



Infection Prevention and Control Link Champion Programme Framework

Adult Social Care Settings

2024/2025

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With thanks to HSE Ireland for allowing Lincolnshire County Council to adapt their Infection Prevention and Control Link Practitioner Programme Framework.

Introduction

Infection Prevention and Control is essential to support the provision of safe and effective care across the Health and Care sector. The global pandemic has highlighted now more than ever why IPC is fundamentally important to improving health outcomes of the individuals we provide care for whether that be in a Care Home, a Day Centre or in a person's own home. In March 2023 of this year, NHS England and Improvement commissioned Skills for Health to review and develop an IPC education framework for mandatory training which will outline the skills, knowledge and behaviors required by the Health and Care workforce to improve the quality of IPC practice and thereby improve health outcomes (Skills for Health, 2023). Locally in Lincolnshire, The Health Protection Team have delivered an IPC link programme for several years and will continue to do so in a way which complements other IPC education programmes like the Skills for Health IPC Framework.

Following an evaluation of the existing Lincolnshire County Council IPC link offer at the end of 22/23, the Health Protection Team have been working towards developing its own IPC Link Champion framework. The framework will focus on a standardised education programme for adult social care link champions and providing contemporaneous updates relating to guidance or key areas of focus such as those outlined in the NHS Long-term Plan. We recognise that the key to delivering a successful Link Champion programme is through stakeholder engagement and we remain committed to building on work previously undertaken whilst developing an IPC Link Champion Framework which focusses on local IPC issues, which is sustainable and robust for the future.

Responsibility for Review

The Clinical Lead will be responsible for reviewing this document to ensure that the framework continues to meet the objectives. The overall framework document will be reviewed annually at the end of the programme delivery.

1.0 Programme Rationale

Preventing infections is essential to protecting the health of the people we care for. In the UK, there is a national vision to [tackle antimicrobial resistance](#) and Health Care Acquired Infections (HCAI). All staff working within Adult Social Care play a vital role in co ordinating, implementing, and improving IPC standards within their settings in order to tackle antimicrobial resistance and prevent serious infections. This is achieved by using evidence-based guidelines alongside comprehensive individual knowledge of the service area and clients who you support. Link Champions are essential to this agenda and can use their knowledge and skills acquired through this programme to influence and promote high standards of IPC practice and improve health outcomes for individuals.

1.1 Programme Philosophy and Aim

The aim of this programme is to allow the IPC Champion within your setting, to advance their knowledge and skills within IPC. This education and guidance will be underpinned by existing Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines such as those outlined in the [National Infection Prevention and Control Manual](#) and through your own organisations Infection Prevention and Control Training.

Adult Social Care is a dynamic and evolving area which relies on staff continuing to update their professional practice. This programme will aim to support staff to achieve this by providing opportunities to advance your skills and knowledge and further.

1.2 Programme Outcomes

- Apply the principles of evidence-based Infection Prevention and Control practices through the role of the IPC Link Champion to reduce transmission risks and limit the spread of infections
- Be able to correctly identify and implement the standards of transmission-based precautions within own setting
- Demonstrate the ability to assess and manage IPC risks within the environment
- Develop knowledge and skills to enable the application of standardised IPC practices across their own care environment including education and training for colleagues and dissemination of information
- Be able to conduct IPC reviews and audits and ensure findings are implemented
- Create a culture for sharing of information and exchange of ideas across the Link Champion network

1.3 Core Content

Standard Infection Prevention and Control Precautions

- The Chain of Infection
- Transmission based precautions
- Hand Hygiene
- Appropriate use of PPE
- Safe use of sharps
- Management of spills
- Environmental controls including adequate cleaning and use of reusable/disposable equipment
- Aseptic Technique if appropriate
- Handling and disposal of waste

- Laundry management
- Consideration of antimicrobial stewardship
- Recognising infection, sepsis and obtaining clinical samples

Managerial Issues in IPC

- Role of the Link Champion in IPC
- Infection Prevention and Control Risk Assessments
- Development of an IPC plan for the service
- Responding to IPC risks including outbreak management, promotion of vaccinations etc.
- Recognising infections and deterioration of health and when to escalate

Optional content

- IPC in settings where care is provided to persons with dementia
- IPC in Learning Disability Settings
- Teaching/promoting IPC in the workplace
- IPC for Housekeeping
- IPC for Domiciliary Care Staff

IPC Resources

- Overview of the [National Infection Prevention and Control Manual for England](#) (NHS England, 2023)
- Overview of the [UK 5-year action plan for antimicrobial resistance 2019 – 2024](#) (HM Government, 2019)
- Overview of the [Infection Prevention and Control Education Framework](#) (NHS England, 2022) including how this aligns to the Link Champion Framework

1.4 Target Audience

The target audience for this training programme will be for Health Care Assistants, Nurses, Nursing Associates or Housekeeping Staff who are the designated IPC Link Champion. The IPC Link Champion is required to attend **all** sessions in each quarter. If unable to attend, a deputy **must be** nominated to attend on their behalf.

