



**Somerset
Council**

HS07 Biological Agent (Infection Control and Blood-Borne Virus) Policy.

Organisation	Somerset Council
Title	Biological Agent (Infection control and Blood-borne Viruses)
Author	Francesca Benson
Owner	The Corporate Health & Safety Unit
Protective Marking	Official – Unclassified
Primary legislation	<u>Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002</u>

Policy on a page

Under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 a biological agent is defined as “*A micro- organism, cell culture, or human endoparasite, where or not genetically modified, which may cause infection, allergy, toxicity or otherwise create a hazard to human health.*”

There are different sources of biological agent which staff could interact with through their workplace activities. These sources are divided into the following groups:

- **Human sources** – transferred by body fluids. An example of this type is tuberculosis or viral Hepatitis.
- **Animal sources** – zoonotic diseases. These are disease which can pass from animals to humans.
- **Plant sources** – transfer from plant to human. This is when the pathogen is passed on to a human through direct contact, by pollen, or from an insect. An example of this is *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. This disease can cause illness to people who have a compromised immune system.
- **Environmental sources** – these types of biological agents originate from the environment. An example is *Legionellosis* caused by Legionella bacteria. This bacterium naturally occurs in damp soil and water courses.

To protect employees the Council has created this policy and supporting guidance to provide, inform and support to control the risk of biological agents.

This document and associated guidance will be available to: **All Elected Members, Somerset Council Staff, 3rd Party Contractors, Secondees and Volunteers.**

Key Messages

- A risk assessment must be completed, and adequate training provided, for any activity where an employee may be exposed to any source of biological agent.
- Provision for needle stick injuries protocol, vaccinations, control measures, information and support for employees that may be exposed to any source of biological agent.

This “policy on a page” is a summary of the detailed policy and guidance documents, please ensure you read, understand, and comply with the arrangements

Responsibilities

Somerset Council	Directors and Delegated Senior Managers
Service Managers and those with direct line-management responsibilities	Premise Managers, Property Services, or others in control of premises
Employees	Corporate Health and Safety Unit (CHSU)

Somerset Council will:

- Provide sufficient information to identify work activities, environments, and persons at risk from transmitting blood-borne diseases, infections, or other diseases.
- Provide suitable training and PPE for work activities, environments, and persons at risk from the transmission of biological agent disease.
- Provide managers with information about the transmission of blood-borne viruses and infectious diseases, and management standards for identifying the risk of exposure.
- Immunisation scheme is offered at no financial or time costs to those employees who, through the process of risk assessment, are identified as high risk to blood-borne diseases through the working activities they provide.
- Monitor immunisation programmes and maintain details of vaccinations, including boosters.
- Provide access to a specific counselling service* for an employee who has had a high-risk penetration injury by ensuring notification of incidents to Public Health England South-West health protection team (Tel: 0300 3038162) and ensuring referral to occupational health services (Tel: 012723 976982).

*Counselling services are available to Somerset Council staff through Care First

Directors and Delegated Senior Managers will:

- Ensure that all managers and staff under their control are trained as appropriate in the requirements of this policy, its related procedures, and safe systems of work.
- Ensure that ALL staff to whom this policy applies are aware of their responsibilities and how to discharge them regarding health and safety.

Service Managers and those with direct line-management responsibilities will:

- Use the information, guidance, and links within this policy to assess the risk of transmission of blood-borne viruses and infectious diseases associated with exposure in each service area and take all reasonably practical measures to prevent transmission of infection, including the establishment of appropriate procedures and control measures.
- Inform employees of the level of risk in their work area.
- Provide employees with guidance on standard infection control procedures to reduce the risks of transmission of blood borne diseases and other diseases.
- Ensure that all staff operate in accordance with good hygiene practices and safe systems of work.
- Ensure provision of appropriate PPE, equipment, clinical waste disposal and safe sharps.
- Ensure employees know of their duty to avoid placing themselves at risk.

- As part of a risk assessment, assess the individual's HIV, HBV, or HBC status, and adjust working practices to reduce onwards transmission from staff with a positive status. Keeping information about an individual's status confidential. Information should not be disclosed on the basis that it might protect those providing care for a service user.
- Establish employees in areas of known risk to confirm their Hepatitis B immune status. **If an employee does not have immunity and immunisation against Hepatitis B, they will be offered a course of vaccinations in work time and at no cost to the employee, or their work activities will be changed to reduce their exposure to the risk of transmission.**
- Provide employees with guidance and information to minimise the risk of sharps injuries, and the action they should take in the event of an injury.
- Ensure appropriate procedures are in place for response to a sharp's injury or other exposure event and ensure access to treatment.
- Record incidents involving exposure or potential exposure to blood-borne viruses on B-Safe so they can be reported to the Health and Safety Executive, when required.
- Ensure people who are vulnerable (e.g., pregnant, or expectant parents, immunosuppressed, or being treated for cancer) to a disease or infection have an individual risk assessment.
- Line managers, as part of the Annual Appraisal (AA) process, should include the completion of the interim 'Health, Safety and Wellbeing - Appraisal Meeting - Check List', where health and safety issues are to be raised.
- Line managers through consultation with staff and their representatives, which may be informally or through safety committees:
 - Must complete a risk assessment for BBV and infection control when there is a risk to the staff of exposure to BBV and infectious diseases during work activities.
 - Must ensure a safe system of work (SSOW) or procedures for tasks in which staff are at risk of exposure to BBV and infectious diseases during work activities.
 - Keep up to date with any changes in PHE, HSE or internal changes relating to managing the risk of exposure to BBV and infectious diseases for work activities. Cascade this inform to staff.
 - Keep records of staff training, risk assessments, tool kits and changes to SSOW or procedures.

