

Level 2 Award in Decontamination in Health and Social Care Settings

July 2007

9 Guided Learning Hours

Description:

The control of infection in care environments is a major concern for the NHS and the wider care sector. The Chief Medical Officer has referred to the 5,000 patients (minimum) who die each year as a direct consequence of healthcare-associated infection in the UK and the need for improvement of these statistics.

In recognition of this, the Government has invested heavily in programmes to combat the causes of infections acquired during the provision of care and has demonstrated the need to reinforce the importance of good practice and high standards of cleanliness within care settings. These standards apply to many areas of service delivery where the highest levels of hygiene and cleanliness are required to safeguard the health both of the care staff and of the public, and in particular the most vulnerable members of the community such as older people and the very young. Therefore the exposure to infection risks (both of care staff and of those receiving care) need to be minimised through safe practices and adequate decontamination. Infection control procedures minimise the spread of infection and are cost-effective.

Support staff and, where appropriate, managers in primary and community care settings all require the same grounding in the principles of maintaining a clean environment, infection control and decontamination. Such settings may be

- care homes
- day centres
- intermediate care facilities
- child care and play facilities
- GP surgeries, dental surgeries and health centres
- podiatry and other clinics.

For this reason this syllabus is generic enough to suit the learning needs of a wide variety of learners from different work environments and the emphasis is on public health and safe systems of care.

The aim of this award is to provide a basic understanding of the principles of decontamination and the importance of their application in relation to care settings

The Level 2 Award in Decontamination in Health and Social Care Settings is a single unit qualification. All outcomes are assessed

Summary of Outcomes

To achieve this qualification a candidate must know and understand:

- The important infections associated with care settings and how these infections are spread.
- The importance of correct hand-washing procedures in the prevention of cross-infection.
- The importance of maintaining a clean and microbiologically safe environment.
- The decontamination process including risk assessment.

- Principles for the use of Personal Protective Equipment and Standard (Universal) Precautions.

It should be noted that infection control issues in relation to the provision of food in health and social care settings are not covered in this syllabus. The RSPH provides a range of qualifications in food safety which meet this need.

Relevance to Practice and National Occupational Standards

Everyone entering work in care settings should start by gaining an essential grounding in infection control and decontamination, on which further knowledge and understanding can be built.

Infections contracted in care settings are not only physically harmful but may also lead to litigation. Managers therefore need to be able to demonstrate due diligence.

This basic syllabus reflects relevant aspects of Skills for Health SSC's National Occupational Standards in Infection Prevention and Control. The award also links to Dimension Core 3: Health, Safety and Security, and Dimension EF2: Environments and Buildings, of the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF).

It also reflects, as far as is appropriate for this award, the legislative requirements, standards and guidance contained in the publications listed under "Useful Sources of Reference" below.

Content

1. **The important infections associated with health and social care and related environments and how these infections are spread.**

Important infections in care environments and their mode of spread including:
MRSA infections (Methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus);
Norovirus infection (winter vomiting disease); Common cold and other respiratory infections; Gastroenteritis; Blood borne infections, especially Hepatitis A, B, C and HIV; *Clostridium difficile*; Scabies

Some common causes and sources of infection in health and social care environments and their mode of spread, including:
Causes: poor cleaning regimes; poor hand washing facilities and/or practice; re-use of equipment designed for single use

Sources: spillage of vomit and blood; respiratory droplets; use of worn, soiled or ripped patient examination couches/ mattresses/infant changing mats; infant play areas; toys; water and sand play; any broken or worn equipment that would compromise safety or efficiency of the device; re-used suction tubing; other equipment intended for single use

How the personal health and hygiene of staff might pose a threat to individuals with whom they work.

2. The importance of correct hand washing procedures in the prevention of cross infection.

The place of hand washing in preventing cross-infection

The facilities required for adequate hand washing and the importance of reporting inadequate facilities to a manager

The rules for hand hygiene: Correct hand washing technique; and when to wash hands (Tutors are encouraged to demonstrate the correct hand washing technique); the use of alcohol based hand gels: when to use and when not to use; how to use; nail care (keeping nails short and free from varnish); jewellery (wedding band only).

3. The importance of maintaining a clean and microbiologically safe environment.

The meaning of the terms “contamination” and “decontamination”.

