ABSTRACT

As a provider of care services to some of the most vulnerable people in society, it is essential that Social Work and Health have effective systems in place to ensure that infections are prevented and controlled both in care establishments and where a service is provided in the community.

The introduction of National Standards for Adult Care Homes (S.E.2005) places a requirement on care homes to have clear policies and procedures for the control, monitoring and reporting of infection control issues. The National Standards establish a robust framework for new infection control policy and procedures applicable for all Social Work and Health Services.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee approves the introduction of the new Policy and Procedures; which include the introduction of basic infection control training for all new Social Work and Health staff, and for existing staff who provide direct care/support services. Operational instruction G1.7 has also been revised to reflect the new policy and procedure.

2 INTRODUCTION

Effective Infection Control is a key responsibility of all service providers in their duty of care to their customers and employees. As a provider of care services to some of the most vulnerable people in society, it is essential that Social Work and Health have effective systems in place to ensure that infections are prevented and controlled both in care establishments and where a service is provided in the community.

The introduction of National Standards for Adult Care Homes (S.E.2005) places a requirement on care homes to have clear policies and procedures for the monitoring and reporting of infection control issues. While this is not replicated in other care settings, the National Standards establish a robust framework for infection control which could be adopted in all care services as appropriate to their function.

In 2007 a comprehensive review of the procedures for Infection Prevention and Control was undertaken in collaboration with the NHS Tayside Public Health Infection Control team. Following this review a new set of policy and procedures were written which strengthen existing systems and improve staff training and guidance.

The main changes are an increased emphasis of good personal hygiene practice, basic hygiene training for all staff, clear procedures, improved accountability, and the extension of influenza immunisation for all Social Work and Health staff.
3 PROPOSAL

As a provider of care services to some of the most vulnerable people in society, it is essential that Social Work and Health have effective systems in place to ensure that infections are prevented and controlled both in care establishments and where a service is provided in the community. It is important that staff have clear and accessible guidance on correct and approved procedures and an understanding of departmental policy; and that managers are clear regarding accountability.

The National Standards provide a robust framework for new infection control policy and procedures applicable for all Social Work and Health services.

In order to clarify policy and procedures for staff three draft documents have been produced:

1. A Policy outlining the legislative context, interagency working arrangements and responsibilities of employees and management.
2. Procedures which identify specific safe methods to perform tasks, and provides information on infection prevention and control principles.
3. An Operational Instruction which guides staff to the policy and procedures and clarifies their responsibilities to comply with these documents.

It is proposed that these Policy documents and framework are adopted for all Social Work and Health services. Copies of these are appended to this report.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Extending the provision of Influenza immunisation from social care staff to include all Social Work and Health staff may increase the cost by approximately £2000 per annum (based on current level of uptake).

The new procedures will reduce the inappropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and disinfectant cleaning materials. The potential saving is difficult to estimate.

It is anticipated that improved Infection control practices and the extension of Flu immunisation may contribute to reducing sickness absence levels.

Training provided by NHS Tayside Public Health Infection Control team is free of charge.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no Human Rights implications arising as a result of the recommendation contained in this report.

6 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services, the Head of Finance and the Head of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

R Peat
Director of Social Work and Health

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.