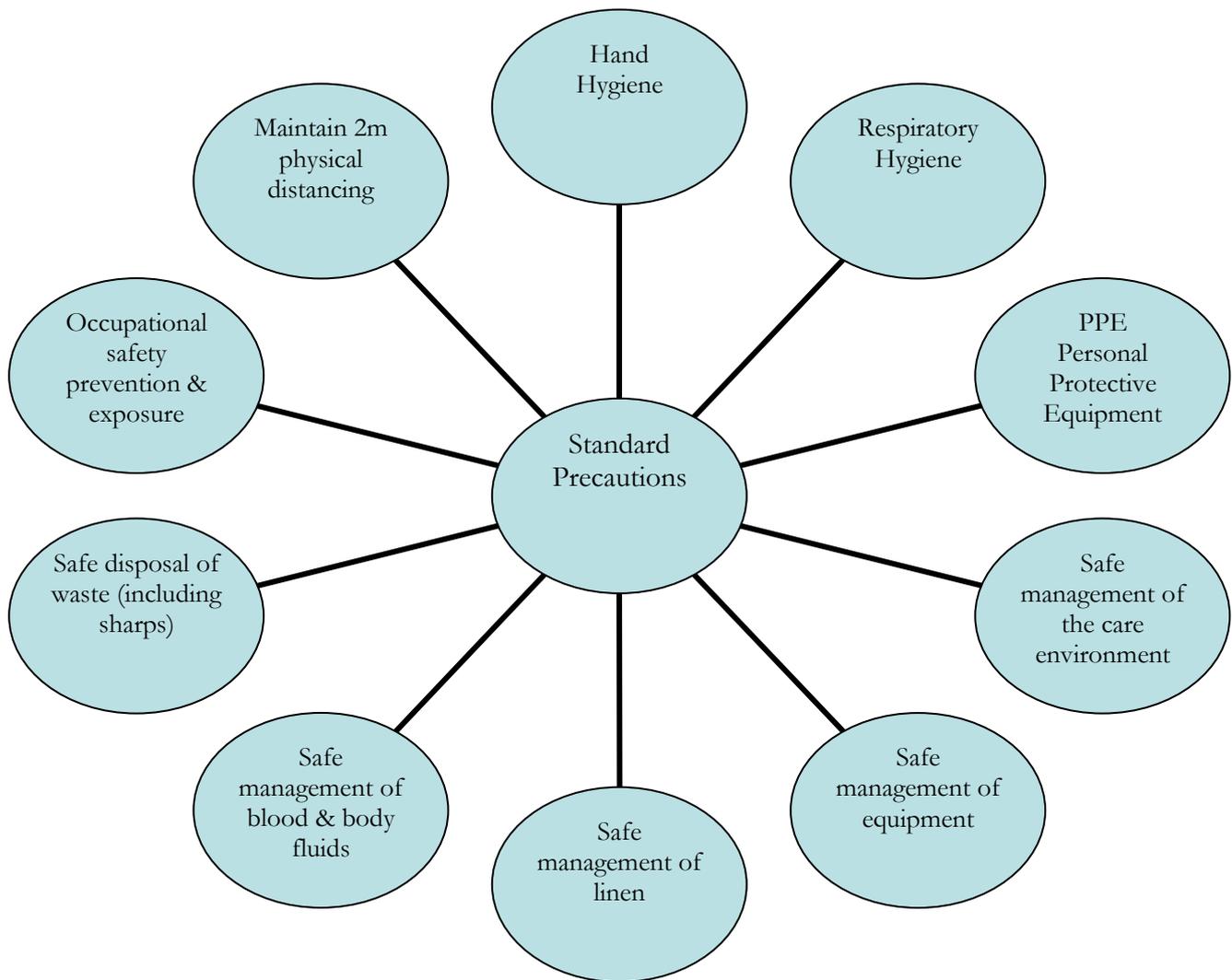
Standard Infection Prevention and Control Precautions

Standard Infection Prevention and Control Precautions (Standard Precautions) are a set of measures to be taken when a) contact with blood/body fluid is anticipated and b) when handling and disposing of sharps. Applying Standard Precautions effectively will limit the risks of healthcare-associated infection for patients, while protecting health care workers (HCWs) from infection with disease-causing micro-organisms, including blood borne viruses.