The importance of, and general principles for, environmental cleaning, including:

Keeping environment dust free: daily damp dusting; floor mopping; limited use of brooms; use of detergent and water, and suitable disinfectants where required; colour coding of all cleaning materials; mops dedicated for specific areas ie separate for toilet and kitchen; carpet cleaning including shampooing where there is spillage of vomit/blood; clean equipment and clean storage area for equipment; instrument storage; cleaning of toys; play mats; changing mats; segregation of foul and/or infected linen/nappies etc from ordinarily soiled linen; segregation of different types of waste, through colour coded bags where necessary, including safe disposal of sharps.

The importance (where applicable) of each care recipient having, or being allocated, their own personal equipment (eg towels, flannels, linen and hairbrushes)

The importance of, and general principles for, the cleaning and decontamination of shared equipment including: Commodes (toilets, taps, baths, bath aids); hoists, zimmer frames, wheelchairs, hand rails; infant changing mats, play equipment/toys; table tops; kitchen work surfaces, bed frames; soft furnishings; examination couches; ear examination and syringing equipment; stethoscopes; other shared equipment and fixtures.

4. The decontamination process including risk assessment.

The principles of risk assessment for undertaking risk-prone activities, including:
Safe systems: Legal obligations and responsibilities of managers and staff in

relation to implementation of policies and procedures; reporting procedures;
Personal safety: risks associated with body fluids; disposal of waste (eg sharps); hepatitis B immunisation; safety of care recipients (patients, clients, others);
Safety of the organisation: relevant legislation and regulations, insofar as they apply to the candidate's job and level of responsibility.

The three levels and methods of the decontamination process.

- a. *Cleaning (detergent and water) - for low risk equipment and environment including*: Commodes; toilets; taps; baths; bath aids; hoists; zimmer frames; wheelchairs; hand rails; infant changing mats; play equipment/toys; table tops; kitchen work surfaces; bed frames; soft furnishings; examination couches; other shared equipment and fixtures.
- b. *Disinfection (hyperchlorite solutions) - for medium risk equipment and environment (ie shared equipment and fixtures) where there is*: A known infectious person (eg Hepatitis B); a body fluid spillage; an outbreak situation
- c. *Sterilisation - for high risk equipment (eg instruments)*: This is principally for staff in hospital and primary care settings and is covered in brief outline only.

The importance of acting and communicating with clients in a sensitive, respectful and reassuring manner, when undertaking cleaning and decontamination tasks of a more personal nature (eg dealing with urine or faeces on a client's chair or the carpet), bearing in mind the dignity of the client and also in accordance with the requirements of any religious belief and/or custom, where they apply to the client eg in Muslim faith.

5. **The principles for the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Standard (Universal) Precautions**

The meaning of the term "standard precautions"; why the use of PPE is necessary when undertaking the decontamination process; the items that are essential for personal protection; that PPE must be fit for purpose and designated for single use; why manufacturers' instructions must be followed and equipment only used for its intended purpose.

Assessment

The assessment will consist of one examination paper of 30 multiple choice questions to be answered in 45 minutes.

To attain a pass, candidates must achieve 20 correct answers out of 30 (66%).
To attain a credit, they must achieve 26 correct answers out of 30 (87%).

Pre-course Entry Requirements

There are no formal pre-course entry requirements for this award.

Examination Entry Requirements

Candidates must have undertaken a course of instruction approved by the RSPH and covering the outcomes detailed below prior to taking the examination.

Application for entry to the examination must be made through an RSPH registered training centre.

Examination Results and Certificates

RSPH Registered Centres will be supplied with a results list stating whether candidates have passed or failed the examination and indicating the grade.

Certificates for successful candidates are normally sent to RSPH Registered Centres for distribution to candidates.

Progression

Holders of this award could progress to qualifications at Levels 2 and 3 in general health care and health and social care. The general principles learned through achievement of this award, especially the chain of infection, effective handwashing, effective cleaning and disinfection, waste disposal and the use of protective equipment, are also applicable in other sectors where control of infection is important, such as food businesses, and hair and beauty salons.

Key Skills

Delivery of the RSPH Level 2 Award in Decontamination in Health and Social Care Settings provides opportunities for developing and assessing certain Key Skills.