Other staff members, not designated to the role of Link Champion can attend sessions where the topic is of interest or may be useful for their own learning and development.

Optional sessions (**See appendix 2**) are available for Link Champions working in Learning Disability Settings, for Housekeeping Personnel or those working in Domiciliary Care. These sessions can be tailored to the individual needs of the Link Champion and the Service Provider.

1.5 Delivery Methods

This programme will be delivered using a blended approach which will include live webinars, classroom-based workshops, and an annual conference. A standard suite of presentations will be provided to course facilitators to ensure standardised education provision.

1.6 Programme Duration

The programme will run quarterly in the same way previous programmes have been delivered. Link Champions are expected to attend 1 session per quarter. Where attendance falls below this, it will impact your annual assurance audit. There will be a new schedule of the programme each year.

1.7 Programme Evaluations and Review

Each quarter, Link Champions will be asked to complete a post session evaluation. This will provide Link Champions with the opportunity to feedback to the programme team, what works well and areas for improvement.

1.8 Programme Timetable

The IPC Link Champion Programme will be delivered quarterly using a hybrid approach with online and face-to-face sessions. Sessions will be delivered by the named Senior Health Protection Nurse for each district in April, July, October and January. The named nurse for your setting will coordinate dates and times of these sessions with you to ensure Link Champions have opportunities to attend sessions in each quarter. Please see appendix 2 for more information regarding the programme timetable and optional sessions available for different settings.

2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities set out in this framework relate to the following groups of people and/or organisations:

- The Health Protection Team
- The IPC Link Champion
- The Service Provider

2.1 The Role and Responsibilities of HPT

The Health Protection team will agree to deliver an IPC Link Champion Framework Programme as outlined in this document as well as:

- Identify protected time to deliver the Link Champion programme

- Ensure that dates, times and locations for delivery of the programme are communicated in advance
- Keep an up-to-date list of all Link Champions including their contact details so that information can be disseminated
- Liaise with colleagues and other organisations at a local level to deliver aspects of the programme e.g., Antimicrobial Pharmacists, Infection Prevention and Control experts
- All communication from the HPT will be sent via the generic email address healthprotectionteam@lincolnshire.gov.uk

2.2 Role of the IPC Champion

The role of the IPC Champion is designed to support care providers to implement good infection prevention and control practices within their service. The Link Champion role is invaluable, with individuals acting as role models to their peers, helping to improve standards of practice and implementing IPC policies within their setting.

The IPC Link Champion role will include:

- Support with the implementation of Infection Prevention and Control policies, procedures and guidelines
- Acting as a role model for peers and promoting high standards of Infection Prevention and Control within their setting
- Support the person in charge to complete audits and spot checks including hand hygiene, donning and doffing and the annual environmental audit
- To disseminate IPC information to other members of the team
- Support and orientate new staff
- Escalate any IPC concerns to management
- Provide feedback on IPC matters to the management

2.3 The Role and Responsibility of the Service Provider

The service provider will agree to:

- Ensure that there is a nominated individual to act as IPC Link Champion within their organisation
- Will allocate protected time to allow the Link Champion to undertake their role including attendance at the sessions outlined in this programme
- Ensure that there is an agreed process to allow IPC Link Champions to raise concerns in relation to IPC matters within the care environment

2.4 Guidance on governance relating to IPC

The Governance of Infection Prevention and Control is both a local and national requirement. [Under regulation 12: Safe Care and Treatment, of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 \(Regulated activities\)](#) (CQC, 2023) providers must prevent and control the spread of infection. The law says that the CQC must take the [Code of Practice for Health and Adult Social Care on the Prevention and Control of Infections](#) (HM Government, 2022) and related guidance into account when making decisions about registration. By following the Code, providers will be able to show how they meet this regulation. A provider may be able to demonstrate that they meet this regulation in a different way (equivalent or better) from that described in the Code.

The role of the Health Protection Team in relation to local governance, is managed through the annual IPC assurance visit programme. The annual assurance programme will monitor attendance and engagement with the IPC Link Champion Programme during the annual IPC visit. Attendance will be monitored by keeping registration records which will be logged in each locations electronic record. Contract Officers will be notified when a setting does not attend sessions due to the contractual requirements to engage with the IPC Link Champion Programme as part of the residential agreement.