Standard Precautions are not prompted by a diagnosis of infection; they are precautions that must be applied at all times, by all staff and for all patients, regardless of diagnosis. Standard Precautions are:

- Cleaning hands at the point of care before and after patient contact and between procedures for the same patient
- Choice and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect staff from exposure to blood/body fluids and prevent spread of infection between patients
- Preserving integrity of the skin as a barrier to infection
- Treating waste and linen contaminated with blood/body fluids as infected or offensive
- Treating all blood spillage as infected
- Handling and disposal of sharps to prevent sharps injuries

Other measures may be required **in addition to** Standard Precautions for the safe management of patients with certain infections - please refer to the Infection Prevention and Control Policy and Covid19 Information Hub.



Hand Hygiene

Hands should be cleaned before and after all procedures. If skin is contaminated with blood or body fluids, wash off immediately with soap and water. Alcohol hand rub can be used on visibly clean hands for hand hygiene between patient contact tasks; for full details see the Hand Hygiene section in the Infection Prevention & Control Policy.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment

- When carrying out clinical procedures **it is essential** that each task is assessed for the healthcare worker's risk of exposure to blood/body fluids.
- The level of precautions taken will be determined by the risk of exposure to blood and body fluids and not by any perceived 'risk factors' in the patient. In other words, **risk assess the procedure and not the patient.**
- Gloves must be worn for direct contact with blood or body fluid and for direct contact with non-intact skin or mucous membranes.
- Gloves should be discarded after each procedure and between different procedures for the same patient.
- Plastic aprons should be worn whenever contamination of clothing with blood or body fluids is anticipated.
- Full-body fluid-repellent gowns must be worn where there is a risk of extensive splashing of blood or body fluids on to the skin or clothing of healthcare workers.

- Protective eyewear and a mask, or full face visors, must be worn during any procedure where there is a risk of blood or body fluid splashing into the face.
- Personal protective equipment should be removed in the following sequence to minimise the risk of cross/self-contamination:
 - gloves;
 - apron;
 - eye protection (when worn); and
 - mask/respirator (when worn).

Hand Hygiene must be performed following the removal of personal protective equipment.

Immunisation

Protection against Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)

The risk of infection with HBV in individuals who have not been vaccinated against HBV, following a sharps or splash injury from a HBV positive source patient, is in the region of 1 in 50, rising to 1 in 3 if the source patient is also “e” antigen positive (HPA, 2008)

Staff who are carrying out exposure prone procedures or working in an area where there is a risk of an inoculation injury should be vaccinated against Hepatitis B Virus.

The Occupational Health Service Provider will follow the most clinically appropriate Hepatitis B vaccination in line with DH guidelines. This will comprise of 3 initial doses of vaccine and a blood test with annual and 5 yearly boosters. Vaccination schedules may be subject to change but will follow the latest national guidance and The Green Book.

The action needed in the immediate post exposure period to protect staff against Hepatitis B is dependent on the vaccination status of staff and (where known) the Hepatitis B surface antigen status of the source patient. This will be managed by the Occupational Health Service.

Hepatitis B immunoglobulin can be used as prophylaxis following a needle stick injury involving a Hepatitis B positive patient. If Hepatitis B immunoglobulin is required this is available via Occupational Health Provider

Broken Skin

Cuts and abrasions on the hands and the forearms should be covered with a waterproof dressing at all times whilst on duty. Staff with extensive exposed lesions such as eczema or psoriasis should refer themselves via their manager to the Occupational Health Service.

Clinical Waste and Linen

Waste contaminated with blood or body fluid should be discarded into infectious or offensive healthcare waste streams; ensuring that no fluid leaks out.

- Use leak-proof rigid plastic containers and pre-treatment (gelling) if appropriate to dispose of sharps waste only.
- Only sharps waste to be disposed of in the ridged sharps waste containers. Soft healthcare waste such as swabs, dressings, wipes and gloves should be disposed of in an appropriate healthcare waste bags. (Orange infectious or Tiger offensive)
- Linen is not to be discarded.
- Soiled (including heavily soiled) linen is to be returned to NGH Linen services in multiple dissolve-bags (alginate) where appropriate, or where areas process their own laundry; should also follow this advice.
- Ensure that handling of healthcare waste and linen complies with local policy.

Blood/Body Fluid Spillage

Initially spillages of blood/body fluids should be safely cleaned up using a Clinell Spill Kit. Follow the instructions carefully on the reverse of the packet.