Employees must:

- Follow any system of work provided for them.
- Wear PPE provided by the Council or employer.
- Wear PPE correctly and dispose of it correctly. As stated in any risk assessment or SSOW.
- Report to their manager of any shortcomings they recognise in health and safety arrangements.
- Report to their manager any injury or condition which may increase the risk of transmission e.g., needlestick injuries, pregnancy, or any concerns related to immunosuppression.
- Report to their manager and to the CHSU of any injury, needlestick, contact with bodily fluids, animals or other situation which could have resulted in exposure to BBV or infectious disease.
- Co-operate in occupational health or health monitoring, unless disclaimer is completed
- Take part in any training required for biological agents, when required.
- Follow good hand hygiene practices.
- Follow office hygiene practices for offices e.g., wiping down shared equipment.

Premises Managers, Property Services, or those in control of premises will:

- Use the information, guidance, and links associated with this policy to assess the risk of transmission of blood-borne viruses' infections or other disease associated with exposure in each service area and take all reasonably practical measures to prevent transmission of infection, including the establishment of appropriate procedures and control measures.
- Inform employees of the level of risk in their work area.
- Provide employees with guidance on standard infection control procedures to reduce the risks of transmission of blood borne diseases and other diseases.
- Ensure that all staff operate in accordance with good hygiene practices and safe systems of work.
- Ensure provision of appropriate PPE, clinical waste disposal and safe sharps.
- Inform employees of their duty to avoid placing themselves at risk.
- As part of risk assessment, assess individual's HIV, HBV or HBC status, and adjust working practices to reduce onwards transmission from staff with a positive status. Keeping information about an individual's status confidential. Information should not be disclosed on the basis that it might protect those providing care for a service user.
- Establish employees in areas of known risk to confirm their Hepatitis B immune status. **If an employee does not have immunity and immunisation against Hepatitis B, they will be offered a course of vaccinations in work time and at no cost to the employee, or their work activities will be changed to reduce their exposure to the risk of transmission.**
- Provide employees with guidance and information to minimise the risk of sharps injuries, and the action they should take in the event of an injury.
- Ensure appropriate procedures are in place for response to a sharp's injury or other exposure event and ensure access to treatment.
- Record incidents involving exposure or potential exposure to blood borne viruses on B-Safe so they can be reported to the Health and Safety Executive, when required.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team will:

- Offer advice to managers regarding this policy.
- Maintain and communicate this policy.
- Review this policy at intervals not exceeding 3 years.
- Liaise with other agencies or authorities when required relating to BBV or infectious diseases.

Human Resources will:

- Ensure appropriate provision of Occupational Health Service and Counselling service.
- Ensure all staff have completed the Occupational Health Questionnaire.
- Support staff if they declare as vulnerable at any point of their employment.

Governance Arrangements

Policy Compliance

If any employee is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to Somerset Council's disciplinary procedure.

Policy Governance

The following table identifies who within Somerset Council is Accountable, Responsible, Informed or Consulted with regards to this policy. The following definitions apply:

- **Responsible** – the person(s) responsible for developing and publishing the policy.
- **Accountable** – the person who has ultimate accountability and authority for the policy.
- **Consulted** – the person(s) or groups to be consulted prior to final policy implementation.
- **Informed** – the person(s) or groups to be informed after policy implementation.

Responsible	Corporate Health & Safety Unit
Accountable	Chief Executive
Consulted	LGR JNF Union Group, LGR H&S Sub-Workstream, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group (HSWSG)
Informed	All members, employees, contractors (on request), volunteers & 3rd parties (on request)

Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, for instance when there is a change in statutory requirements and/or HSE guidance is revised, but no less frequently than every 36 months. Policy review will be undertaken by rolling programme established by the CHSU and agreed by the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Steering Group.

Version History

Revision Date	Author	Version	Description of Revision
	Francesca Benson	V1.0	New policy - draft

Document Notification

Approval	Name	Date
Corporate H&S Advisor		
Service Director of Workforce and chair of HSWSG		
HR Committee		