



Infection Control: General Policy

Infection control is the name given to a wide range of policies, procedures and techniques intended to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. All of the staff working at Touch Trust are at risk of infection or of spreading infection, especially if their role brings them into contact with blood or bodily fluids like urine, faeces, vomit or sputum. Such substances may well contain pathogens that can be spread if adequate precautions are not taken.

Policy Statement

Touch Trust believes that adherence to strict guidelines on infection control is of paramount importance in ensuring the safety of our Guests, their partners and our staff. We also believe that good, basic hygiene is the most powerful weapon against infection, particularly with respect to hand washing.

Touch Trust also understands that the realities of working with Guests who often have Autistic Spectrum disorders and profound multiple and learning disabilities include the need to accommodate behaviour which can involve our Guests contaminating equipment with sputum, toileting accidents involving urine and faeces and other potentially hazardous practices. Our staff therefore also need to be vigilant in order to prevent this behavior from causing the spread of infection.

Touch Trust adheres fully to *The Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of Practice for Health and Adult Social Care on the Prevention and Control of Infections and Related Guidance*.

Aim

The aim of Touch Trust's infection control policy is to prevent the spread of infection amongst our Guests, staff, and the local community.

Goals

The goals of Touch Trust's infection control policy are to ensure that:

1. our Guests, their partners, families and staff are as safe as possible from acquiring infections through our activities
2. all staff at Touch Trust are aware of and put into operation basic principles of infection control
3. Our Guests and their partners are empowered to make choices about their preferred activities and decisions about their healthcare which will help protect them from unnecessary infection risks.

Touch Trust will adhere to all relevant infection control legislation, including;



1. the Health and Safety at Work Act, etc. 1974 and the Public Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 1988, which place a duty on the organisation to prevent the spread of infection
2. the Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR), which place a duty on the organisation to report outbreaks of certain diseases as well as accidents such as needle-stick accidents
3. the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), which place a duty on the organisation to ensure that potentially infectious materials within the organisation are identified as hazards and dealt with accordingly
4. the Food Safety Act 1990.

Infection Control Procedures

At Touch Trust;

1. all 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
2. the management of Touch Trust will make every effort to ensure that staff offering outreach services in the homes of our Guests have access to sufficient facilities and supplies of appropriate equipment to ensure that they can implement effective infection control procedures and techniques
3. any staff who does not feel that 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

Effective Hand Washing

Touch Trust believes that the potential for cross-infection is highest due to unwashed or poorly washed hands, which provide an effective transfer route for micro-organisms, mostly by contaminating equipment used during the Sessions.

Touch Trust believes that regular, effective hand washing and drying (and hand sanitizing), when done correctly, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Staff who fail to adequately wash and dry their hands before and after Activity Sessions, and who fail to properly sanitize their hands during Activity Sessions, may transfer micro-organisms from one Guest to another and to the equipment being used, exposing themselves, Guests and their partners to infection.

Touch Trust also believes that regular equipment cleaning is also essential to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Staff who fail to ensure the equipment used in their Activity Sessions is clean, and who fail to isolate any contaminated equipment for cleaning before further use, also expose themselves, our Guests and their partners to infection.



For these reasons;

4. All staff should, at all times, observe high standards of hygiene to protect themselves and their Guests from the unnecessary spread of infection.
5. All staff should ensure that their hands are thoroughly washed and dried between Activity Sessions, and at any other time;
 - a. after handling any body fluids or waste or soiled items
 - b. after using the toilet
 - c. before handling foodstuffs
6. Hands should be washed thoroughly — liquid soaps and disposable paper towels should be used rather than bar soaps and fabric towels whenever possible.
7. All cuts or abrasions, particularly on the hands, should be covered with waterproof dressings at all times.
8. Ordinary soap is considered to be effective for routine use in removing dirt and reducing levels of transient micro-organisms on the skin to acceptably safe levels.
9. The use of antiseptic or antimicrobial preparations is recommended if service users are known to have an infectious disease or are colonised with antibiotic-resistant bacteria, such as Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA).
10. Antiseptic hand washing solutions and hand sanitizing wipes may also be used in situations where effective hand washing is not practicable, for example during group Activity Sessions.
11. All staff should also ensure that their hands are properly sanitized during Sessions:
 - a. between working with each and every Guest where direct contact is involved, no matter how minor the contact
 - b. after any touch therapy or massage, including offering Guests hand cream
 - c. before and after any care activity.
12. The use of alcoholic products for hand decontamination is not intended to replace washing hands with soap and water but rather to supplement hand washing where extra decontamination is required or to provide an alternative means of hand decontamination in situations where standard facilities are unavailable or unacceptable (for example, between service users or in unsanitary conditions).
13. For hand sanitizers and hand cleansing wipes to be effective hands should be thoroughly washed before their use and again after the Activity Session has ended.



