Policy on controlling the risks of infectious diseases in the workplace

# Introduction

The following policy includes a list of the commitments made by the Company to help control and reduce the risk and spread of infectious diseases to employees.

If an employee’s role brings them into contact with blood or bodily fluids like urine, faeces, vomit or sputum or whose duties include food handling, they are at a higher risk of infection. Such substances may contain micro- organisms such as bacteria, fungi, viruses, internal parasites, and other infectious proteins known as prions.

Employees may be harmed by being infected with a micro-organism, by being exposed to toxins produced by the micro-organism, or by having an allergic reaction to the micro-organism or substances it produces. It is therefore, important that strict hygiene precautions are implemented and observed.

Our rules on controlling the risks of infectious diseases must always be followed. However, there may be times when it is more important than ever that they are strictly followed, for example, during the outbreak of Coronavirus.

To restrict and reduce the risk of infection in the workplace, the Company will:

* designate a lead for infection prevention and control
* implement systems that assess the risk of and prevent, detect and control the risk of infection
* ensure sufficient resources are available to secure effective prevention and control of infection
* ensure employees, contractors and other persons who directly or indirectly provide work are provided with suitable information, instruction, training and supervision.

When it comes to this information, instruction, training and supervision the Company will ensure that precautions are put in place as follows:

* information is obtained from and shared with other businesses audits are carried out to ensure policies and procedures are being implemented
* a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is carried out for prevention and infection control
* ensure an appropriate standard of cleanliness and hygiene is maintained throughout the premises and that the premises are maintained in good physical repair and condition
* ensure that equipment is cleaned and maintained to the appropriate standard
* ensure that a suitable cleaning schedule is in place and followed
* ensure there is suitable and sufficient hand washing facilities and antimicrobial hand rubs (gel or liquid) where appropriate
* ensure the appropriate supply and provision of clean linen and laundry
* ensure suitable information on infection control is provided to visitors, including the importance of hand washing by visitors
* ensure information regarding infection is passed on to any other person, as necessary
* ensure individuals who develop an infection are identified promptly and that they receive the appropriate treatment and care
* inform the local health protection unit of any outbreaks or serious incidents relating to infection
* ensure all staff co-operate with our control of infection procedures
* provide regular suitable training, including induction training to all staff on the prevention and control of infection
* keep a record of all training and updates to staff
* ensure prevention and control of infection responsibilities are outlined to employees in job descriptions
* stagger start and finish times so that fewer people are together at once
* cancel non-essential overseas travel to affected areas across the world
* cancel non-essential training sessions
* deal with clients/customers by phone and email
* if face to face meetings must take place, ensure that facilities are suitable to minimise the spread of infection e.g. allowing a distance of more than one metre between participants
* consider whether employees may work from home
* offer appropriate vaccines to employees and keep a record of
* relevant immunisations
* ensure the following policies are in place and kept up to date

**[Optional – select applicable policies from the below]**

standard infection prevention and control  aseptic techniques

isolation of service users with an infection  safe handling and disposal of sharps

prevention of occupational exposure to blood-borne viruses (BBVs), including prevention of sharps injuries

management of occupational exposure to BBVs and post exposure

prophylaxis

closure of rooms or premises to new admissions

disinfection

decontamination of reusable medical devices  single use medical devices

control of outbreaks and infections associated with specific alert organisms  safe handling and disposal of waste

care of deceased persons

use and care of invasive devices

purchase, cleaning, decontamination, maintenance and disposal of equipment

dissemination of information

isolation facilities

uniform and dress code

immunisation of service users

# Procedure

The Company will apply the below infection outbreak procedure to control the risk of infectious diseases in the workplace:

* strongly recommend that employees follow any Government guidance published on self-isolation/quarantine
* encourage staff to report symptoms of infectious diseases
* ensure staff who have infectious disease symptoms do not come to work and, in the case of diarrhoea and vomiting, they stay away for at least 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped
* where required, ensure notifiable outbreaks are reported to the relevant authority e.g. HSE
* co-operate with any investigation by a relevant authority and comply with any investigation findings
* keep the number of employees dealing with affected persons to a minimum and do not allow these employees to be involved with food handling
* prioritise cleaning, paying particular attention to the cleaning and disinfecting of toilets, handles, support handrails, taps and wash basins
* ensure staff pay strict attention to infection control procedures, in particular to the washing of hands and the wearing of protective clothing if required
* provide and use antibacterial hand wash in all hand washing areas and in the rooms of outbreak
* inform visitors of the outbreak and discourage unnecessary visits receive external advice, if necessary.

# Responsibility

is responsible for the implementation of this policy Signed

Date

Date of Review (recommended 3 years)