



## EQUALITY, EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

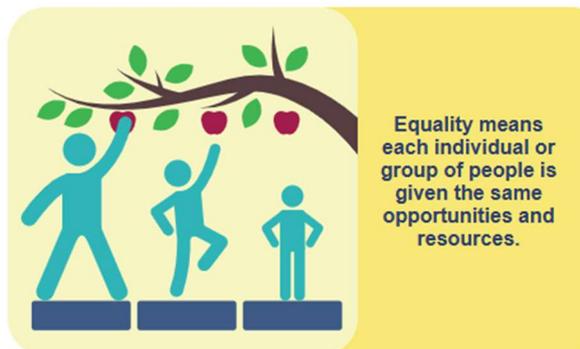
### Celebrating Diversity, Promoting Inclusion

People are wonderfully diverse—in their appearance, clothing, behaviours, beliefs, gender identities, sexual orientations, ages, cultures, and personalities. Thames Hospice reflects this richness, serving a broad and varied community with a team of staff and volunteers who bring a wide range of experiences and perspectives.



We are proud to be an equal opportunities organisation, committed to fostering inclusion and preventing discrimination. We actively welcome individuals from all backgrounds to access our services, work with us, or volunteer. We value the unique contributions of every person and expect all staff and volunteers to uphold and celebrate this diversity.

### What are Equality and Equity?



### What is Diversity?

Diversity means:

- celebrating individual differences
- appreciating and embracing the unique backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of every person
- including everyone - making sure everyone feels welcome, valued, and connected.

### What are Human Rights?

They are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world and include:

- the right to life

- the right to respect for private and family life
- the right to freedom of thought, belief, and religion
- the right to not be discriminated against. (N.B. This is not an exhaustive list.)

## Protecting People from Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection for everyone in Britain. It protects people from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. Everyone is responsible for upholding the principles of the Equality Act. There are nine protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment (some people prefer the description 'transgender person,' 'trans male' or 'trans female')
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation



## Types of Discrimination

### 1. Direct Discrimination

- Direct discrimination is when a person is treated differently or less favourably than someone else because of a protected characteristic.
- **For example:**  
A local book club denies membership to Arthur, 74, based on his age, arguing that he wouldn't fit in with the existing age group, despite no age restrictions being formally in place.

### 2. Indirect Discrimination

- Indirect discrimination is when there's a practice, policy, or rule (these can be formal or informal) which applies to everyone in the same way, but it has a worse effect on some people than others or puts someone at a particular disadvantage.
- **For example:**  
A local council provides all public documents and services in English only, indirectly discriminating against non-English speakers or those for whom English is not their first language, potentially limiting their access to essential services.

### 3. Bullying

- Bullying is behaviour carried out by a person or a group, which is unwanted and makes the person who is being bullied feel uneasy, frightened, offended, or upset. It can take place face-to-face or via email, social media, text/instant messaging, phone, letters, or graffiti. It might occur as a one-off incident or as a regular pattern of behaviour.

### 4. Harassment

- Harassment is unwanted behaviour that violates a person's dignity, or that creates a hostile, degrading and humiliating or offensive environment. It is illegal when related to the following protected characteristics:
  - Age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation
- Examples of bullying or harassing behaviour include:
  - verbal abuse
  - taunting
  - unpleasant comments, or jokes
  - spreading malicious or false rumours
  - physical force
  - deliberately isolating/ignoring someone
  - regularly undermining a competent worker or continually putting someone down during meetings etc.

- **For example:** Ahmed, a refugee from Afghanistan who is a keen footballer, joins his local football club. Whenever he goes to a practice session, the coach asks him why he does not go home to where he came from. This is harassment related to Ahmed's race.

