

Applying to register a care service

Infection prevention and control policy: Guidance for applicants

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Introduction

Policy writing guidelines and template

When writing your own policies, it is important to remember that they must be your policies and relevant to your service. It is not appropriate to submit published guidance as 'your policy' or plagiarise another services policy and claim it as your own.

This document provides guidance on how to structure your policy.

Remember, your service is unique and operates in its own individual way. Not all policies are the same. Your policy does not have to be lengthy or overly detailed, think quality not quantity. You need to clearly describe your overarching infection prevention and control (IPC) aim and who is responsible for implementing the IPC policy. It will then be supported by standard operating procedures that explains the 'how to' activity that will help the service meet the IPC policy aims and intent.

It is important to understand the difference between a policy and a standard operating procedure, but they link and support staff in the provision of safe effective evidence-based care

A policy is a formal statement of intent that is followed by everyone that works in the service. It is not designed to tell staff the steps on 'how' to do something as the 'how to' sits with standard operating procedures (SOPs). The policy makes it clear to everyone the overall expectation of the provider organisation around a specific topic area.

Standard operating procedures (SOPs) are a series of steps to be completed by everyone across the service, relevant to their role, which supports the policy intention. SOPs can be changed and adapted to continuously improve outcomes for people but there must be a clear information governance approach to recording when these changes take place over time. For example, it could be at the review date of the policy to make sure the intent is still being met or you may wish to change the 'how' you do things. SOPs clearly state what, how, when and/or who. SOPs offer a detailed description of what needs to happen consistently that supports the organisation's policy intent. They support the meeting of the overarching policy and usually cross reference other SOPs and underpinned by good practice including the Health and Social Standards (2017).

Please see below areas of SOPS that should link to your overarching infection prevention and control (IPC) policy intent.

Try and write any policy intent in a SMART way as this will help you to question and answer whether it is being met using the approaches laid out in your SOPs.

Infection prevention and control policy.

This will need adapted to suit the size of provider organisation and the individual service, client group and environment where the care will be delivered. These are the areas that you should consider.

Introduction: Give some context that encapsulates the ‘why.’

Infection prevention and control (IPC) is critical to keeping people safe when they are receiving health and social care. IPC is integral to quality health outcomes and social care delivery because anyone is at risk of developing an infection in these settings.

Good IPC practice can help to reduce the prevalence of infections, including healthcare-associated infections (HAIs), which are associated with the delivery of care in hospitals, long-term care facilities including care homes. (Ref HIS IPC standards)

The following information should be used as a framework to develop individual service policy and standard operation procedures around IPC as well being the basis for any IPC staff development and education.

Underpinning every good policy and SOPs is an understanding of relevant good practice and how it can be applied in your services. For example, ‘the underpinning good practice, principles, and values that this policy and SOPs are based on include....’ As part of the registration process the CI inspectors will assess your knowledge and understanding of the available good practice guidance that you build your policy and SOPs on.

Policy intent: A statement or statements of what your organisation seeks to achieve for people using the service.

State here the overarching high-level aims and outcomes that you want to achieve if your staff follow the policy and relevant supporting SOPs. See below for examples of SOPs that may help you achieve your overarching IPC intent.

Scope: state who is the policy aimed at.

The scope of this policy applies to everyone who has direct/indirect contact with people using our care services and their environments whether they be permanent staff, visiting professionals, family and friends who visit and/or bank, agency, and contractors.

Purpose: Be clear what your high-level intent is. Write in a way that you can question, answer and measure to assess the impact and outcome.

The purpose of the document is to set down the principles of infection prevention and control for use by everyone that works, visits or lives within the service, which is underpinned by best practice and legislation relevant to social care in Scotland.

The roles and responsibilities must reflect the staffing and management structure of the service and identify specific designations of those who have responsibility for IPC. Some examples are listed below.

Roles and responsibilities: This will depend on the size of the organisation and size of service.

Based on your service, be clear about who does what and when., setting out what is expected of each role but keep it succinct. The person responsible usually becomes clear once you have written your policy intent statement(s) and you can go into more detail when drafting the supporting SOPs.

Standard operating procedures (SOPs): When you write your policy statement(s) you may start to cross reference to the SOPs that will help you achieve your IPC policy intent, but you do not need the detail of the SOP within the policy. Any SOP linked to your policy must reference good practice documents you have considered and Scottish legislation that applies. You may wish to put in appendices to highlight the relevant SOPs that will help you achieve your policy intent. Appendix 1 gives examples of what you might consider.

SOPs that could link to an IPC policy are but not exhaustive to:



Summary: IPC policy with supporting SOPs

As stated, a policy is a high-level statement(s) that reflects the organisation perspective and expectation, whereas the standard operating procedure gives the detail of how your staff should go about achieving it. Your policy and SOPs must reflect current good practice documents. When developing your policy and supporting SOPs you should be asking yourself, is your policy:

- specific, relevant, and applicable to the client group and environment where care will be delivered?
- well structured, written in plain language that is easy to read and understand by staff, people using the service, contractors, and visitors? Otherwise, anyone reading it will find it difficult to sift through lots of information.
- succinct and consistent in its message making it easy to implement and measure against to ensure it is being applied as intended and outcomes for people are good? It is easier to implement an issue-specific policy as opposed to a wide-ranging policy as you can convey key messages to staff faster. And you can then measure compliance as to what is expected using supporting SOPs.
- reflecting latest laws, regulations, and standards of where the care is being delivered? For example, it must be based on Scottish Legislation and good practice documents used in Scotland where they are available.
- clear on what your staff can and cannot do?
- supported by well written, evidence-based SOPs that reflect the detail on what staff should be doing to meet the policy intent?
- easy to rely on in a court of law?

Appendix 1

- [National IPC Manual](#)
- [National Infection Prevention and Control Manual](#) appendix 22 Appendix 22 - Community IPC COVID-19 Pandemic
- [Care Home IPC Manual which includes waste management](#)
- [Safe Environment - Cleaning schedules guidance](#)
- [National guidance for safe management of linen in NHS Scotland](#)
- [A-Z pathogens](#)
- [Care Homes for Adults – The Design Guide](#)
- [Healthcare Improvement Scotland IPC Standards](#)
- [Health and Social Care Standards: my support, my life](#) (2017)
- [Personal planning guides for providers](#)
- TURAS IPC modules relevant to social care: staff will need to create their own account, but the SIPCEP Foundation module will help your staff meet the fundamental IPC SOPs
- [SSSC IPC Learning Zone](#)
- [PHS guidance including their outbreak checklist](#)
- [Relevant legislation](#) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2011/210/made>
Specifically, Regulation 4-(1)(d) where necessary, have appropriate procedures for the prevention and control of infection.

This is not an exhaustive list.

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