Once the initial clean-up process of the organic matter has been safely carried out by Nursing or Support Worker staff, the area can be cleaned as normal with Virusolve+ by Housekeeping staff (when on duty) or other departmental or nursing/support staff when Housekeeping staff are not on duty.

Further advice on the safe management of blood and body fluid spillages can be found in the relevant section in the Infection Prevention & Control Policy

Management of a sharps spillage

A sharps spillage can be defined as:

- One or more inappropriately discarded sharp/s
- An overfilled sharps container with protruding items which cannot be safely locked
- Sharps not in a sharps container e.g. jam jar, bag
- An accidental release of sharps in the work place

If used sharps are spilled from a sharps container, the following procedure should be followed with **extreme caution**:

- Cordon off the area. Where possible a staff member should stay with the spillage.
- Apply protective equipment – gauntlet gloves if available or heavy duty gloves
- Collect a new sharps container and take it with you to the scene; a larger size than the original container may be necessary depending on the circumstances
- In the case of a single discarded sharp, if the sharp is fully visible, you may feel able to pick up the non-sharp end and safely discard into a new sharps container.
- If more than one sharp item, use a dust pan and brush to carefully gather up the spillage and discard in a new sharps bin.
- If a sharps container has been over-filled and cannot be closed, do not retrieve items from it, instead place it in a larger assembled container and safely lock.
- Depending if any type of fluid has been spilled from the container, the floor area will need to be cleaned as per the advice above re: spillage kits
- Remove protective equipment. If reusable, clean as per the manufacturers' guidance and store. Discard single-use disposable equipment in the appropriate waste stream.
- Perform hand hygiene using soap and water.
- Complete and submit an incident report form.

If the situation cannot be safely dealt with using the above procedure, please contact the Waste Lead or Health and Safety Lead for advice.

Where the public notify any member of staff of a sharp found in a public area on Trust property; the staff member should advise the public not to touch it. The staff member must inform their manager of the incident and follow the above procedure.

Where the public notify staff of sharps found on non-Trust property, e.g. parks, the local authority should be informed (Street Force), they can be contacted on 0114 273 4567.

Safe Handling of Sharps

Wherever possible avoid the use of sharps. Sharps must always be handled carefully in accordance with the following principles:

- Needles should not be re-sheathed. If resheathing is required in exceptional circumstances an approved device must be used.

- Needles must never be bent or broken
- Never pass sharps from person to person
- Never walk around with sharps in your hand or pocket
- Always get help when using sharps with a confused or agitated patient
- Always use needle free devices where provided

Safe Disposal of Sharps

- Always dispose of sharps yourself, never delegate; “you use it, you bin it”
- Dispose of sharps at the point of use (take a sharps bin with you)
- Dispose of syringes and needles as a single unit (do not remove the needle first)
- All sharps must be disposed of in an appropriate sharps bin with correct colour coded lid; orange lid for blood contaminated sharps, yellow lid for medicinally contaminated sharps and purple lid for cytotoxic/cytostatic contaminated sharps. See waste management policy for further guidance.
- Always ensure sharps bins are assembled correctly (ensuring that the lid is secured properly, the label is completed)
- Ensure that sharps bins are placed in a suitable safe location (wall brackets and trays should be used as appropriate and are provided free by our sharps container provider).
 - Sharps bins should never be placed on the floor.
 - Risk assessments should always be made for confused patients.
 - During use in domiciliary care settings, a flat, hard surface at a safe working height should be chosen out of the reach of children and pets to prevent accidental ‘tipping-over’.
- Ensure sharps bins are of an appropriate size for the clinical activity and are filled only to the fill line displayed
- Sharps bins should be available at the point of use of the sharp
- All sharps bins to be closed and locked securely when $\frac{3}{4}$ full or at the specified interval i.e. the manufacturers’ fill line.
- Between uses the temporary closure device should be employed to prevent accidental spillage of sharps if the bin is knocked over
- Always carry the sharps bin by the handle if fitted with one, or using the tray provided; never place it against your body. In the domiciliary care setting sharp bins do not have handles, therefore staff must carry their bins in a safe manner e.g. in their kit bags with the temporary closing mechanism in use.
- Ensure sharps bins are locked in accordance with manufacturers’ instructions and ensure they are labelled with point of origin. Do not place sharps containers in any type of infectious or offensive healthcare waste bags for disposal.