## 5. Sexual Harassment

- Employers now have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and create a safe working environment
- Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that causes someone to feel humiliated, offended, intimidated, or degraded
- It can happen to men, women, & people of any gender identity, & can be carried out by a person of the same sex, a different sex, or a person of any gender identity
- It could be carried out by someone you work or volunteer with or by another person you meet at work, such as a member of the public
- It is unacceptable for any volunteer or employee to sexually harass any other person

## 6. Victimisation

- Victimisation is treating someone unfairly because they've complained, tried to complain, or have supported someone else in a claim related to a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act.
- **For example:** Irene, who has schizophrenia, and her friend Christine regularly go to a bingo session at their local community centre. One of the assistants at the centre makes an offensive remark to Irene about her schizophrenia. Irene complains to the manager and Christine supports Irene's complaint. The manager promises to investigate but the next time Irene and Christine go to the centre they are told that they are no longer welcome there. This is unlawful victimisation of both women.

## What can you do?

You can play your part to foster equality, diversity, and inclusion by:

- Welcoming people and being open minded
- Respecting people's differences
- Listening to the views and opinions of others
- Not engaging in discriminatory behaviour
- Not making assumptions based on stereotyping
- Considering people as individuals and not as part of a social category.

Volunteers and staff must report any evidence or suspicions they have of discrimination taking place. This can be done by contacting a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian

[freedom.to.speak.up.guardian@thameshospice.org.uk](mailto:freedom.to.speak.up.guardian@thameshospice.org.uk)

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is important to take care of your own health and safety, and the health and safety of others who may be harmed by your actions while volunteering, in the same way that employees do.

All accidents or incidents must be reported as soon as possible. Please visit or contact the Facilities Office or speak to your manager to log the details.

We also ask that you report near misses too, as this helps us manage risks effectively and ensure appropriate safety measures are in place.



### Definitions

#### Hazard

- Something that is dangerous and is likely to cause damage.

#### Risk

- The possibility of something bad happening.

#### Risk Assessment

- The process of checking the risks involved in a planned activity.

#### Safety

- Where you are safe and not in danger or at risk.

### The Law

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires that workplaces:

- Teach you so you know how to be safe and healthy at work.
- Make sure you have what you need to be comfortable at work.
- Keep the workplace safe and in good condition, and make sure work is done safely.
- Give you the right information and guidance.

## Your Responsibilities

1. Follow health and safety rules e.g.
  - Although you won't regularly be in contact with chemicals, on the occasion that substances are required, only use products that are supplied by Thames Hospice, ensure they are stored safely, wear protective clothing, such as gloves, never mix chemicals and never use unmarked containers
2. Use any safety equipment given to you e.g.
  - If you need to use a ladder or step stool, you should receive training to do so, ensure you use it safely and follow instructions from staff.
3. Report any dangers e.g.
  - Faulty equipment, frayed wiring etc. Please report any issues to the Facilities team or your manager, who will ensure this is logged on the appropriate system.
4. Look after your health e.g.
  - Report any contagious illnesses to your manager and do not come into work if you are unwell.
5. Look after others e.g.
  - Tidy up after yourself, don't leave things lying around for people to trip over etc.

## Manager's Responsibilities

1. Make the right plans.
2. Implement these plans.
3. Check the plans are working.
4. Act if the plans are not working.
5. Protect vulnerable people.
6. Review the processes.

If you feel that you or others are not protected, you should report it immediately to your manager.

## FIRST AID

There are several qualified First Aiders available on site. If you require assistance, please contact Reception or speak to the nearest member of staff, who will help locate a First Aider for you.

First Aid boxes are positioned throughout the hospice and are restocked monthly to ensure they remain fully equipped. In the event of a serious accident or emergency, please dial 999.



## SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

Slip, trip, and fall accidents happen for a number of reasons and they can have a serious impact on the lives of employees and service users.

They are the most common cause of major injuries at work and can happen almost anywhere. Some people are more likely to fall than others. In busy places with lots of people, flooring problems can quickly become dangerous.



