



## Legionnaires Disease Policy

Revised March 2013

## *Legionnaires' Disease*

Care home name: The Wellbeing Residential Group

### *Policy Statement*

The Wellbeing Residential Group believes that adherence to strict guidelines on infection control is of paramount importance in ensuring the safety of both service users and staff.

The Wellbeing Residential Group adheres fully to the new outcomes essential standards of quality and safety which consists of 28 regulations and its associated outcomes. They are set out by the Health and Social Care Act 2008 for regulated activities.

### *Aim*

The aim of the Wellbeing Residential Group is to prevent the occurrence or spread of Legionnaires disease.

### *Goals*

The goals of the home are to ensure the following.

1. Service users, their families and staff working at the home are as safe as possible from Legionnaires disease.
2. All staff at the home are aware of the causes of the spread of Legionnaires disease and are trained to avoid these.

### *Personnel*

- The Home Manager is the infection control lead for the home.
- The Home Manager is responsible for infection control risk assessment and staff training.
- Domestic Assistants are responsible for the cleaning and hygiene of the home.

## *Legal Considerations and Statutory Guidance*

The Wellbeing Residential Group should adhere to the following infection control legislation.

1. The Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974 and the Public Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 1988 which place a duty on the Wellbeing Residential Group to prevent the spread of infection.
2. The Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) which places a duty on the Wellbeing Residential Group to report outbreaks of certain diseases as well as accidents such as needle-stick accidents.
3. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1999 (COSHH) which places a duty on the Wellbeing Residential Group to ensure that potentially

- infectious materials within the home are identified as hazards and dealt with accordingly.
4. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 which makes it the responsibility of the Wellbeing Residential Group to dispose of clinical waste safely.

### *Background to Legionnaires' Disease*

Legionnaires disease is one of a group of diseases collectively known as legionella. Others are Pontiac fever and Lochgoilhead fever. Of these infections Legionnaires disease is the most common and most serious. It is caused by victims ingesting or breathing in legionella bacteria. The most common result of infection is pneumonia and victims often feel confused and run high temperatures, many developing acute septicaemia. For older people and those with immune system weakness, legionella infection can be fatal or can result in severe complications such as renal failure.

Legionella bacteria are very commonly found in natural sources of water including rivers, streams and ponds and may even be found in soil. Here they do little harm but unfortunately they can also grow in recirculating hot and cold water systems in buildings and, in certain conditions, they can cause infections.

### *Policy on Preventing Legionnaires' Disease*

Since legionella bacteria are so common in our environment they cannot be prevented from entering water systems but the risk of an outbreak developing can be reduced by taking simple precautions. In this home the following precautions will apply.

1. Cisterns and pipe work should be designed so that water is not allowed to stand undisturbed for long periods.
2. Cisterns should be well covered to prevent the entry of dirt, debris and vermin, and should be periodically inspected, cleaned and disinfected.
3. Water temperatures between 20°C and 45°C will be avoided by insulation of cold water tanks and pipes in warm spaces, and by storing hot water at 60°C and circulating it at 50°C.
4. Because of the high running temperature of the water thermostatically controlled taps will be fitted on all sinks and baths to prevent the danger of scalding and burns.
5. Only water system fittings and materials which comply with water authority by-laws will be used in the home (certain materials, eg leather, some rubbers and plastics, support the growth of bacteria and should not be used).

The registered Corgi plumber and central heating engineer for the home is

Keith Williams Tel: 01775 680 027

### *Reporting*

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 obliges the home to report the outbreak of notifiable diseases to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Notifiable diseases include legionella.

Records of any such outbreak must be kept specifying dates and times and a completed disease report form must be sent to the HSE.

- In the event of an incident the Home Manager is responsible for informing the HSE.
- RIDDOR forms are kept in the office and night care box

In the event of the suspected outbreak of an infectious disease at the home the local Consultant in Communicable Disease Control or Communicable Disease Team should be contacted immediately.

- Contact Details: Health Protection Agency 0844 225 4524

### *Training*

All staff will attend training covering basic information about infection prevention and control.

In-house training sessions should be conducted at least annually and all relevant staff should attend.

- The Home Manager is responsible for organising and co-ordinating training.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy review date: \_\_\_\_\_