Equipment Cleaning to Prevent Cross Infection

Touch Trust is aware that sharing equipment, including musical instruments, fabrics and hand cream used in our Activity Sessions between people at these sessions can also provide a transfer route for micro-organisms. Touch Trust therefore believes that maintaining clean and hygienic equipment for use in sessions is essential for effective infection control.

Effective equipment cleaning is the responsibility of all Creative Facilitators, and time will be allocated on the weekly timetable for this task. Creative Facilitators who fail to ensure the equipment they use in activity sessions is clean and hygienic may expose themselves, our Guests and others to infection. Therefore;

1. All equipment used in Activity Sessions that is offered to Guests by their partners and by our Creative Facilitators and must be clean and hygienic
2. Creative Facilitators are also responsible for ensuring that equipment that becomes contaminated during our sessions (e.g. by sputum), including musical instruments and fabric, is isolated from the rest of the equipment in use
3. Creative facilitators must ensure all the equipment left in the Session Rooms after their session is clean and dry
4. At least once a week, the musical instruments used in Activity Sessions must be cleaned using antibacterial spray and warm, soapy water, to ensure good hygiene maintenance.

Effective Laundry

Touch Trust is also aware that several of our Guests will inevitably share the pillows, bean bags and sofas in our Session Rooms over the course of any given day. It is therefore very important that the fabrics, throws, sheets and pillowcases are kept clean and hygienic, and that the bean bags, mattresses and pillows offered to our Guests who have incontinence issues are waterproof and suitable for disinfection. To prevent micro-organisms from being transferred by these routes, Session Leaders must therefore ensure that;

1. Any fabric, cushion or pillow that becomes soiled or contaminated (e.g. with urine, faeces or sputum) during an Activity Session is removed from the session room until it can be cleaned, and bagged ready to be laundered if necessary.
2. Water proof mattresses, pillows and sofas should be offered to Guests where there is an identified risk of contamination during session (e.g. due to incontinence)



3. Protective gloves and aprons must be worn by all staff when handling contaminated fabric, pillows or cushions, and when cleaning waterproof mattresses and sofas, etc.

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 the OFFENSIVE/HYGIENIC WASTE bins provided in the two disability toileting rooms here.

Use of Protective Clothing

1. Adequate and suitable personal protective equipment should always be provided by Touch Trust, including vinyl disposable gloves and disposable plastic aprons.
2. All staff who are at risk of coming into direct contact with body fluids should use these 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 every member of staff. The need to replenish supplies must be communicated to Touch Trust's management.
4. All gloves supplied for use in personal care or in cleaning tasks should be vinyl and not latex, to prevent our Guests and staff suffering from an allergic reaction to latex gloves.

Cleaning and Procedures for the Cleaning of Spillages

1. Staff should treat every spillage of body fluids or body waste as quickly as possible and as potentially infectious.
2. When cleaning up a spillage staff should wear protective gloves and aprons and use the disposable wipes provided wherever possible.
1. staff should make an urgent appointment to see a GP or, if none is available, Accident and Emergency
2. Managers should record and investigate the incident and ensure that the member of staff is offered appropriate "post-exposure prophylaxis" and counselling as required.

Food Hygiene

1. All staff should adhere to Touch Trust's food hygiene policy and ensure that all food prepared on the premises is prepared, cooked, stored and presented in accordance



with the high standards required by the Food Safety Act 1990 and the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013.

2. Any member of staff who becomes ill while handling food should report at once to his or her line manager.

Reporting

The RIDDOR obliges the 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, Bev Garside (Touch Trust's CEO) is responsible for informing the HSE.

RIDDOR forms are kept in the Health and Safety file in the administration area.

In the event of the suspected outbreak of an infectious disease at the organisation, the local Consultant in Communicable Disease Control or Communicable Disease Team should be contacted immediately.

Training

All new Touch Trust staff should be encouraged to read the policy on infection control as part of their induction process. Existing staff should be offered training covering basic information about infection control. In-house training sessions should be conducted at least annually and all relevant staff should attend.

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.

Claudia Molzhan is responsible for organising and coordinating training at Touch Trust.