### How Can I Help?

- Keep areas clean.
- Clear up spillages straight away and help to keep floors clean and dry.
- If you can, wear shoes with good grip.
- Ensure that all areas are well-lit to help with visibility.
- Keep all equipment clear of corridors and walkways.
- Watch out for wet or slippery areas. If you notice a potential slip hazard, please request a wet floor sign from the Facilities team.
- If equipment must be used in a public area, and cannot be moved, please contact Facilities to request appropriate signage or barriers to ensure safety.
- Avoid causing trailing cables and keep place of work clear of obstacles.
- Report risks, near misses and accidents promptly to your manager.

## MOVING AND HANDLING OBJECTS

You should not lift, move, or handle anything heavy or awkward without the required training.

If you need to lift or move items while volunteering, please follow these guidelines to help prevent injury—particularly to your back:

- Avoid lifting or dragging heavy loads.
- Use appropriate equipment, such as trolleys, whenever possible.
- Check the weight of the item before attempting to lift it.
- Reduce the load by emptying contents where possible.
- Do not carry items over long distances.
- Take regular breaks and vary your tasks to avoid strain.
- Stretch gently if you've been in one position for an extended period.

**Before lifting, always assess the following:**

- **Task**
  - Where are you moving the item from and to?
- **Individual**
  - Are you physically capable of completing the task safely?
- **Load**
  - What is the size and weight of the item?
- **Environment**
  - Is there enough space to carry out the task safely?



**CREATING A SAFE AND RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENT**

Your safety and wellbeing are our priority. Any form of violence, aggression, or threatening behaviour from anyone, will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

We understand that some individuals may be experiencing emotional distress or challenging circumstances, which can sometimes lead to heightened behaviours. It's important to be aware of early warning signs that may indicate a situation is escalating. These can include:

- Clenched fists or tense posture
- Pacing or restlessness
- Raised voice or shouting
- Flushed face or visible agitation
- Distressing or aggressive verbal cues

If you notice these signs, respond with empathy and calm. Use open and relaxed body language, maintain a calm tone, and be mindful of your facial expressions. Respect the person's personal space, avoid sudden movements, and stay aware of your surroundings—including potential exits.

If at any point you feel unsafe or believe the situation may escalate beyond your control, seek help immediately.

## HANDLING WASTE

Handling waste safely is key to keeping the working and wider environment safe. If done incorrectly it could cause serious harm.

What are the Risks?	How Can I Manage the Risks?
Waste can block emergency exits and escape routes.	All waste should be disposed of as per the organisation's policy.
Waste can cause fire hazards if it is ignited accidentally or on purpose.	Any hazardous conditions should be reported.
Injury can occur due to sharp objects within waste, back strains if the waste is heavy or awkward, and possible infection.	If you're dealing with anything potentially hazardous, wear personal protective equipment to keep yourself safe.
Waste can also attract vermin, which can cause risks to health.	Hands should be washed thoroughly with soap and water after handling any waste.

## HANDLING MONEY SAFELY

As a volunteer, you may be responsible for handling money in various situations—such as accepting payments in a shop, counting donations at fundraising events, or transporting cash between locations.

To ensure safety and security:

- Always handle money in a secure and appropriate environment.
- Never leave cash unattended.
- Store all money in a locked and secure place when not in use.
- You will receive practical training on how to use cash registers and process electronic payments confidently and correctly.

By following these guidelines, we help protect both individuals and the organisation.

## INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Infections occur when harmful germs—too small to be seen without a microscope—enter and multiply in the body. Unlike conditions such as heart disease or diabetes, infectious diseases can spread from person to person. This is especially important in a healthcare setting like Thames Hospice, where patients may be particularly vulnerable, even if you don't have direct contact with them.

## Your Role in Preventing Infection

Everyone has a part to play in reducing the risk of infection. Germs can be passed from person to person or via surfaces, so it's essential to:

- Wash your hands thoroughly and regularly
- Maintain good personal hygiene
- Stay at home if you are unwell
- Keep your vaccinations up to date in line with the UK immunisation schedule

## Washing Your Hands

Hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of infection. Hands should be cleaned properly and at key moments throughout the day.

