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| Health and Safety Procedure  **HSP17 Food Handlers: Fitness to Work Procedure** | BS1995_Haringey_TapeType_485C_PMS.eps |

**Management of Ill Health for Food Handlers – Information for Management**

Food handlers who become ill **must** report this to Management to comply with the “Food Handlers Information and Declaration” in the Food Handlers: Fitness to Work Procedure as signed by all food handlers. All food handling areas should display the criteria for reporting in “prominent positions”, outside the kitchen/food handling area.

Once reported, a food handler with an infection should remain excluded from any work that involves direct handling or serving of open ready to eat food until written medical clearance is obtained. This will be decided by the medical professional who should provide a written medical clearance certificate before returning to work – this should be kept in the individual’s personnel file.

**Summary information for Managers and Headteachers:**

* The law requires you to exclude anyone from work if they have an infection that can be passed on through food and there is any likelihood of them contaminating food directly or indirectly.
* This would apply to people employed as food handlers or to other staff or visitors working in areas where open food is handled.
* Diarrhoea and vomiting are the main symptoms of infections that can be transmitted through food.
* Other symptoms can include stomach cramps or pain, nausea and fever. Skin infections are also a problem too.
* This is because some infections, mainly from bacteria and viruses, can spread in faeces and vomit. This can contaminate infected persons’ hands when they have diarrhoea or vomiting. Vomiting can also spread it directly. If an infected person contaminates food or food contact surfaces, in many cases the infection can spread to people who eat the food.

**Action to take:**

* Ensure that all staff handling food and anyone working in a food handling area knows to report the symptoms of infection and if they have close contact with someone with these symptoms.
* Exclude staff with these symptoms from working with or around open food.

**Returning to work:**

* The exclusion period is normally 48 hours from when symptoms stop naturally. Different action is required in special cases – please refer to Section 6 for action to take.
* When excluded staff return to work, ensure that they take extra hygiene precautions, particularly hand washing.
* Not all cases of diarrhoea or vomiting are infectious, e.g. morning sickness, so exclusion is not always needed.

**Other facts:**

* People can have infections without symptoms, so it is important that Managers/Headteachers try to ensure that everyone washes and dries their hands regularly at work, especially after using the toilet.
* Managers/headteachers should assess the risk to food safety of anyone found to have been working with or around food whilst infectious and take the appropriate action to ensure that unsafe food is not released.
* If you are not sure what to do in any situation, you can seek advice from the [Corporate Health and Safety Team](http://intranet/service-areas/public-health/health-safety-and-well-being/health-and-safety/health-safety-and-wellbeing-team), the [Council’s Food Safety Team](https://www.haringey.gov.uk/business/licensing-and-regulations/health-and-safety/food-safety) and/or the [Occupational Health Service](http://intranet/service-areas/public-health/health-safety-and-well-being/what-occupational-health).

**Protocol For Assessing Fitness To Work As A Food Handler**

1. The Manager/Headteacher must ensure that the ‘Food Handlers Pre-placement/Visitor/Returning from abroad’ questionnaire (Appendix 1 in the Food Handlers: Fitness to Work Procedure) is completed for:

* Individuals being considered for food handling work, whether new employees or transfers from other roles,
* Visitors working in or around areas where open food is handled, including maintenance staff and contractors, and
* Staff returning from abroad

Completed questionnaires are then assessed by the Manager/Headteacher and any necessary action taken prior to commencement of work in or around a food handling area. This record is retained by the Manager/Headteacher in their personnel records for 6 years.

1. Individuals considered suitable for food handling work then complete a “Food Handlers Information and Declaration” Form (Appendix 3) which is retained by the Manager/Headteacher in their personnel records for 6 years.
2. Appropriate Food Hygiene Training is then organised by the Manager/Headteacher – please refer to the Food Safety Procedure for more information.
3. The Manager/Headteacher will give the individual the ‘Health, Safety & Hygiene Rules for Food Handlers’ (Appendix 4 in the Food Handlers: Fitness to Work Procedure) to read.