- Used sharps bins awaiting disposal must be stored in a locked, segregated designated cupboard or infectious healthcare waste storage bin away from public access.
- Under no circumstances must one sharps container's contents be decanted into another sharps container.
- Items must never be retrieved from sharps bins

Sharps Generated by Patients at Home

In general patients and visitors must not have access to sharps bins unless supervised by a member of staff. Patients must be advised on the safe disposal of sharps, for example when involved in their own care. This advice must also include where to safely store the bin (when not in use) away from children and pets.

It is recommended that such patients be prescribed a sharps bin by their GP and when full it should be returned to the practice for safe disposal or arrangements made with the local authority for collection and disposal.

The Environment Agency provides an exemption for GPs to accept their self-medicating sharps, this Non Waste Framework Directive exemption (NWFD 4) allows GPs to temporarily store waste at a collection point before recovering or disposing of the waste elsewhere. NWFD 4 does not need to be registered with the Environment Agency, for further details:

<https://www.gov.uk/waste-exemption-nwfd-3-temporary-storage-at-a-collection-point>

Safety Devices

Many sharps injuries can be avoided by adherence to the principles of safe practice. However it is recognised that some injuries are complete accidents. The use of safety devices makes it possible to reduce the risk of these injuries occurring.

Safety devices incorporate a built in safety feature which aim to reduce the risk of sharps injuries.

SECTION B – INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

What is meant by exposure?

Percutaneous injuries (e.g. from used needles, bites and other wounds from sharp items) carry the greatest risk for transmission of blood borne viruses in the healthcare setting (Yazdanpanah, 2005).

Mucocutaneous exposure (e.g. splashes into the mouth, eyes, splashes onto broken skin or existing cuts/ eczema etc) carries a lower risk of blood borne virus infection, approximately 1 in 1000 for HIV. There is currently no evidence on the risk of transmission of Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C from mucocutaneous exposure (Department of Health, 2008).

Exposure to low risk body fluids e.g. urine, vomit, faeces, sputum and saliva (except when associated with dental work) is not normally considered a risk unless visibly stained with

blood. Though low risk for transmission of blood borne viruses, these fluids are important sources of other pathogenic microorganisms implicated in healthcare associated infections. Standard precautions described previously are important to prevent the spread of these organisms between patients and from patients to staff. Exposure of intact skin to blood and body fluids has not been associated with blood borne virus transmission to staff.

Note - Occupational exposure to Blood Borne Viruses is extremely uncommon

Body fluids that may transmit blood borne viruses

Blood	Vaginal fluid
Saliva	Semen
Cerebro-spinal fluid	Amniotic fluid
Pericardial fluid	Human breast milk
Peritoneal fluid	Pleural fluid
Synovial fluid	Unfixed human tissues and organs
Exudate or tissue fluid from burns/wounds	
Any other body fluid if visibly blood stained.	

First Aid

Immediately following any exposure, staff should quickly:

- **For a wound**
Encourage bleeding by gently squeezing the site
Wash the wound in warm running water with soap. Dry and apply a waterproof dressing
- never suck the injury
- **For a splash in the eye**
Irrigate the eye copiously with water before and after removing contact lens if worn.
- **For splash in the mouth**
Irrigate thoroughly with drinking water for at least five minutes, without swallowing this water.

Staff who sustain an occupational exposure should report the exposure promptly to their manager and seek urgent advice on further management and treatment from Occupational Health. An incident form must be completed.

Injuries with clean needles or sharps should be washed and covered with a waterproof plaster. There is no requirement to inform the Occupational Health Service but should still be reported as an incident and recorded.

Initial Risk Assessment

The initial risk assessment is based on the potential for viral transmission, i.e. the type of body fluid involved, the route (e.g. percutaneous/mucocutaneous) and the severity of exposure. For example, some occupational exposures after careful initial assessment may not be considered to be significant as they do not have potential for BBV transmission. An incident form should still be completed and the incident recorded. If after the initial risk assessment, which will be undertaken by the Occupational Health Service, a significant exposure has occurred see the following sections and refer to the document highlighted below.

Staff and managers should always follow instructions and advice given by the Occupational Health Provider.

The following information is provided as a general guide/principles, each Occupational Health Provider will have their own procedures to follow.