Coronavirus (COVI -19) and Flu Pandemic

A pandemic (such as Novel coronavirus, bird flu (avian influenza) or swine flu pandemic) has the potential to affect severely the organisation, its employees and their families, and requires specific planning over and above that made for other disasters. The impact of a pandemic on employee sickness absence rates, public transport systems, suppliers and health services is complex and requires the extension of provisions contained in the organisation's primary business continuity plan. A Pandemic has the potential to affect all businesses and employers in a region, including those providing essential services on which this business relies.



This plan provides a system for the organisation to plan for, respond to, and recover from a pandemic, using the World Health Organisation alert phases to trigger organisation-level actions once evidence emerges of increased human-to-human transmission.

The plan focuses on:

- enhanced protection for high-risk work sites, vulnerable employees; and guests
- raising employees' awareness of the threat of a pandemic and testing their preparedness;
- maintaining health surveillance and hygiene measures; and
- producing action plans that are specific to the organisation's location.

Planning for a Pandemic

Vivette Boon is the organisation's designated pandemic coordinator. The functions of the pandemic co-ordinator include:

- maintaining the team's own awareness of global developments in virus strains (including guidance on containment strategies);
- ensuring that external stakeholders are involved in planning for a pandemic (e.g. suppliers, insurers, customers and, where relevant, the public).
- stockpile essential supplies, materials and equipment;
- ensure that maintenance plans are up to date to guarantee that all equipment essential to the business's operation is capable of sustained operation in the event of a pandemic;
- prepare timelines for how long it will be possible for the organisation to carry out its essential functions without critical supplies, personnel and equipment;
- ensure that occupational health services are involved in pandemic planning and encourage a high take-up of vaccinations amongst employees, if available;
- prioritise staff for vaccines and antiviral medications in accordance with the essential functions/services identified;
- put in place a pandemic response protocol that will inform steps to heighten awareness of the organisation's infection control procedures, particularly provisions covering hand hygiene;



- ensure that adequate supplies of infection control materials (e.g. alcohol-based hand cleaners or wipes, gloves and masks) are held in preparedness for a pandemic; and
- consult the organisation's legal services function in relation to this contingency plan, paying particular attention to questions surrounding the quarantining of employees returning from personal travel to affected areas and whether or not a worker who has been exposed to the virus but shows no symptoms should be kept away from work.

Transmission Interventions: Infection Control

During a pandemic, the organisation will seek to reduce the overall and specific risks to staff by taking appropriate infection control actions (e.g. strengthening guidance on hand washing, unnecessary contact such as hand shaking, and coughing).

Basic health protection advice will be issued to all staff, including guidance on:

- avoiding close contact;
- staying at home when sick;
- covering mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing;
- cleaning hands; and
- avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth.

Additional protection measures will be taken to ensure that influenza / coronavirus (COVID-19) cannot spread through contaminated objects and surfaces, such as handles, railings and equipment. Surfaces touched by hands will be cleaned at least daily using either soap and water or disinfectant.

Staff with flu-like / coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms will be required to stay at home until the symptoms disappear and will be allowed into the workplace only in extreme circumstances (e.g. to sustain essential operations that cannot be performed by other staff).

Stockpiles of personal protective equipment, including masks and gloves, will be held, and used during a pandemic, with appropriate training and fitting (particularly in the case of masks).

Communications

The organisation will distribute information to employees on the disease that:

- gives information to employees and their families on the symptoms of the virus and modes of transmission;



- informs employees of personal protection and response strategies (e.g. personal protective equipment, sneezing and coughing etiquette, and hand washing);
- reinforces the message that employees should not come to work if they are not well;
- updates employees on the implementation of the plan as trigger points are reached and passed; and
- sets out how the organisation will liaise and communicate with local businesses, communities, government agencies and the NHS.

Business and Personal Travel

Only essential business travel will be permitted during a pandemic, and procedures for approving travel will be tightened, requiring authorisation from Bev Garside.

Testing and Review

This plan and the processes that it describes will be reviewed regularly in order to ensure that the organisation is fully prepared to respond to and recover from a severe pandemic.

During a pandemic, the senior team will implement actions appropriate to the World Health Organisation pandemic phase, and other trigger points used by government departments and official agencies.

The team will monitor and assess actions as they are implemented to ensure that the plan is on target.

The plan will be adjusted as necessary during a pandemic to ensure that the organisation's response is effective and flexible. It will be adjusted every 90 days during the early stages of a pandemic, and more frequently thereafter.

Signed:

Date:

12th February 2020

Policy review date:

February 2021
