

IPC NEWS

Winter Preparedness



Wirral Community Health and Care
NHS Foundation Trust



Essential news from the IPC Team

Adult Social Care Settings

December 2022

Help stop the spread of viruses

Currently in Wirral we are experiencing increased levels of respiratory and gastrointestinal illnesses/outbreaks. This is placing those who are vulnerable at increased risk as well as increasing pressure on our healthcare services.

Vaccinations for flu and Covid-19 offer you the best protection against these viruses and help to protect others too. We encourage all staff and residents to be vaccinated if you have not already done so - it's not too late.

Acute respiratory infection resource pack

All care homes should have received the Acute Respiratory Infection Resource Pack (ARI resource pack) that was produced by UKHSA. It is important that all staff are familiar with this guidance and that it is accessible within the care home. All staff must be able to follow the correct process in the event an outbreak is declared.

It is important that you proactively complete (retain and keep up to date) appendix 1 – (care home and resident information template) within the ARI resource pack. Do this now to ensure you are prepared.

This will be requested if a flu outbreak is declared and based upon a risk assessment. Antiviral medication may be indicated. If appendix 1 is not available when requested this may lead to delays in resident treatment.

Outbreak management

Covid-19 and flu symptoms can present in a very similar way and can be difficult to differentiate. Prompt recognition, reporting and management of outbreaks can reduce transmission within settings and help to keep residents safe.

Staff must know how to recognise an outbreak and implement the appropriate measures promptly. It is important that you have stock of PCR test kits in the event your setting has a Covid-19 outbreak.

Follow basic infection prevention measures

It is vital that you continue to follow basic infection prevention measures to reduce the spread of infections and keep others safe. By doing so we can make a difference and break the chain of infection. Please continue to:

- Follow and reinforce good hand and respiratory hygiene
- Wear PPE appropriately (as per UKHSA guidance)
- Maintain high standards of environmental cleanliness
- Maintain good ventilation
- When caring for residents affected by gastrointestinal infections, use liquid soap and water for hand hygiene. Do not use alcohol gel to clean hands as this is not effective
- Be prepared: maintain sufficient stock of PPE, hand hygiene and suitable cleaning and disinfection products
- Access free lateral flow testing as soon as possible if staff have Covid-19 symptoms
- Visitors who are unwell should not visit the care setting
- Keep up to date with guidance as it can sometimes change rapidly

The IPC Team wishes you a Merry Christmas and a happy infection-free 2023!