Post Exposure Procedures

Testing and Counselling

The occupational physician or nurse will need, where possible, to obtain information from or about the source patient concerning possible indicators of blood borne virus infection, including risk factors and results of previous tests for HIV and hepatitis, medical history suggestive of such infection and details of past and current antiviral therapy in patients known to be HIV infected.

Based on risk assessment the source patient will be asked to consent to testing for blood borne virus infections including HIV, HBV and HCV. This will entail pre-test discussion and obtaining fully informed consent. This will be the responsibility of the clinical team caring for the patient, including medical staff covering out of hours. If the source patient is approached in a sensitive manner, it is understood that consent to testing is rarely withheld.

Source Patient Testing

The source patient will be routinely asked to consent to testing for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV.

Responsibility for obtaining the consent, arranging the blood tests and conveying the results of the test to the source patient will be the responsibility of the clinical team caring for that patient.

The staff member who sustained the exposure should not obtain the patient's consent for testing.

The Occupational Health Provider should be able to provide a source patient information sheet and standard consent form.

Source Patients unable to give consent

The provisions of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 will apply where there is doubt about the source patient's capacity to consent. Please refer to the Mental Capacity Act Policy.

If the source patient is unable to give consent, i.e. is unconscious, lacks capacity to consent or has died, the Consultant Occupational Physician should discuss this with the senior Medic responsible for the source patient.

Testing of source patient's pre-existing blood samples, for the purposes of BBV management in relation to blood exposures without consent, is not permissible.

Neonates

Where the source patient is a neonate, the risk assessment will need to be based on the mother's risk factors for blood borne viruses.

Where antenatal testing results are not available, and if staff have sustained a significant injury, the mother will need to be asked to provide a sample of her blood. The baby's blood will not be tested.

Children

Children (under 16) will be tested with the consent of the parent/guardian. The child may consent if deemed able to give informed consent.

Young Adults (16 – 18)

This age group can consent to source patient testing for themselves but it may be appropriate to involve the parent/guardian in the pre-test discussion, depending on the patient's wishes.

In patients over 16 years of age, the provisions of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 will apply where there is doubt about the patient's capacity to consent.

Management of Refused Consent

If the source patient refuses consent, no testing will be carried out, even on stored blood.

Refusal to consent to source patient testing will not affect the patient's subsequent care and does not constitute evidence of infection.

Duration of Consent

The source patient's consent to be tested will only apply for the specific incident for which it is obtained.

If the same patient is subsequently the source of another blood exposure, advice from the Occupational Physician should be obtained on the need for further testing. If a further test is advised, consent will need to be obtained again.

Information to the Source Patient following testing; Record keeping

The results of screening for blood borne viruses will be given to the patient by the senior clinicians or registered GP responsible for their care. If the source patient has been found to be infected with a blood borne virus, appropriate counselling and support and referral for treatment as indicated will be arranged by the clinical team responsible for their care.

Where the source patient is a child, the senior clinician will give the information to the parents/guardians and the child if competent as appropriate.

The senior clinician, usually the consultant, or GP and the Occupational Physician will liaise carefully over disclosures of any positive source patient result to ensure that the source patient and the staff member are informed in an appropriate manner. For this reason, the laboratory results on the source patient will normally be given to the Occupational Health Service initially.

Where source patient results are positive for blood borne viruses, the Consultant Occupational Physician will liaise with the source patient's Consultant or GP to ensure that appropriate action is taken.

When informing the source patient of the results of the test, the clinician will ask whether or not the patient wishes the results to be recorded in their notes and whether or not they wish their GP to be informed. The reason for the test must be clearly stated in the notes and any subsequent correspondence, i.e. that it was following a blood exposure to staff.

All information relating to the source patient obtained by the Occupational Health Service will remain strictly confidential and will not be disclosed to any third party. When information has to be disclosed, e.g. in legal matters, only the hospital or NHS number will be disclosed.

Workplace Wellbeing Support

Following the event of exposure to fluids Workplace Wellbeing can offer a range of interventions to all affected staff. Reactions can vary according to many factors, the degree of distress or trauma experienced is not always proportional to the actual risk. It is important

that managers offer timely and immediate follow up to the affected member of staff preferably face to face where possible. As part of a range of interventions following an incident such as these managers should ensure that their staff are offered psychological support.

Confidential individual support via self-referral to Workplace Wellbeing can be offered to support staff process some of these events. This can be done in range of ways, from information sharing e.g. personal reactions to trauma, individual support in pre-test scenarios, support where there is perceived conflict of interest between the Trust and staff member and emotional support, psychological therapy or more formal post-trauma interventions such as EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing).

