

Residential Infection Control Toolbox Talk Sessions

2 to 4 April 2020 FAQs: Covid-19

Development and Regeneration Services



Residential Infection Control Procedures in HFLs Toolbox Talk Sessions

A series of toolbox talks were completed in Hawthorn House, Orchard Grove, Riverside Care Home, Meadowburn Care Home and Victoria Gardens Care Home from Thursday 2 to Saturday 4 April 2020 for PLS catering and cleaning teams.

Emma Rodger (Health and Safety Manager) advised questions would be noted and a frequently asked questions (FAQs) document would be circulated to allow all that attended the sessions to view other team members questions and the responses to the questions.

1. General Questions:

- **How do PLS staff know if a resident is symptomatic as a lot have chest infections/coughs anyway?**

If the resident is suspected to be symptomatic with Covid-19, HSCP staff will display a sign on the door as described in the notes above. Furthermore, HSCP staff will be wearing full PPE on entering the room including face masks. If you are at all unsure, the unit manager will offer reassurance to you.

- **How do we social distance in a dementia unit?**

This has been described above, it is very difficult, however you should try as much as possible, to adhere to the 2 metre rule, where this is not achievable, turn your head and body to prevent directly breathing onto a person.

- **Are the residents who are shielding due to underlying health conditions bedrooms doors having signage on them?**

Some residents will be shielding, this means that they fall into the category that they should not go outside for 12 weeks. As much as possible, residents in these categories will be kept within their rooms. Staff entering these rooms will be kept to a minimal. This process is slightly different in each unit, and confirmation should be sought by the Catering Manager/Cleaning Supervisor/FMC on how to proceed in this situation. How do we not spread the virus to residents who are shielding?

By adhering to the social distancing measures we have described. On entering the resident's room, go straight to the bathroom wash your hands and put on PPE. Talk to the resident, try to maintain a 2 metre distance, where this is not possible, try to keep your back to the resident to prevent any potential spread but reassure them all the time – remember they will be scared and feeling very isolated.

- **Does the virus incubate and for how long?**

Yes, although the exact details are not yet known. If a person develops symptoms they must isolate for 7 days, anyone else in their household must isolate for 14 days. If someone in your household develops symptoms you must isolate for 14 days.

- **Do we need to change aprons going out to the bin (catering and cleaning)?**

Aprons and gloves must be changed after each task. Yes aprons must be changed if you are wearing them out to the bin.

- **Why do we not touch our faces?**

The main routes we can become infected by the virus is through ingestion (the mouth); inhalation (the nose); and absorption (the eyes). This is why it is so important that the hands are kept clean at all times and we limit the amount we touch our face.

2. Service Specific Questions

Catering

- **How can catering staff social distance in kitchens?**

As described above, it is recognised this is difficult, however as much as possible try to distance. Communicate with each other and where possible as other catering staff to move to allow you to get passed or to access areas you need. Where the distance is impossible to manage, position your bodies to angle yourselves away from each other.

- **If a catering team member is absent due to symptoms or confirmed do the team need to self-isolate?**

No, the government guidance does not currently recommend this.

- **Why are we not wearing gloves at all times including kitchen areas?**

It is not a legal requirement for food handlers working in a food business to wear gloves. Catering and FM removed the use of disposable gloves in kitchens a number of years ago because catering staff were not ensuring that they only wore a pair of gloves for a single task. Catering staff were not adhering to the non-multi-tasking rule when they had gloves on and therefore were presenting possible cross contamination hazards.

All Catering Staff as part of their induction and food safety training, including the back to basics programme have had various training of good Hand hygiene; Personal hygiene in the kitchen; and Cross-contamination of food. All of which rely heavily on good hand hygiene.

There is no need for the Catering staff to be wearing disposable gloves when operating in the kitchen at present as they have constant supply of hot running water and soap. The most likely way for a caterer to become infected by Covid-19 will be through ingestion (the mouth); inhalation (the nose); and or absorption (the eyes). Therefore the instruction to wash hand frequently will prevent any possible risk of infection. If staff wear to wear gloves, we are opening them up to reducing the frequency to which they currently wash their hands. Furthermore, the gloves could be potentially contaminated and they would touch their face. The gloves only keep the surface of the hands clean, they do not prevent cross contamination if the gloved hand touches any part of the face.

Cleaning

- **Conflicting information regarding locking off of rooms for 72 hours from HSCP staff.**

Information given is that rooms will be closed for 72 hours, only then will PLS staff be asked to enter.

- **Cleaners asking to wear masks if a resident is coughing.**

No, this was described above, cleaners are not trained in the use, nor do they currently fall into the recommended category for face mask by the government.

- **What training do HSCP have for cleaning?**

They will do minimum cleaning and will be using Unisafe+. HSCP will be responsible for ensuring that staff have adequate information to undertake necessary cleaning.

- **Is it safe to wear contact lenses?**

Yes, but it is essential that people wash their hands before touching their eyes.