PPE POLICY

The benefit of wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) is that it helps protect both clients and staff from infection. You should be provided with appropriate PPE suitable for the task and the type of PPE worn should be based on the:

* Risk of micro-organisms spreading to service users and staff
* Risk of soiling of your uniform/workwear
* Risk of blood and/or body fluids contaminating your skin, nose, mouth, or eyes

All PPE should be disposed of as soon as the activity is completed and as per local policy. Always wash your hands after disposing of PPE.

**Gloves**

The main reasons for wearing gloves:

* To protect hands from contamination with blood, body fluids and microorganisms
* To reduce the risk of micro-organisms spreading to both service users and staff

Gloves are not a substitute for handwashing. Hands must be washed or alcohol handrub applied to hands immediately before putting on and after removing each pair of gloves.

Gloves must:

* Be appropriate for the task - use disposable clinical gloves when providing personal care and domestic (rubber) gloves for cleaning. See ‘Glove selection guide’
* Be changed if a perforation or puncture is suspected
* Be changed between each different task on a service user
* Be worn as single use items
* Not be washed, nor cleaned with alcohol handrub and reused
* Be disposed of after each procedure or care activity

The reuse of gloves is not recommended for the following reasons:

* Glove integrity can be damaged if in contact with substances such as isopropanol, ethanol, oils and disinfectants
* Many gloves will develop micro-punctures very quickly and will no longer perform their barrier function
* There is a risk of spread of infection
* Washing of gloved hands or using an alcohol handrub on gloves is considered unsafe practice

Latex gloves Latex gloves are made from natural rubber (latex) and due to their elasticity, provide a better fit than other types of glove. Latex can cause skin sensitivity and allergies and following risk assessment, some employers are using alternative products such as nitrile.

Nitrile gloves Nitrile gloves are a synthetic alternative to latex gloves. To be worn if the employer has a latex-free policy or if the service user/staff member is latex sensitive.

Vinyl gloves Vinyl gloves are not recommended for contact with blood and blood-stained body fluids. These are looser fitting, less durable for procedures involving twisting and are more likely to tear and develop holes. They are not associated with skin irritation. Vinyl gloves should only be worn when there is no risk of exposure to blood or blood-stained body fluids, and if tasks are short and nonmanipulative.

**Aprons**

Disposable aprons are resistant to fluids and protect the areas at highest risk of contamination on the front of the body. A disposable apron is single use. It should be worn whenever body fluids or other source of contamination is likely to soil the front of the uniform or workwear, especially when:

* Dealing with urine and faeces
* Decontaminating equipment or the environment
* Undertaking a procedure on a service user with a known or suspected infection

A disposable apron should be removed and disposed of after each task. Never wear an apron for a dirty task and then move onto a clean task without changing it. Hand hygiene should be performed after removing the apron. There is no need to wear disposable gloves or apron when unloading washing machines, dishwashers, tumble dryers or when ironing.

**Facial Protection**

If there is a risk of splashing of blood and/or body fluids to the face, safety spectacles or a visor should be worn to protect the eyes and face. Eye and face protection should not be impeded by accessories, e.g. false eyelashes, facial piercings.

Eye protection Safety glasses are not routinely required, unless there is a risk of body fluids getting into the eyes, e.g. a service user spitting.

Masks Face masks are not routinely required and will be made available when necessary, e.g. in the event of a Pandemic. Masks should:

* Cover both the nose and mouth and not be allowed to dangle around the neck after use
* Not be touched once put on
* Be changed when they become moist
* Be worn once and disposed of when removed.
* Hand hygiene must be performed after disposal

**COVID-19 PPE POLICY**

**PPE must always be donned and doffed outside of clients’ property – use hand sanitiser before, during and after donning and doffing.**

**Gloves, aprons, and masks to be worn at every visit.**

**Gloves and aprons to be changed in between personal care and food prep tasks (as normal) and as per instructions above.**

**Masks are compulsory at all visits and worn as per instructions above. Masks must be disposed of after each individual visit.**

**Visors or Safety Glasses must be worn at all visits where wet tasks such as showering, bathing, washing, hair washing, emptying commodes, etc., are being carried out for all clients**

**Visors must be worn at every visit when visiting someone new to us for the first 14 days.**

**Visors to be worn for the duration of the visit to a client that is symptomatic of Covid-19 or has had a positive test result.**