

Providing Care in the Most Appropriate Place

Staff in care homes have a responsibility to provide the best possible level of care and support to all who live, work and visit the care home.

When an individual is found to be or thought to be suffering from an infection, it is necessary to consider the possible source and route of transmission in order to institute appropriate control measures – this may include separating an individual.

There are a wide range of infections and conditions that may require individuals to be separated. Separation is undertaken for two main reasons:

Source: to prevent the transmission of infection from the affected individual to others.

Protective: to prevent the transmission of infection to others who may be particularly susceptible.

Infections can be transmitted through a variety of routes from one part of your body to another, or from person to person, from the environment, food or even animals. People can become infected by contact - touching something or someone; by breathing something in or by swallowing something; or infections can be introduced through a cut or wound or through contaminated care equipment such as feeding equipment.

Wherever possible individuals found to be or thought to be suffering from an infection should be separated in a single room or moved to a room of their own. Ideally the room should have its own toilet and hand washing facilities.

Being separated from others can be a frightening or frustrating experience and staff should discuss the situation with the individual affected, the person they may currently share a room with, and family carers to ensure that everyone understands the importance of preventing infection and protecting the wellbeing of all.

For some, the affected person or their family may not agree or perhaps for people with dementia, separation may not be possible or practical. In these cases a plan needs to be in place to minimise the spread of infection.

All arrangements, agreements and plans around separation should be well documented and reviewed as the situation develops.

Preventing Infection in Care

Infection Prevention and Control:
Care Homes for Older People and
Home Environment



Standard infection control precautions must be observed at all times by everyone living and working in the setting including those separated. Staff in particular should remember the importance of hand hygiene, personal protective equipment and the cleaning of care equipment that may be brought in to and out of the isolation area. Occasionally, additional special measures may be required and advice should be sought from the Health Protection Team.

Always remember to be aware that infections can spread rapidly and the importance of reporting any signs of infection to your manager as soon as possible.

To break the chain of infection:

Remember:

- Remember the chain of infection and how an infection is transmitted and spread
- To recognise if someone is ill and report to your supervisor
- After someone has been separated reflect on how this was handled and any problems encountered