Workplace Wellbeing can also offer support to managers via consultation and have several information sheets that can be helpful to support them in these situations e.g. Guidelines for Managers dealing with Staff after Traumatic incidents. WWB can also offer psycho-educational materials and group facilitation to teams to enable the working through of the psychological and emotional processes that might be associated with such an event as appropriate.

Post Exposure Prophylaxis

Hepatitis B

If staff have been exposed to HBV infected blood, post exposure prophylaxis will be considered in accordance with guidance from the Public Health Laboratory Services (PHLS) Hepatitis Sub-committee (Communicable Disease Report, Vol. 2, Review No. 9, August 1992)

Hepatitis C

At present no post-exposure prophylaxis is available for HCV. Follow up of staff will be in accordance with current national guidance.

HIV

A separate policy on the provision of PEP for staff occupationally exposed to HIV supports this policy, and implements the requirements of "HIV post exposure prophylaxis: Guidance from the UK Chief Medical Officers Expert Advisory Group on AIDS" (2008).

Staff to Patient Exposure

These incidents are those where, in the course of clinical procedures, blood or body fluids from a member of staff contaminate a patient's tissues, usually where staff sustain a sharps injury and bleed into the patient, or more rarely, by "double needlestick" where staff stick themselves with a needle, which then enters the patient.

In this situation, there could be a risk of BBV infection to the patient if the staff member is infected and the patient may need to be given prophylaxis.

Staff who may be the source of an exposure to a patient must report the incident immediately to the Occupational Health Service, who will determine the risk of exposure to the patient and, where appropriate, obtain a blood sample from the staff member, with their consent, for testing. If the staff member is infected with blood borne viruses, the Consultant Occupational Physician will liaise with the consultant responsible for the patient's care to ensure that the patient is appropriately informed and counselled and given prophylactic treatment when indicated. Occupational Health will provide appointments, support and follow up to the staff member.

Detailed guidance on the management of incidents where a patient is exposed to the blood of an HIV infected HCW are contained in HIV Post-Exposure Prophylaxis: Guidance from the Chief Medical Officers' Expert Advisory Group on Aids, (Department of Health, 2008).

The identity of the "source" staff member will not be disclosed to the patient.

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)

If staff become infected with a blood borne virus as a result of a blood or body fluid exposure, this is reportable under RIDDOR as a disease. The Occupational Health Service will inform the Health and Safety Lead and the Medical Director should such a report be necessary. Further advice can be obtained from the Risk Department on RIDDOR.

7 Development, Consultation and Approval

Version 3 – updated policy to reflect updated Trust adoption of new policy template. This policy will be available via the Trust's intranet site.

The policy has been sent out for consultation with all members of the Infection Control Committee and additional relevant colleagues (HR) from 27/10/20 to 30/10/20. Comments were received back from:

- Waste Lead
- Deputy Chief Nurse

All comments and corrections were accepted and included within the policy as and where relevant. The policy has been circulated to all members of the Infection Control Committee for verification, comment/approval prior to being presented for ratification. Responses were received from Sheffield CCG, DIPC and Hotel Services Manager who had no comments for inclusion, but had reviewed the draft version.

8 Audit, Monitoring and Review

This section should describe how the implementation and impact of the policy will be monitored and audited. It should include timescales and frequency of audits.

If the policy is required to meet a particular standard, it must say how and when compliance with the standard will be audited.

Monitoring Compliance Template						
Minimum Requirement	Process for Monitoring	Responsible Individual/group/committee	Frequency of Monitoring	Review of Results process (e.g. who does this?)	Responsible Individual/group/committee for action plan development	Responsible Individual/group/committee for action plan monitoring and implementation
How inoculation incidents are reported	Incident form submitted & recorded on Ulysses	Risk Department IPCT Team ICC H&S Committee	Quarterly	ICC and QAG Risk Department	ICC H&S Committee	ICC/QAC
Process for the management of an inoculation incident (including prophylaxis)	HR contract monitoring arrangements,	OH Provider HR Department	HR frequency for monitoring the OH contract	HR contract monitoring	Staff Health & Wellbeing Group	Staff Health & Wellbeing Group

Policy documents should be reviewed every three years or earlier where legislation dictates or practices change. The policy review date should be 31 December 2023.