You should wash your hands for **at least 20 seconds** using soap and water. A good way to time this is by humming the "Happy Birthday" song twice from beginning to end.

Here's a quick guide to effective handwashing:

1. Wet hands with clean, running water.
2. Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces.
3. Rub hands palm to palm.
4. Rub the back of each hand with the opposite palm.
5. Rub between your fingers and under your nails.
6. Rub the backs of your fingers against your palms.
7. Rub each thumb.
8. Rub fingertips on the opposite palm.
9. Rinse thoroughly with water.
10. Dry with a clean towel or air dry.
11. Turn off the tap using your elbow, or a clean disposable towel.



Wet your hands and wrists with water.



Apply enough soap to cover your hands.



Rub your hands palm to palm.



Use one hand to rub the back of the other hand and clean in between the fingers.

Repeat with the other hand.



Rub the palms together with fingers interlocked.



Rub the backs of the fingers against the palms with fingers interlocked.



Clasp the left thumb with the right hand and rub in rotation.

Repeat with the left hand and right thumb.



Rub the tips of the fingers in the other palm in a circular motion, going backwards and forwards.

Repeat with the other hand. Rub each wrist with the opposite hand.



Rinse your hands with water.



Dry thoroughly with towels.



Use your elbow or a clean disposable towel to turn off the tap.

## Alcohol Based Handrub

1. Apply a palmful of alcohol-based hand rub to dry hands (enough to cover all surfaces).
2. Rub palms together.
3. Rub the back of each hand with the opposite palm.
4. Rub between your fingers.
5. Rub the backs of your fingers against the opposite palm.
6. Rub each thumb by clasping it in the opposite hand.
7. Rub fingertips on the opposite palm in a circular motion.
8. Continue rubbing until hands are completely dry (usually around 20–30 seconds).

## Key Tips

- Do **not** wipe or rinse your hands after applying.
- Make sure hands are **dry before applying** the hand rub.
- Use enough product to keep hands wet for the full rubbing duration.

## **When to Use Alcohol-Based Hand Rub**

- When hands are not visibly dirty or soiled
- Before and after:
  - Touching a patient or service user
  - Performing a clean or aseptic procedure
  - Handling medical equipment
- After:
  - Contact with body fluids (if hands are not visibly soiled)
  - Touching patient surroundings (e.g., bed rails, medical charts)
- Before putting on and after removing gloves

## **When Not to Use It**

- If hands are visibly dirty, greasy, or contaminated (e.g., after using the toilet or handling food), you should wash with soap and water instead.

## **FIRE**

### **Understanding How Fires Start**

Fires begin when three key elements come together:

- Heat – a source of ignition
- Fuel – any material that can burn
- Oxygen – usually from the air around us

This combination is known as the Fire Triangle. Removing any one of these elements will prevent or extinguish a fire.

### **Reducing Fire Risk**

- Keep fire exits clearly marked and unobstructed
- Never wedge fire doors open
- Fire alarms must be tested regularly
- Maintain good housekeeping—avoid rubbish buildup
- Store flammable materials away from ignition sources
- Smoking and vaping should only occur in designated areas at the hospice and never within the building

## FIRE AWARENESS AT THAMES HOSPICE

### The Fire and Rescue Service

- Sounding the fire alarm **DOES NOT** automatically call 999
- In core hours (see below), 'Gold' will authorise ringing 999
- Out of core hours (see below), the Nurse in Charge (NiC) of Inpatient Services (IPS) will ring 999 immediately

### Fire Panels

There are TWO main fire panels:

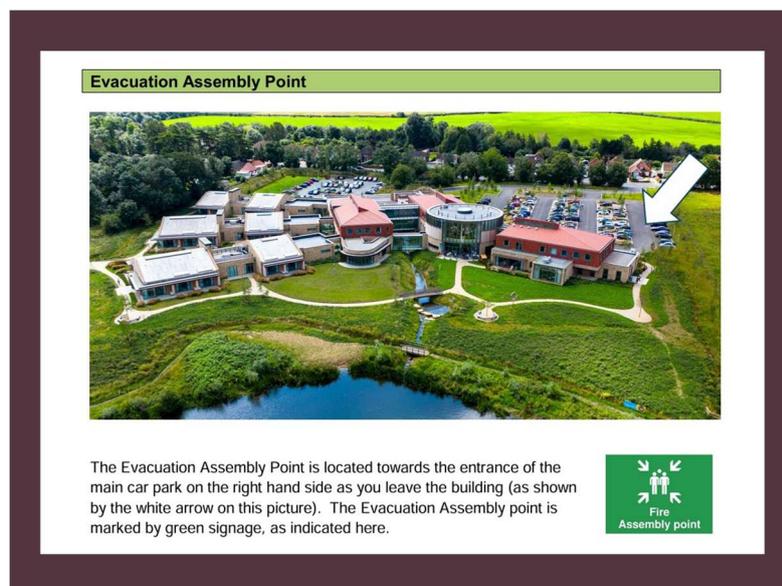
- MAIN fire panel is at the ambulance entrance
- SECOND fire panel is on Heron wing if the first one is blocked by fire

### Fire Alarm Tests and Drills at Thames Hospice

- The Fire Alarm is tested once a week at 10.00 am on a Tuesday morning
- Fire drills are held monthly at different times of day plus evacuation drills for clinical settings e.g. IPS

### The Evacuation Assembly Point

All volunteers **MUST** leave the building when the fire alarm sounds and go to the Evacuation Assembly Point (see below).



## Roles at Thames Hospice in Core Hours

9 am – 5 pm Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays

### 1. 'Gold' (Main Incident Controller)

- Stationed at the main fire panel at the ambulance entrance & is a member of the Executive Team (one of the Directors)
- Duties include:
  - Ensuring 999 is called if it is not a false alarm
  - Assigns runners & search party
  - Co-ordinating with 'Silver' & 'Bronze'
  - Will authorise silencing the alarm when safe to do so

### 2. 'Silver'

- NiC on IPS at Heron wing panel
- Duties include:
  - Organising patient evacuation if needed
  - Liaising with 'Gold'

### 3. 'Bronze'

- Member of the Executive Team or delegated manager
- Duties include:
  - Managing the evacuation point
  - Communicating with people at the evacuation point

### 4. Fire Marshals

- Trained employees from around the hospice
- Sweep their area, close doors and windows & report to 'Gold' and await instructions

## Roles Out Of Core Hours

- 5 pm – 9 am Monday – Friday, all weekends, and Bank Holidays
- The Nurse in Charge on IPS becomes the Main Incident Controller and will ring 999 immediately

## If the Fire Alarm Sounds?

- **DO NOT** assume that it is a drill or an alarm test
- Act quickly, quietly, and calmly to evacuate the building using the nearest, safe fire exit and make your way to the Evacuation Assembly Point
- Line up with your departmental colleagues, in silence
  - If anyone is missing, inform 'Bronze'
- Do not re-enter the building unless authorised to do so

- Do not go to your car but remain where your team can see you

## **Who Should Evacuate The Building?**

- Administration staff
- Non-clinical teams
- Non-patient facing clinicians
- Volunteers
- Allied Health Professionals e.g. physiotherapist
- Other staff e.g. counsellors, complementary therapists plus any patients/clients with them

## **Who Stays in The Building?**

### **IPS**

- Registered Nurses, Healthcare Assistants, Nursing Assistants, and Thames Hospice Doctors
- Patients

## **Hospice Outpatient Services**

- Patients who are in the lounge
- Registered Nurses and Healthcare Assistants stay with the patients
- If there are no patients in the lounge, then the Registered Nurses and Healthcare Assistants will evacuate the building

