Infection Prevention and Control Policy

PRN-79: **Infection Prevention and Control Policy**
Company Name: AI Auto-Tech Ltd
Trading/Business Name: CAREHOPES
Company Registration Number: 15556946
SIC Code: 88100 – Social Work Activities Without Accommodation for the Elderly and Disabled
Email: admin@carehopes.com
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1. Policy Introduction

CAREHOPES, the trading name of AI Auto-Tech Ltd, is committed to protecting service users, companions, volunteers, and staff from infection risks. Infection prevention and control (IPC) is essential in companionship work, where staff support vulnerable adults, disabled individuals, and children in private homes, community settings, and environments with varying hygiene standards.

This policy outlines the procedures, responsibilities, and standards required to minimise infection risks and ensure safe, hygienic, and compliant service delivery.

2. Key Principles

- **Safety:** Infection control is a core safeguarding responsibility.
- **Prevention:** Proactive hygiene practices reduce infection risk.
- **Compliance:** All actions align with UK health and safety regulations.
- **Professionalism:** Companions maintain high hygiene standards at all times.
- **Boundaries:** Companions do not perform clinical tasks or medical procedures.
- **Awareness:** Staff must recognise infection risks and respond appropriately.
- **Respect:** Infection control measures must be applied sensitively and respectfully.

3. Policy Statement

CAREHOPES ensures that all companions follow infection prevention and control procedures to protect themselves and service users. Companions must:

- Maintain personal hygiene
- Use PPE appropriately

- Follow handwashing protocols
- Report infection risks immediately
- Avoid unsafe environments
- Document concerns accurately

Companions must **not**:

- Administer medication
- Provide clinical wound care
- Use medical equipment
- Ignore signs of infection
- Enter environments that pose serious infection risks

4. Purpose

- Reduce infection risks for service users and staff
- Provide clear IPC procedures
- Strengthen safeguarding through hygiene awareness
- Ensure compliance with health and safety legislation
- Promote safe companionship practice
- Support staff confidence and competence

5. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Agency workers

It covers infection control in:

- Private homes
- Community settings
- Transport environments
- Overnight companionship

- Holiday companionship

6. Related Policies (Selected ONLY from relevant categories)

Safety, Health & Risk Management

- **PRN-046** Health and Safety Policy
- **PRN-128** Manual Handling Awareness Policy
- **PRN-069** Risk Assessment Policy
- **PRN-100** Environmental Safety & Home Condition Policy
- **PRN-120** Fire Safety Policy
- **PRN-121** First Aid Policy

Safeguarding & Protection

- **PRN-003** Adult Safeguarding Policy
- **PRN-136** Safeguarding Children Policy
- **PRN-144** Child Abuse Policy
- **PRN-070** Safeguarding Reporting and Escalation Procedure
- **PRN-056** Mental Capacity Act Policy

Conduct, Ethics & Behaviour

- **PRN-014** Code of Conduct Policy
- **PRN-015** Code of Ethics
- **PRN-099** Professional Boundaries Policy

Lone Working & Multi-Agency Work

- **PRN-054** Lone Working Policy
- **PRN-053** Lone Working and Community Visits Procedure
- **PRN-145** Working in Pairs Policy
- **PRN-146** Working with Other Social Workers and Carers Policy
- **PRN-147** Proxy Working Principle

Digital & Information Governance

- **PRN-112** Data Protection and GDPR Policy
- **PRN-023** Confidential Information Management Policy

- **PRN-024** Confidentiality Policy
- **PRN-050** Information Sharing and Confidentiality Procedure

7. Definitions

Infection: The invasion and multiplication of microorganisms that cause illness.

Infection Control: Measures taken to prevent and manage infection risks.

PPE: Personal Protective Equipment such as gloves, masks, and aprons.

Cross-Contamination: Transfer of harmful microorganisms from one person or surface to another.

8. Companion Responsibilities

8.1 Personal Hygiene

Companions must:

- Maintain clean clothing
- Keep nails short and clean
- Avoid wearing jewellery that may harbour bacteria
- Use deodorant and maintain personal cleanliness

8.2 Hand Hygiene

Companions must:

- Wash hands before and after each visit
- Wash hands after using the toilet
- Wash hands after coughing or sneezing
- Use hand sanitiser when soap and water are unavailable

8.3 Use of PPE

Companions must:

- Wear gloves when appropriate
- Wear masks when required
- Dispose of PPE safely
- Avoid reusing disposable PPE

8.4 Environmental Awareness

Companions must:

- Identify hygiene risks
- Avoid unsafe environments
- Report concerns immediately
- Encourage safe practices sensitively

8.5 Professional Boundaries

Companions must **not**:

- Provide clinical care
- Clean wounds
- Administer medication
- Handle bodily fluids beyond basic first aid
- Use medical equipment

9. Recognising Infection Risks

Risks may include:

- Poor home hygiene
- Contaminated surfaces
- Presence of pests
- Unmanaged wounds
- Respiratory symptoms
- Gastrointestinal symptoms
- Unsafe food storage
- Overcrowded environments
- Lack of ventilation

Companions must report risks immediately.

10. Infection Control in Different Settings

10.1 Private Homes

- Respect the home environment
- Encourage safe hygiene practices

- Avoid touching personal items unnecessarily

10.2 Overnight Companionship

- Maintain personal hygiene
- Keep PPE accessible
- Avoid sharing bedding or personal items

10.3 Holiday Companionship

- Follow local health guidelines
- Maintain hygiene during travel
- Avoid unsafe food or water sources

10.4 Transport

- Keep vehicle interiors clean
- Use sanitiser after touching public surfaces

11. Safeguarding Considerations

Infection risks may indicate:

- Neglect
- Cognitive decline
- Domestic abuse
- Environmental hazards
- Self-neglect

Companions must escalate concerns immediately.

12. Reporting Infection Concerns

Companions must:

- Inform the office immediately
- Document concerns factually
- Report safeguarding risks
- Cooperate with external agencies if required

13. Training Requirements

Staff must receive training in:

- Infection prevention
- Hand hygiene
- PPE use
- Safeguarding
- Lone-working safety
- Environmental risk assessment

14. Documentation & Record Keeping

Records must include:

- Infection concerns
- Actions taken
- Safeguarding escalations
- Communication with external agencies

Records must be stored securely.

15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required due to:

- Legislative changes
- Safeguarding updates
- Organisational changes
- Public health guidance