9 Implementation Plan

Action / Task	Responsible Person	Deadline	Progress update
<i>Upload new policy onto intranet and remove old version</i>	<i>PA Corporate Affairs</i>	<i>5 working days from ratification date</i>	
<i>Trust wide communication via Connect</i>	<i>Communications Team</i>	<i>5 working days from ratification</i>	
<i>A communication will be sent to Educational Trainers. Dissemination of policy during annual mandatory updates and course content can be reviewed in line with this policy version</i>	<i>Lead Nurse IPC Mandatory Trainers</i>	<i>5 working days from ratification</i>	

10 Dissemination, Storage and Archiving (Control)

Version	Date added to intranet	Date added to internet	Date of inclusion in Connect	Any other promotion/ dissemination (include dates)
1.0	2013	2013	N/A	N/A
2.0	2017	2017	N/A	Via established trust communication at the time
3.0	TBC	TBC	TBC	

This policy will be available on the Trusts intranet site following the ratification process. It will be disseminated via the Infection Control Committee and the Infection Prevention and Control Link Worker Forum; and available to all staff.

Previous versions of this policy will be archived by the PA Corporate Affairs. Individual staff are responsible for ensuring that they are accessing and adhering to the latest version of this policy; and delete any previous versions to prevent confusion.

11 Training and Other Resource Implications

Preventing sharps injury and managing blood and body fluid exposures are incorporated into the Infection Prevention and Control Core and Update Mandatory session facilitated by the Training and Education Department; which are **mandatory** for staff employed by the Trust.

The Line Manager or Designated Supervisor/Team Leader should inform their staff about their personal Mandatory and Job Specific Training requirements during induction or when there is a significant change in role. The Line Manager/Designated Supervisor should consult the Training Needs Analysis for Infection Prevention and Control or contact the Training and Education Department for clarification.

The Line Manager/Designated Supervisor should book the employee onto any relevant training courses and confirm these arrangements with the employee. This process should be completed as part of induction and repeated when updates are due.

Staff should complete the specified training or notify their Line Manager or Designated Supervisor if they are unable to comply so that alternative training can be arranged.

12 Links to Other Policies, Standards (Associated Documents)

Risk Management Policy
Health and Safety Statement
COSHH Policy
Physical Health Policy
Incident Reporting and Investigation Policy
Waste Management Policy
Mandatory Training Policy
Consent to Examination or Treatment Policy
Mental Capacity Act Policy
Infection Prevention & Control Policy

External Documentation & Legal Frameworks

Prevention from Sharp Injuries in Hospital and Healthcare Sector Directive
Health & Social Care Act 2008 (2015)
Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999
The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
Epic3: National Evidence-Based Guidelines for Preventing Healthcare-Associated Infections in NHS Hospitals in England (2014) Journal of Hospital Infection, [Volume 86, Supplement 1](#) , Pages S1-S70

13 Contact Details

Title	Name	Phone	Email
HR Helpline	HR representative	2263301	
Health & Safety	Charlie Stephenson	2716208	Charlie.stephenson@shsc.nhs.uk
Lead Nurse IPC	Katie Grayson	2718621	Katie.grayson@shsc.nhs.uk

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment Process and Record for Written Policies

Stage 1 – Relevance - Is the policy potentially relevant to equality i.e. will this policy potentially impact on staff, patients or the public? This should be considered as part of the Case of Need for new policies.

NO – No further action is required – please sign and date the following statement.
I confirm that this policy does not impact on staff, patients or the public.

I confirm that this policy does not impact on staff, patients or the public.

Name/Date: K Grayson Oct 2020

YES, Go to Stage 2

Stage 2 Policy Screening and Drafting Policy - Public authorities are legally required to have 'due regard' to eliminating discrimination, advancing equal opportunity and fostering good relations in relation to people who share certain 'protected characteristics' and those that do not. The following table should be used to consider this and inform changes to the policy (indicate yes/no/ don't know and note reasons). Please see the SHSC Guidance and Flow Chart.

