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**WHAT IS YOUR INFECTION  
CONTROL STRATEGY?**



It's a common fact. A lot of people don't like hospitals.

This isn't an unreasonable feeling because if you're in hospital chances are you're in need of medical attention or someone you care about does.

Plus, as the old saying goes 'hospitals are full of sick people'.

But many a true word is spoken in jest. Hospitals *are* full of sick people and that means the risk of cross infection is high. That risk increases exponentially if someone with a highly infectious disease is admitted.

As we've discussed, the cost of healthcare associated infections is a drain on budgets and resources, not to mention sows the seeds of doubt for those in your care.

They stop feeling safe.

A 'belt and braces' infection control strategy will never eliminate the risk of infection completely but it *will* minimise it and provide a rapid reaction response to infection outbreaks.

### **Outline Your Objectives**

The key to any good strategy is to know what you're working towards. In the same way as private organisations have business objectives, your healthcare facility or care home needs to do the same.

Objectives should include an institution wide understanding of the risks represented by infectious diseases and associated outbreaks as well as the responsibilities everyone has in controlling them.

One of the key objectives, as we've alluded to, is trust. Everything about your infection control strategy must be around protecting clinicians and patients and thus earning their trust.

As soon as the public – specifically patients – lose faith in your facility, it takes a great deal to win it back again, if ever.

### **Think Strategically Not Tactically**

Infection control is made up of a variety of measures, from gloves and face protection to disposal of human waste within sluice rooms.

All of these things are immensely important but they're tactical precautions or responses to an emerging situation.

It's the strategy behind them – the theoretical if you will – that informs the practical solution.

An infection control strategy should, according to the NHS in the UK, raise the profile of infection control and prevention, provide direction and identify priorities of improvement and challenges.

The strategy needs to have a defined objective and broken down into sections within which the tactical processes sit.

It's also important to understand that the strategy is everyone's responsibility and making that clear to everyone is a part of the strategy in of itself.

If your infection control strategy fails you cannot simply shrug your shoulders. Lives are at stake and cleaners to clinicians have to play their part.



Even patients and their loved ones need to take a degree of responsibility so clear signposting needs to be part of how you support those individuals to uphold those infection control tactics.

### ***Making it Work***

Rolling out a strategy as complex as infection control isn't easy.

Non-compliance of infection control procedures has been reported in various parts of the UK according to NHS infection control documents.

Ownership is important so an action plan that allows clinicians and support staff to get to grips with your strategy quickly and effectively.

Training, monitoring, surveillance and auditing all have to be put in place before the strategy can actually take effect. In a facility that never stops this can prove a challenge.

Everyone needs to understand that they have a role to play and what that role is.

It relies on good communication and black box style auditing.

Gathering and recording data and analysing to identify weaknesses in the strategy are vital to its success.

Targeting activities assessing patient outcomes, infection rates, cleanliness standards and hygiene management in line with standards of care with help measure the effectiveness of your strategy and ultimately save lives.

DDC Dolphin is an expert in infection control solutions, capable of providing sluice/dirty utility room solutions and consultancy. If we can support you with your next project with a service or solution, speak to one of our team today who can help you further.

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