The examination does not directly assess Key Skills, but the knowledge required, if put into practice during a course, would require the application of Key Skills which might be independently assessed at the same time in line with published guidance. See Appendix for further details.

Guidance for Training/Examination Centres

Training Centres wishing to provide courses leading to the RSPH Level 2 Award in Decontamination in Health and Social Care Settings should first apply to the RSPH for registration.

Prospective trainers will normally have:

- practical experience of managing infection control procedures in care settings
- a Level 4 (or equivalent) qualification in infection control or a related area.
- a training qualification and/or experience of training.

Full details of registration procedures and application forms are available from the RSPH website (www.rsph.org.uk).

Examinations for this qualification can be held on demand and exam bookings can be made online via the RSPH website or directly with

The Qualifications Department,
Royal Society for Public Health
3rd Floor
Market Towers
1 Nine Elms Lane
SW8 5NQ

Exam bookings should be made at least two weeks before the date of the examination. Bookings made less than two weeks before the date of the examination will be subject to a late booking fee.

Examination Centres may wish to make special arrangements for candidates for whom the standard examination format might present difficulties. Full details and the special arrangements form can be found on the RSPH website.

Other Issues

The delivery of this award provides opportunities for developing understanding of wider issues that affect us all. Some areas for consideration are given below.

Spiritual, social and cultural issues

Social issues related to ensuring the dignity of the client during delivery of personal care, insofar as decontamination issues are concerned, is an integral part of this award. Knowledge of certain religious beliefs and customs that should be applied where required during the delivery of personal care, is also covered.

Moral and ethical issues

Candidates may consider moral and ethical issues relating to the provision of safe care. Single use equipment could be used as an example.

Legislative issues, including health and safety

The legal responsibilities of care staff, especially in relation to health and safety procedures for cleaning and disinfecting, disposal of waste, protective clothing and standard precautions, are covered in this award.

Economic issues

Candidates may discuss the cost implications, especially to the NHS, of the consequences of care associated infection (ie treatment of patients with antibiotics, and extra nursing and medical care required), whether the infection is contracted within the NHS or private care sector.

Environment and sustainability issues

Candidates may consider the effects on the environment and on sustainable living, of the quantities of waste (eg cleaning chemicals, packaging materials) that are disposed of, and the disposal methods employed.

European issues

Candidates learn about relevant UK law, which is derived from EU Directives.

Appendix

Key Skills

Although the RSPH Level 2 Award in Decontamination in Health and Social Care Settings does not directly assess Key Skills, the delivery of it provides opportunities for developing, or for generating evidence for, Key Skills which might be independently assessed in line with published guidance. Some examples of such opportunities are given below, but it is recommended that tutors first read the relevant Key Skills standards and guidance which can be accessed at <http://www.qca.org.uk/> Guidance on assessment can be accessed at <http://www.qca.org.uk/>

Application of Number

N2.1. Interpret information from a suitable source

Candidates could be asked to interpret a manufacturer's instructions for use of a cleaning or disinfecting chemical in different situations.

N2.2. Use your information to carry out calculations

Candidates could be asked to show how to produce the correct concentration/dilution of a cleaning/disinfecting chemical for use in a given situation.

Communication

C2.1a. Take part in a group discussion

Group discussions could be held on several aspects of the syllabus including the matters described in "Other Issues" below.

C2.2. Read and summarise information from at least two documents on the same subject. Each must be a minimum of 500 words long.

Candidates could be asked to undertake this exercise using documents/handouts provided by the tutor on any aspect of the syllabus.

Working with Others

WO2.1. Plan work with others

Candidates could undertake a joint exercise to achieve an identified objective such as planning the cleaning of a specified area, in accordance with set procedures.

Information and Communication Technology

ICT 2.1. Search for and select information to meet your needs, using different sources of information for each task and multiple search criteria in at least one case.

Candidates could search the internet (including websites of Skills for Health Sector Skills Council, trade bodies), trade journals/magazines, relevant documents (eg the Code of Practice for the Prevention and Control of HCAI for the Private and Voluntary Sector and Care Homes, mentioned in the Useful Sources of Reference section of this specification) and other information sources for information to help with study of aspects of the syllabus.