References

Care Quality Commission (2023) Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014: Regulation 12. Available from [Regulation 12: Safe care and treatment - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](#)

HM Government (2019) Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance 2019 – 2024: The UK's five-year national action plan. Available from [Tackling antimicrobial resistance 2019 to 2024 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

HM Government (2022) Health and Social Care Act 2008: code of practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance. Available from [Health and Social Care Act 2008: code of practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

NHS England (2022) National Infection Prevention and Control Manual for England. Available from [NHS England » National infection prevention and control manual \(NIPCM\) for England](#)

NHS England (2023) Infection Prevention and Control Education Framework. Available from [NHS England » Infection prevention and control education framework](#)

Appendix 1: Service Commitment Form

LCC Infection Prevention & Control Link Practitioner Program

Please complete all sections and return a scanned copy of this form to:
healthprotectionteam@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Service / Facility Name:

Location:

Type of Service:

- Residential Service e.g., Nursing Home or Care Home
- Learning Disabilities Service
- Community Supported Living
- Domiciliary Care

If successful in the application, and on completion of the programme, our service will support our IPC Link Champion by committing to:

- Allocating time for the IPC Link Practitioner to attend IPC Link Champion Meetings quarterly
- Ensuring the IPC Link Champion has access to an established e-mail address (ideally a work email address) to communicate with the Health Protection Team (Lincolnshire County Council) Senior Health Protection Nurses, and access to a computer within the clinical area
- Supporting the IPC Link Champion to access local and national Infection Prevention and Control guidelines by providing access to the internet at work
- Supporting the IPC Link Champion to attend relevant study days/webinars in relation to IPC
- Providing the IPC Link Champion with protected time to undertake the IPC Link Champion role
- Reviewing the results of local level Infection Prevention and Control audits and action improvements indicated in collaboration with the IPC Link Champion

Nominated Individuals details:

Click or tap here to enter text. would like to apply for a place on the LCC Infection Prevention & Control Link Champion Programme.

Email address for the nominee (work email address preferred):

Click or tap here to enter text. ***Contact number for the nominee:***

Click or tap here to enter text.

Signature of Nominated Link Champion:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Date:

Click or tap to enter a date.

Line Manager details: *Name & Title:*

Click or tap here to enter text.

Signed:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Date:

Click or tap to enter a date.

Contact Phone Number:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Email Address:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Appendix 2: Programme Timetable 2024 -2025

Quarter 1 – Link Champion Framework Launch 24th April 2024			
Boston United Football Club, Pilgrim Way, Wyberton, Boston, PE21 7NE			
Time	Presenter	Topic/Content	Delivery Method
09:30am – 10:00am	HPT/SHPN	Registration and welcome refreshments	Face to Face
10:00am – 10:15am	HPT/SHPN	Welcome and Introduction	Face to Face
10:15am – 11:00am	HPT/SHPN	Overview of IPC Link Champion Framework and Programme	Face to Face
11:00am – 11:30am	HPT/SHPN	Breakout Session – IPC Link Champion Framework	Group Discussion
11:30am – 12:00pm	HPT/SHPN	Breakout Session - Feedback	All
12:00 – 13:00pm Lunch and Networking			
13:00pm – 13:45pm	Lisa Hodgkinson <i>IPC Matron Nottingham</i>	The Impact of Infection on Frailty	Face to Face
13:45pm – 14:15pm	Reena Rambani Pathlinks – Consultant Microbiologist	Antimicrobial Resistance	Face to Face
14:15pm – 14:30pm	Break	Refreshments	
14:30 – 15:00	HPT/SHPN	IPC Campaigns – Hot Topics	Face to Face
15:00pm – 15:30pm	HPT/SHPN	Closing comments and evaluation	Face to Face

Quarter 2 – Online (Various dates throughout July 24)			
Time	Presenter	Topic/Content	Delivery Method
10:00am – 12:00pm	HPT/SHPN	Transmission Based Precautions and Risk Assessment	Online

Quarter 3 – Face to Face (Various dates throughout October 24)			
Time	Presenter	Topic/Content	Delivery Method
09:30am – 12:30am	HPT/SHPN	Preventing Health Care Acquired Infections associated with invasive devices including aseptic/clean technique. Practical – Handwashing and Donning and Doffing	Face to Face (Organised within District)

Quarter 4 – Online (Various dates throughout January 25)			
Time	Presenter	Topic/Content	Delivery Method
10:00 am – 12:00pm	HPT/SHPN	Teaching, Learning and Leadership for IPC Link Champions	Online

Optional Session – Housekeeping (Dates TBC)			
Time	Presenter	Topic/Content	Delivery Method
10:00 am – 12:00pm	HPT/SHPN	IPC for Housekeeping Staff	Online

Optional Session – Learning Disability Settings (Dates TBC)			
Time	Presenter	Topic/Content	Delivery Method
10:00 am – 12:00pm	HPT/SHPN	IPC for Learning Disability Settings	Online

Optional Session – Domiciliary Care (Dates TBC)			
Time	Presenter	Topic/Content	Delivery Method
10:00 am – 12:00pm	HPT/SHPN	IPC for Domiciliary Care: Infection and Control Practices working in different environments including inside people's homes or supported living accommodation	Online