

Our Commitment to Safety

West Heanton is committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of our clients, team, visitors and the wider community. Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) is a core part of how we deliver safe, high-quality care every day.

We follow national legislation, professional guidance and best practice to reduce the risk of infection and maintain a clean, safe environment.

What This Policy Covers

This policy explains how West Heanton:

- Prevents and controls infection
- Maintains a safe and clean environment
- Responds to infectious diseases and outbreaks
- Supports clients, visitors and the team to stay safe
- Works with health professionals and national agencies
- Ensures the team is trained and competent in IPC

Standards We Follow

West Heanton complies with recognised national standards, including:

- Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of Practice on Infection Prevention & Control
- Care Quality Commission (CQC) Fundamental Standards
- UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) guidance
- Health & Safety at Work Act
- COSHH Regulations
- Food Safety and Environmental Protection legislation

These standards ensure our infection control systems are safe, effective and regularly reviewed.

How We Keep Our Environment Safe

Cleanliness and Hygiene

We maintain high standards of cleanliness throughout the home, including:

- Daily cleaning routines
- Enhanced cleaning during outbreaks
- Colour-coded equipment to prevent cross-contamination
- Regular audits to ensure standards are met

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways to prevent infection. The team follows recognised handwashing techniques and uses alcohol gel at key moments.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The team uses PPE such as gloves, aprons and masks when needed to protect clients and themselves.

Safe Waste and Laundry Systems

We use safe, colour-coded systems for:

- Clinical waste
- Sharps disposal
- Laundry handling
- Contaminated items

Food Safety

We follow strict food hygiene procedures, including temperature checks, safe storage and team training.

How We Identify and Manage Infection

Early Recognition

The team is trained to recognise symptoms of infection quickly and report concerns immediately.

Isolation When Needed

If a client has an infection, we may use room-based isolation to reduce the risk of transmission. This is always done sensitively and with respect for the individual's wellbeing.

Working With Health Professionals

We work closely with:

- GPs
- UKHSA
- Environmental Health
- Local authority IPC teams

This ensures timely advice, testing and support when needed.

Reporting Infectious Diseases

We notify UKHSA if:

- A notifiable disease is suspected
- An outbreak occurs
- A high-risk infection is identified

Outbreak Management

If an outbreak is suspected, we follow a clear action pathway:

- The team reports symptoms immediately
- Managers assess risk and begin monitoring
- Enhanced cleaning and precautions are introduced
- UKHSA guidance is followed
- Families are informed when appropriate (via the direct email address if provided)
- Team members follow exclusion periods before returning to work

This ensures a quick, coordinated response that protects everyone in our care.

Team Training and Responsibilities

All team members receive:

- IPC induction training
- Ongoing training when guidance changes

The team is responsible for:

- Following IPC procedures
- Maintaining hand hygiene
- Using PPE correctly
- Reporting symptoms promptly
- Raising concerns about safety

Visitors and Families

We welcome visitors and aim to maintain safe visiting arrangements. During periods of increased infection risk, we may introduce temporary measures to protect clients.

Visitors may be asked to:

- Use hand sanitiser
- Wear PPE if required
- Avoid visiting if unwell
- Help us reduce footfall
- Follow any outbreak guidance in place

These steps help keep everyone safe.

Continuous Improvement

We regularly review and improve our infection control systems through:

- Audits
- Monitoring infection trends
- Team feedback
- Annual IPC Statements
- Policy updates when guidance changes

Our goal is to maintain the highest standards of safety and care.

Contact Us

If you have questions about infection prevention and control at West Heanton, please speak to a member of the team or contact the Duty Manager.