Stage 3 – Policy Revision - Make amendments to the policy or identify any remedial action required and record any action planned in the policy implementation plan section

SCREENING RECORD	Does any aspect of this policy or potentially discriminate against this group?	Can equality of opportunity for this group be improved through this policy or changes to this policy?	Can this policy be amended so that it works to enhance relations between people in this group and people not in this group?
Age	Neutral The policy applies equally to all individuals		
Disability	Neutral The policy applies equally to all individuals		
Gender Reassignment	Neutral The policy applies equally to all individuals		
Pregnancy and Maternity	Neutral The policy applies equally to all individuals		

Race	Neutral The policy applies equally to all individuals		
Religion or Belief	Neutral The policy applies equally to all individuals		
Sex	Neutral The policy applies equally to all individuals		
Sexual Orientation	Neutral The policy applies equally to all individuals		
Marriage or Civil Partnership	Neutral The policy applies equally to all individuals		

Please delete as appropriate: - no changes made.

Impact Assessment Completed by:
Name /Date K Grayson October 2020

Appendix B

Review/New Policy Checklist

This checklist to be used as part of the development or review of a policy and presented to the Policy Governance Group (PGG) with the revised policy.

		Tick to confirm
Engagement		
1.	Is the Executive Lead sighted on the development/review of the policy?	Y
2.	Is the local Policy Champion member sighted on the development/review of the policy?	Y
Development and Consultation		
3.	If the policy is a new policy, has the development of the policy been approved through the Case for Need approval process?	N/A
4.	Is there evidence of consultation with all relevant services, partners and other relevant bodies?	Y
5.	Has the policy been discussed and agreed by the local governance groups?	Y
6.	Have any relevant recommendations from Internal Audit or other relevant bodies been taken into account in preparing the policy?	N/A
Template Compliance		
7.	Has the version control/storage section been updated?	Y
8.	Is the policy title clear and unambiguous?	Y
9.	Is the policy in Arial font 12?	Y
10.	Have page numbers been inserted?	Y
11.	Has the policy been quality checked for spelling errors, links, accuracy?	Y
Policy Content		
12.	Is the purpose of the policy clear?	Y
13.	Does the policy comply with requirements of the CQC or other relevant bodies? (where appropriate)	Y
14.	Does the policy reflect changes as a result of lessons identified from incidents, complaints, near misses, etc.?	Y
15.	Where appropriate, does the policy contain a list of definitions of terms used?	Y
16.	Does the policy include any references to other associated policies and key documents?	Y
17.	Has the EIA Form been completed (Appendix A)?	Y
Dissemination, Implementation, Review and Audit Compliance		
18.	Does the dissemination plan identify how the policy will be implemented?	Y
19.	Does the dissemination plan include the necessary training/support to ensure compliance?	Y
20.	Is there a plan to i. review ii. audit compliance with the document?	Y
21.	Is the review date identified, and is it appropriate and justifiable?	Y

Policy Governance Group (PGG)

Date 09 November 2020

Item Ref 8e iii

TITLE OF PAPER	Infection Prevention & Control Standard Precautions - Prevention of Sharps Injuries & Prevention of Exposure to Blood & Body Fluids
TO BE PRESENTED BY	Katie Grayson, Lead Nurse Infection Prevention & Control
AUTHOR	Katie Grayson, Lead Nurse Infection Prevention & Control

1. Purpose

For approval	For assurance	For collective decision	To seek input	To report progress	For information	Other (Please state)
√						

2. Summary

The attached Policy has been consulted on across the network:

Members of the Infection Control Committee and colleagues from HR (as they are responsible for the Occupational Health contract); have been consulted on the review of this policy

- The author confirms that the policy reflects current national guidance and best practice as a CQC 'Must Do' requirement.
- The author confirms that cross referencing to other policies has been undertaken and the appropriate section of the policy reflects this.
- The author confirms that the policy follows the governance process: -
 1. Ensuring appropriate internal and external expertise and adherence to good practice, and that the existing policy has;
 2. been circulated for consultation to appropriate groups as described above;
 3. dissemination of the policy and training implications have been considered
This is a review of an existing established policy therefore the policy details current dissemination/training/audit of implementation.
 4. arrangements for implementation have been considered

3 Next Steps

Following approval by the Policy Governance Group, Corporate Governance to arrange for the Policy to be submitted to the appropriate Board Committee for ratification.

4 Required Actions

The Policy Governance Group are asked to approve the attached policy because the current version has reached the date for review.

5 Monitoring Arrangements

Please see section 8 of the policy.

6 Contact Details

Katie.Grayson@shsc.nhs.uk

Lead Nurse, Infection Prevention & Control
0114 271 8621