INTIMATE CARE POLICY

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Author	Karen Double
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Intimate Care Policy

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure (such as cleaning a person after they have soiled themselves) to intimate personal areas. In most cases such care will involve cleaning for hygiene purposes as part of a staff member's duty of care. In the case of a specific procedure to meet complex health needs only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent will undertake the procedure, (e.g. emptying a stoma bag).

The issue of intimate care is a sensitive one and will require staff to be respectful of the attendee's needs. The attendee's dignity should always be preserved with a high level of privacy, choice and control. There should always be a high awareness of possible safeguarding and child/adult protection issues. As such, staff behaviour must be open to scrutiny and staff must work in partnership with parents, guardians and where appropriate, health professionals, to provide continuity of care to attendees wherever possible. The following document is based on best practice in club settings.

LEAPS Suffolk is committed to ensuring that all staff are responsible for the intimate care of an attendee and he/she will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. We recognise there is a need to treat an attendee with respect especially when intimate care is given. No child/adult should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.

The management of all attendees with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. The attendee's welfare and dignity are of paramount importance.

Staff who provide intimate care will be trained to do so (including Safeguarding, Child/Adult Protection) and be fully aware of best practise.

Each attendee will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible, given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each attendee to do as much for his/herself as he/she can. This may mean, for example, giving the person responsibility for washing themselves.

Where appropriate, Individual Intimate Care Plans will be drawn up for each attendee to suit their individual circumstances.

Each attendee's right to privacy will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each situation e.g. determining how many carers might need to be present when personal care is carried out.

Wherever possible, one attendee will be catered for by one adult unless there is a sound rationale for having more adults present, if this is the case, the reasons will be clearly documented. The member of staff must inform another member of their whereabouts during the personal care routine.

The Protection of Attendees

LEAPS Suffolk safeguarding procedures will be adhered to at all times. If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in an attendee's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. s/he will immediately report concerns to the designated named persons for child/adult safeguarding. If an

attendee becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be investigated and outcomes recorded. If an attendee of member of staff makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary safeguarding and child protection procedures and protocols will be followed. Parents/guardians will be contacted and informed as part of this process in order to reach a resolution. Where deemed appropriate, staffing schedules will be altered until the issue(s) are resolved. The club will seek further specialist advice from outside agencies where necessary to maximize best outcomes for the individual.

Health and Safety

When attending to the intimate care of attendees, staff should be aware of the clubs Health and Safety policy. Staff should always wear an apron and gloves when dealing with bodily fluids. Any soiled waste (urinary or faecal) should be placed in a nappy waste disposal bag, which will be sealed. This bag should then be placed in a bin (complete with a liner) which is specifically designated for the disposal of such waste. The bin should be emptied regularly and it will be collected as part of the usual refuse collection service. This is the responsibility of the site manager.

Special/complex health needs

Attendees with special/complex health needs have the same rights to safety and privacy when receiving intimate care. Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical disability or learning difficulty must be considered with regard to individual care plans for each attendee. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the attendee, those with parental responsibility and the club should be easily understood and clearly recorded.

Regardless of age and ability, the views and emotional responses of those with special/complex health needs should be actively sought (with advocacy arrangements in place for those who require assistance) in regular reviews of these intimate care arrangements.

Physical Contact

All staff engaged in the care of attendees need to exercise caution in the use of physical contact. The expectation is that staff will work in 'limited touch' cultures and that when physical contact is made with attendees this will be in response to their needs at the time, will be of limited duration and will be appropriate given their age, stage of development and background.

Staff should be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact might be misconstrued directly by the attendee, an observer or by anyone the action is described to. Staff must therefore always make considered judgements when executing their duties, be prepared to justify actions and accept that all physical contact will be open to scrutiny.

Any physical contact with an attendee is likely to be open to question unless the justification for this is formally agreed by the attendee, the club and those with parental responsibility.

People with complex health and/or special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning and enjoyment. The general culture of 'limited touch' will be adapted where

appropriate to the individual requirements of each attendee. The arrangements must be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the attendee's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Consultation with colleagues and, where possible, parents/guardians will take place where any deviation from the agreed arrangements is anticipated. Any deviation and the justification for it will be fully documented and reported.

Extra caution is required by staff where it is known an attendee has previously suffered abuse or neglect. In this case the attendee may view physical contact to be associated with such previous experiences and may result in staff being more vulnerable to allegations of abuse. As such, an attendee may present as extremely needy and actively seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the attendee, minimising any negative experience. In such cases staff should ensure appropriate supervision ratios are maintained to safeguard against possible allegations. Staff have a duty to report any concerns

Restraint

Please refer to the Behaviour Policy.

Managing distress

There may be occasions when a distressed attendee needs comfort and reassurance that may include physical touch such as a caring parent would give. Staff must remain self-aware at all times to ensure that their contact is not threatening or intrusive and is not subject to misinterpretation.

Judgement will need to take account of the circumstances of the attendee's distress, the extent and cause of the distress. Unless the attendee needs an immediate response, staff should consider whether they are the most appropriate person to respond. It may be more suitable to involve the attendee's relative. To minimise the risk of misinterpretation/allegation, particular care must be taken in instances that involve the same attendee over a period of time. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance, they should seek further advice from Safeguarding Lead - Karen Double

First Aid and intimate care

Staff who administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that another adult or other person are present. The attendee's dignity must always be considered and where contact of a more intimate nature is required (e.g. assisting with toileting or the removal of wet/soiled clothing), another member of staff should be in the vicinity and must be made aware of the task being undertaken. Regular requirements of an intimate nature should be planned for. For conditions known to the club administered first aid procedures should be in line with agreed care plans.