## **What Should You Do If You Discover a Fire?**

- Remain calm but act promptly as fires can spread quickly
- Press the nearest red fire alarm (located by exit doors)
- Call 999
- Only tackle a fire with the relevant fire extinguisher if it is very small and safe to do so and you are confident to do so – DO NOT put yourself at risk
- Leave the building using the nearest Fire Exit, providing assistance to anyone who needs it
- DO NOT stop to collect personal belongings or use the lift
- Go to either 'Gold' (in core hours) at the Fire Panel, or 'Silver' on Heron (out of core hours) to inform them that 999 has been called
- Then go to the Evacuation Assembly Point

## Staff Evacuation and Refuge Points

In the event of a fire alarm sounding, lifts will automatically stop working.

If someone is stuck at the top of the stairs, then they can use the refuge call point to alert Gold to their situation.

The green refuge call point links directly to the disabled refuge call panel which is at the ambulance entrance.



## Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS)

Any individual (including volunteers) who feels that they need a PEEP can complete one with their manager. A 'buddy system' may be set up for the individual if required. This PEEP must be reviewed on a regular basis, at least annually, or when individual circumstances change.

Managers may also request that a PEEP is completed for a member of staff or a volunteer.

## Smoking and Vapes at Thames Hospice

- Patients, staff, volunteers & members of the public are only allowed to smoke in designated smoking areas within the grounds of the Hospice
- We do not allow smoking in the Hospice buildings
- Staff must not plug in a vape to charge the battery

## Fire Extinguishers

Do not tackle a fire unless it is very small, you feel confident to do so, and AFTER you have raised the alarm. There are two types of extinguisher available at Thames Hospice:

### 1. Water Extinguishers:

- For class A fires i.e. combustible materials such as paper and wood

### 2. CO<sub>2</sub> Extinguishers:

- Class B fires i.e. flammable liquids and electrical equipment such as computers

If you have any doubt at all about which extinguisher to use on a fire, **DO NOT** use one. It is much better and safer to evacuate the building and go to the Evacuation Assembly Point in the car park.

## **SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AND CHILDREN**

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's and child's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. This includes:

- promoting their welfare and wellbeing
- protecting their rights
- preventing, wherever possible, the risk and experience of abuse or neglect.

### **What Constitutes Abuse?**

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human, personal and civil rights by another person or persons. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts.

Adults and children, can be susceptible to abuse and neglect, but people aren't always conscious of this fact.

It's crucial to recognise and address any form of abuse or neglect effectively to halt or mitigate harm and minimise the risk of recurrence.

Abuse may include one or more of the following:

- physical abuse
- domestic abuse
- discriminatory abuse
- sexual abuse
- neglect and acts of omission
- psychological (emotional) abuse
- modern slavery
- self-neglect
- organisational (institutional/systemic) abuse
- financial (material) abuse
- radicalisation.

### **Your volunteering role may not involve working with children - so why does it still matter?**

For many individuals, contemplating the abuse of children is distressing. But anyone who works with children has a responsibility to keep them safe.

It matters because adults may share crucial information about children or about their own childhood experiences. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who meets them has a role to play in:

- Identifying concerns

- Sharing information
- Taking prompt action

## **Reporting a Safeguarding Concern**

As a volunteer, you must promptly report any concerns to your manager - you are not expected to investigate further.

Even if an adult confides in you and requests confidentiality, it's essential to report it. While respecting their wishes is important, their safety and wellbeing take precedence.

Explain that you must share the information with others who can help ensure their safety and that of other adults. If you find your concerns aren't being addressed or you're uncomfortable speaking with your manager, reach out to another senior member of the organisation's team.

It is important that you do not promise to keep things to yourself. Information may need to be shared with others when there is a safeguarding concern.

