

Beyond Limits Dumfries & Galloway provides policies and procedures to promote safe and consistent practice across the Organisation. The framework laid down within our policies and procedures lets everyone know how we work and reflects our values and mission statement. Our policies and procedures are written to help us, employees of Beyond Limits Dumfries & Galloway, to make good, safe decisions.

Beyond Limits Dumfries & Galloway expects all employees to be familiar with the contents of all policies and procedures relevant to their role and to understand how to apply them within their daily work.

None of these documents stand alone, all fit within the larger framework of the way we work and any associated policies which are particularly relevant will be directly referenced.

Hand Hygiene

To be read in association with the following policies:
Infectious Diseases & Control, Health & Safety.

This Hand Hygiene Policy is an essential policy which must be read and signed by all employees. You will be required to do this during your probationary period and when this Hand Hygiene Policy is reviewed. There will be a copy of this policy kept in the Health & Safety folder of the person you support.

Hand Hygiene Policy – What this means to Beyond Limits Dumfries & Galloway

This policy is about the way we need to work in order to protect the people we support from the transmission of infectious diseases. Hand hygiene is one of the most important procedures for

preventing this. It is essential that everyone takes responsibility to ensure that the care provided is carried out in a safe manner.

The aim of this Policy is to promote good hand hygiene amongst all Staff to prevent the risk of the people we support acquiring a health care associated infection.

Micro-organisms such as bacteria and viruses can be introduced into the skin or into the body through susceptible sites such as wounds or by direct contamination or transmitted (spread) by hands.

All Beyond Limits Dumfries & Galloway will have regular Infection Control training every two years.

When working with the people we support in relation to infections, Staff should refer to national infection prevention and control guidance.

Involving the People we Support and their Visitors in Infection Prevention and Control

Staff should encourage the involvement of the people we support and the public in infection prevention and control. In order to facilitate compliance, the following should be introduced:

- Supported People should be encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating and drinking.
- If a Supported Person is unable to access hand washing facilities, alcohol hand rub or skin wipes can be used, unless their hands are visibly soiled or dirty or they have a suspected or confirmed viral gastroenteritis. In this case, alcohol hand rub should not be used and only non-alcohol skin wipes, eg baby wipes should be used.

If a Supported Person has an infection:

- They should use a separate towel to dry their hands and this should not be used by other people. The towel should be washed daily.
- Before leaving the Supported Person's home, visitors should wash their hands with liquid soap and warm running water, drying them thoroughly using paper towels. The use of

kitchen roll is acceptable. Fabric towels should only be used on an individual person basis and laundered daily.

Hand hygiene information leaflets should be available at the Supported Person's home. See link to download a copy.

[Hand-hygiene-Leaflet-for-service-users-September-2020-v1.07.pdf](#)
(infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk)

Good Hand Hygiene Practice

To facilitate effective hand hygiene when delivering direct care, Staff should ensure they:

- Use liquid soap rather than a bar of soap as bars of soap can harbour micro-organisms.
- Cover cuts and abrasions with waterproof dressings.
- Are “Bare Below the Elbows” which entails:
 - ✓ Wearing short sleeved clothing and rolling sleeves up to the elbows.
 - ✓ Removing wrist and hand jewelry. Rings with jewels, stones, ridges or grooves should not be worn as these may harbour micro-organisms and also prevent good hand hygiene.
 - ✓ A plain band ring may be worn but ensure the area under the ring is included when hands are washed or alcohol hand rub applied. Removing dermal piercing on the arm or wrists.
 - ✓ Keeping nails clean and short as long finger nails will allow build-up of debris and micro-organisms under the nails and impede effective handwashing.

When to Clean your Hands

1. Before touching a Supported Person.
2. Immediately after an exposure risk to body fluids (and glove removal).
3. After touching a Supported Person and her/his immediate surroundings, when leaving the Supported Person's side.
4. After touching any object or furniture in the Supported Person's immediate surroundings when leaving – even if the Supported Person has not been touched.

Always clean your hands when the above moments occur, including arriving at and before leaving a Supported Person's home.

The use of gloves is not a substitute for cleaning hands – clean hands before applying and after removing gloves.

