**Intimate Personal Care – Adults and Children**

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# Policy statement

Where intimate personal care is delivered this will always be done sensitively and appropriately. Staff will be aware of the need to maintain privacy and dignity when dealing with intimate personal care needs.

Where intimate personal care needs to be delivered, a care/support plan must be completed with the person and/or their circle of support to detail best and preferred methods for that individual.

Where possible the person will make the decision as to who offers intimate personal care and what form this will take.

Gender issues are significant in determining the appropriateness of the support and we will endeavour to ensure that the principle of same gender care is applied when meeting the intimate personal care needs of a person.

It is recognised that it is important for people to have positive role models of males and females. Work other than that involving intimate personal care would routinely be carried out by staff of either sex, subject to the preference of the individual and the appropriateness of the individual staff member. Where appropriate, there should always be 2 staff members supporting someone during intimate personal care.

# Definitions

Intimate personal care is taken to mean:

* hands-on physical care in areas of personal hygiene, and physical presence or observation during such activities.

Intimate personal care includes:

* Body bathing other than to arms, face, and legs below the knee
* Toileting, wiping and care in the genital and anal areas
* Incontinence care
* Placement, removal and changing of incontinence pads
* Menstrual hygiene
* Dressing and undressing
* Application of medical treatment, other than to arms, face, and legs below the knee.

# Deciding on the appropriate person to carry out the task

It is important that all of a person’s needs are considered when deciding on those staff who will be working with them. Some aspects of close personal care may have to be dealt with during any activity, and if the staff member working with the person is not the appropriate worker to deal with the specific need, then there needs to be someone available who is.

The manager of the service will have to take these considerations into account. The principle of same gender care is subject to the availability of staff of the same gender who are competent to deliver intimate personal care. It is acknowledged that at times there may be insufficient staff of the same gender to carry out the principle of same gender care.

It is therefore acceptable for the intimate personal care needs of a male to be carried out by female staff members, if no male staff member is available. Where a female requires assistance in the areas of bathing, dressing, toileting and menstrual hygiene, the managers must ensure that female staff are available to provide this care.

Male staff may only work with females in the areas of bathing, dressing, toileting and menstrual hygiene in cases of necessity or urgent need. The prime objective should be to avert this from happening.

In shared services the manager of the service will need to ensure a balanced availability of males and females staff, where at all possible. Where there is an imbalance, recruitment will have to address the issue.

If, for some reason, the group is not mixed, staffing should still be mixed, although on a less rigorous basis, unless the needs of the group dictates otherwise, in order to provide good male and female role models. In all other areas of work, apart from intimate personal care needs, it is a requirement that all staff will work with anyone regardless of gender.

# Care/support plan

A care/support plan will be completed for any person requiring intimate personal care before they start on a service. It will detail the level of support required and how it is to be delivered. If the person does not wish for same gender care or same gender care cannot be provided or it is not considered to be an appropriate method of working, then the reasons why must be recorded. This record will specify which care tasks are being exempted from the principle, and name workers/ grades of staff who will work on these tasks. The service manager will ensure they are aware of any situations that do not comply with the principle of same gender care and will monitor the delivery of such care.

# Privacy

Privacy is a fundamental right, and is of prime importance in the delivery of intimate personal care. People should be encouraged to be as independent as possible. Therefore, staff should make sure that any appropriate aids, adaption’s and equipment is available to that person to support their own needs, rather than doing it for them as it is quicker and easier. Every effort should be made to ensure that equipment is provided that would reduce the need for physical assistance or staff presence during intimate personal care.

# Safety

Meeting the intimate personal care needs of a person carries a measure of risk to both staff and the individual. The risks can include the following:

* Injury to individual or staff due to accidents/poor work practices
* hot water
* Epilepsy and bathing
* moving and handling
* Infection from bodily fluids.

It is therefore important that safeguards are put in place to minimise the risk to staff and the individual.

# Health care

If, during the course of assisting a person with their intimate personal care needs, there are any changes in an individual’s appearance that may require attention, these should be noted, e.g. Rashes, blisters, sores, lumps, and changes in colour and size of skin blemishes. These should be recorded and the person supported to seek medical attention.

# Suspected abuse

In the event that any bruise or skin damage is noted, this should be recorded and brought to the attention of the manager. Any signs of suspected abuse will be recorded and reported immediately.

# Training

The manager of the service needs to ensure that staff are competency trained in delivering sensitive and high quality assistance to people in the area of intimate personal care. Training will be given in safe working practices, including areas such as hygienic practices, infection control, positive personal care, moving and handling.

# Independence

It is emphasised that in this, as in all other areas of work, a prime aim of carrying out intimate personal care will be to develop the skills and abilities of the individual to enable them to become as independent in the task as possible.

# Staff support

Staff will have the opportunity to say if they are uncomfortable with a particular area of practice, or if they feel vulnerable in carrying it out. This does not mean that individual staff can abdicate responsibility for meeting people’s needs that have been clearly identified and planned for. The manager of the service will offer staff the opportunity to discuss and clarify such matters in supervision meetings, and will offer training if this is required, subject to being satisfied that the worker has the potential to be competent in the work.

# Recruitment and staffing

In order to implement same gender care, and in line with equal opportunities legislation, the membership of staff teams will be reviewed whenever a vacancy arises. Factors that will be considered will be the gender and cultural needs of the individuals or group.

**Signed on behalf of the executive committee of Sutton Mencap**

**Chairman: ………………………… date: ………………..**

**Mavis Peart**

**Reviews: 2018 signed: ………………….. Date: …………..**

**2019 signed: ………………….. Date: ……………**

**2020 signed: ………………….. Date: ……………**

**Appendix 1**

**Check List for Supporting People with Personal Care Needs (Toileting)**

Please make sure you familiarise yourself with these guidelines and follow each point exactly. If you feel there is something missing or that you do not agree with please speak to one of the managers.

* Ensure Health and Safety records have been completed.
* Ensure you have read the individuals support plan.
* Ensure that you speak to the person you are supporting at all times and inform them of what you are about to do, what is happening now and what is about to happen.
* Remember to respect the person’s dignity, privacy and their preferred way of personal care e.g. standing/lying down, use own materials where possible.
* Wash your hands
* Remember to close the bathroom/therapy room door(screen up)
* Lay blue paper towel out on the bed
* Make sure you have everything you need within reaching distance and prepared before you start to support someone with their personal care e.g. disposable bags, sanitary items, change of clothes
* Put gloves on
* Put apron on
* Follow manual handling procedure
* If using the hoist, ensure the area is clear and you follow the hoist policy and procedure
* Once you have finished, make sure that all debris, used sanitary items, gloves, aprons, bed towels are placed in the disposable bag and placed in the peddle bin in the room, never on the floor
* Wash hands after removing gloves
* Leave the bathroom/therapy room tidy and as you found it
* Report any shortages, concerns or queries to the coordinator, manager or core staff team