



Covid-19 Infection control in care settings

Infection prevention and control has always been important in care settings, but now more so than ever before.

We get that running a business whilst simultaneously keeping on top of your health and safety obligations can be tough, so that's where we come in.



Getting started

To give you a helping hand with your duties, our experts have shared a handful of key questions they ask care providers when inspecting their site, specifically relating to infection prevention and control.

Area	Activity	Y/N
Use of Sharps	Are sharps being used as required by the Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013?	
	Is there appropriate written procedures/protocols for when use of safer sharps is not clinically appropriate?	
	Has an infection control risk assessment or audit been completed/reviewed in the last 12 months?	
Food Hygiene	Are all members of staff trained in appropriate food hygiene procedures?	
	Have supervisors received advanced food hygiene training?	
	Has the health declaration form been undertaken for all members of staff who handle food?	
	Is the return to work form completed for all food handlers on their return to work from sickness and is there a plan should symptoms still be apparent/there is ongoing treatment required?	
	Is the temperature of fridges and freezers being monitored at advised frequencies?	
	Has a food safety hazard [HACCP] analysis been undertaken?	
	Are cleaning schedules in place and documented?	
	Is there evidence that the kitchen undergoes a deep clean on a regular basis?	
Health Surveillance	Are all staff offered Hepatitis B vaccination?	
Welfare Training	Has (role specific) Health & Safety training been provided to members of staff, including certificated infection control procedures and policies?	
	Can staff display adequate competencies regarding blood borne viruses and bodily fluids and have they all acknowledged internal training and risk assessments?	
Personal Protection Clothing and Equipment	Have written records and instructions been given to employees on the correct use of PPE?	
	Is PPE being worn correctly by members of staff/employees?	
	Is all PPE that has been issued stored correctly?	
	Is all PPE in good condition?	

Area	Activity	Y/N
Waste	Are all staff aware of waste disposal procedures?	
	Is hazardous waste segregated and disposed of correctly?	
Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare	Are there adequate washing facilities?	
	Is there soap, hand dryers/towels and toilet paper in all toilets?	
	Are changing and storage facilities provided for employees to store work and personal clothing?	
	Are housekeeping levels suitable across the premises?	
	Is clean/potable water available at all times, with all outlets maintained in a clean and hygienic condition?	



Useful links and sources

Health and Social Care Act 2008
code of practice on the prevention and control of infections

Department of Health
Care homes: Infection prevention and control

Royal College of Nursing
Essential practice for infection prevention and control

Did you answer 'no'?

As part of their inspections, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) will look at how well staff and people living in care homes are protected by infection prevention and control (IPC) - key line of enquiry S5. They will look at key areas, including visitors, shielding, admission, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), testing, premises, staffing, and policies. Infection prevention and control will also be looked at very closely by other regulatory bodies, including the Care Inspectorate and Care Inspectorate Wales.

If you answered 'no' to any of the questions above, then you could be breaching Health & Safety laws, which puts you, your care business, your service users, and your employees at risk.

And remember, answering 'yes' doesn't mean you're in the clear. There are plenty of checks to be made, and health & safety is by no means a one-off job.



Your Covid-19 responsibilities

In addition to the above, you have specific responsibilities when it comes to preventing the risk of COVID-19 in your care setting.

The two biggest responsibilities for employers are making sure workplaces are COVID-secure and performing a COVID-19 specific risk assessment. The government's guidance also states that "if possible, employers should publish the results of their risk assessments on their website and we expect all businesses with over 50 employees to do so".

With so many new workplace hazards and risks to consider – such as social distancing, facemasks, or hygiene practices, previous workplace risk assessments aren't sufficient anymore.

In addition, as part of its 22 September announcement, the government stated that there will be fines of up to £10,000 to individuals who refuse to self isolate after they've been advised to. These fines are now also applicable to businesses who don't follow COVID rules. It's also worth checking your policies and procedures remain reflective of what is actually done in practice. For example, you may need to revisit your fire risk assessment so you're COVID-19 compliant.



For more information visit:

marshcommercial.co.uk/for-business/care

Or call our Health and Care team on:

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