Other Examples of when hand hygiene should be performed:

- ✓ Whenever hands are visibly dirty or soiled.
- ✓ Before the start of your shift, between each task and before you go home.
- ✓ Before putting on personal protective equipment (PPE) and after removal of each item of PPE eg. Pair of disposable or domestic gloves (wearing gloves should not be a substitute for handwashing) or apron.
- ✓ Before preparing/serving food or assisting with eating or drinking.
- ✓ Before and after having a break and using the toilet.
- ✓ After handling used laundry, eg. Making beds, dirty clothing.
- ✓ After washing, dressing and toileting service users.
- ✓ After coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- ✓ After performing cleaning tasks.

Most Commonly Missed Areas

It is important to pay particular attention to the following areas which have been shown to be those most commonly missed during handwashing.



Hand Hygiene Products

Research and evidence suggest that:

- Liquid soap and water are as effective as antibacterial handwashing preparations for decontaminating hands and removing most micro-organisms.
- Alcohol hand rubs are not effective at removing physical dirt or soiling and should, therefore, only be used on visibly clean skin.
- Alcohol hand rubs are effective in destroying most micro-organisms. However, they are not effective against C.Dif and viral gastroenteritis, eg Norovirus.

Whichever option is chosen, it must be acceptable to the user in terms of ease of application, time access and dermatological effects.

Hand Cleaning Methods

Hand hygiene is the most important method of protecting the Supported Person, visitors and Staff from infection. All Staff will receive training on the correct technique for hand washing.

Hand Washing

Removes dirt, soiling and most micro-organisms acquired through direct contact with a person and from the environment. Liquid soap and warm running water is adequate.

- Ensure you are “Bare to Elbow”.
- Before applying liquid soap, wet hands under warm running water to minimize the risk of skin damage.
- Apply liquid soap.
- Rub all parts of the hands for at least 15-30 seconds, ensuring that all surfaces of the hands and wrists are covered with soap.
- When working with a Supported Person with a known infection, rub all parts of the hands together including the back of the hands, between the fingers, thumbs, tips of fingers and wrists as in your training provided.
- Rinse hands thoroughly under warm running water to remove residual soap.

- Dry hands thoroughly using paper towels. Wet hands are more likely to transfer micro-organisms than dry hands. The friction of paper towels also helps to further remove micro-organisms on the hands.
- The use of nail brushes is not recommended as they can harbour micro-organisms and can cause skin grazes.

Skin Wipes

If handwashing facilities are unavailable, or a Supported Person is unable to access hand washing facilities, skin wipes can be used.

Non-alcohol skin wipes eg. Baby wipes should be used if the hands are visibly soiled or dirty or the Supported Person has a suspected or confirmed viral gastroenteritis or C.Dif.

Hands should be rubbed with the wipe ensuring that all surfaces and wrists are covered.

Staff using skin wipes for cleaning their hands should:

- ✓ Then apply alcohol hand rub, if available, ensuring that all surfaces of the hands and wrists are covered with the product until the solution has dried.
- ✓ Wash the Supported Person's hands at the earliest opportunity.

Alcohol Hand Rub

Alcohol based hand rubs (with a minimum of 60% alcohol content) offer a practical and acceptable alternative to hand washing in most situations. Pocket sized alcohol hand rub can be used as appropriate.

Alcohol based hand rubs are not effective:

- In removing physical dirt or soiling and, therefore, must only be used on visibly clean skin.
- When working with a Supported Person with viral gastroenteritis, eg Norovirus or a spore forming bacteria, such as C.Dif. Hands must be washed with liquid soap and warm running

water when supporting or in contact with the environment of the Supported Person with these infections.

- Alcohol hand rub may be less effective if used immediately after the application of a hand cream or lotion.

Technique for using Alcohol Hand Rub

- Ensure you are “Bare Below the Elbow”.
- Dispense manufacturers recommended amount of alcohol product on to hands, ensuring it covers all surfaces of the hands and wrists.
- Rub hands ensuring that all the surfaces of the hands and wrists are covered with the product until the solution has dried – about 20-30 seconds.

Skin Care

- To minimize the risk of skin damage, wet hands under warm running water before applying liquid soap.
- Rinse hands well to remove residual soap and dry thoroughly to prevent chapping.
- Always cover cuts and abrasions with a waterproof dressing.
- Staff with skin problems on their hands should report this to their Manager and seek medical advice eg. Pharmacist, Practice Nurse, GP.

Hand Cream and Moisturisers

The use of hand cream and moisturisers will help to prevent skin problems and irritations, therefore, promoting compliance with hand hygiene.

- For maximum benefit, hand cream or moisturiser should be used three times daily.
- Communal pots of hand cream or moisturiser should not be used as these can become contaminated.