## **PREVENTING RADICALISATION**

The aim of the Prevent strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism. This is by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, and to safeguard and support vulnerable people to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism

### **What is Radicalisation?**

- This refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terror groups
- Radicalisation can be motivated by a range of factors, including ideologies, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and prejudices against groups of people
- Individuals can be radicalised in many ways, and the length of time involved can differ greatly from as little as a few days, weeks or months or it may take several years

### **Signs To Be Aware Of**

- Having, or searching for materials, literature, tattoos, symbols etc. promoting extremist messages
- Changes in behaviour, becoming withdrawn
- Appearing to have been 'adopted' by a new friendship group
- Changes in appearance to fit in with a new group or ideology
- Becoming more aggressive and fixated with certain ideas or political views
- Using words spoken by hate preachers
- Believing that their religion, culture, or beliefs are under threat and treated unjustly

## **Your Responsibilities As A Volunteer**

As a volunteer, if you suspect that a child or an adult is at risk of abuse, or is being abused, neglected, harmed, or radicalised ...

- Speak to your manager – you are not expected to investigate further
- Contact one of our Safeguarding Leads - posters about who these people are can be found around the hospice building and these staff also wear special Safeguarding badges.
- Speak to Volunteer Services
- Even if an adult confides in you and requests confidentiality, it's essential to report it. While respecting their wishes is important, their safety and wellbeing take precedence.
- Explain that you must share the information with others who can help ensure their safety and that of other adults. If you find your concerns aren't being addressed or you're uncomfortable speaking with your manager, reach out to another senior member of the organisation's team.
- It is important that you do not promise to keep things to yourself. Information may need to be shared with others when there is a safeguarding concern.

## **FREEDOM TO SPEAK UP (WHISTLEBLOWING)**

We are committed to creating a safe and supportive environment where everyone—staff and volunteers alike—feels confident to speak up about any concerns they may have.

You are encouraged to raise concerns about any of the following:

- Poor or unsafe clinical practice
- Mistreatment or abuse of any individual
- Unethical, inappropriate, or offensive behaviour
- Unsafe working conditions
- Health and safety risks
- Misuse or unauthorised use of funds or resources

If you have any concerns, please speak to our **Freedom to Speak Up Guardian**, who is here to listen, support, and ensure your voice is heard via [freedom.to.speak.up.guardian@thameshospice.org.uk](mailto:freedom.to.speak.up.guardian@thameshospice.org.uk) or by calling 01753 848955. Concerns can be made anonymously if you wish.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Everyone who works or volunteers with us has a responsibility to protect the privacy of patients, staff, volunteers, and supporters. If you come across or overhear any personal or sensitive information, it is essential that you keep it confidential and do not share it with anyone.

Confidential information may include, but is not limited to:

- Names and addresses
- Reasons for treatment or care
- Appointment details

If you notice any potential breaches in information security—such as a patient record left in a public area—please report it immediately to your manager.

Maintaining confidentiality is vital to ensuring trust, safety, and respect for everyone we support and work with.

## **FOOD HYGIENE**

This section is only relevant to those volunteers who have a role in giving out food and drinks to patients, families, and customers.

### **What Does Food Hygiene Cover?**

- Personal hygiene
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Safe storage of food
- Sources and risks to food safety
- Safe food handling practices and techniques
- Temperature controls

### **Good Food Hygiene Helps the Organisation to ...**

- Obey the law
- Reduce the risk of food poisoning
- Protect our reputation
- Not spoil or waste food
- Achieve a 5 (Very Good) Food Hygiene Rating

### **Consequences of Poor Food Hygiene ...**

- Illness for service users, staff, and volunteers
- Damaged reputation – bad news travels fast
- Poor staff and volunteer morale
- Spoiled / wasted food
- Prosecution or improvement notice

## **Food Poisoning**

Food poisoning is defined as any disease of an infectious or toxic nature caused by the consumption of food or drink

The term is most often used to describe the illness, usually diarrhoea and/or vomiting caused by bacteria, viruses or parasites

Very occasionally poisonings from chemicals may be the cause

Food poisoning usually lasts 1-3 days but can continue for up to a week depending on the type and the severity of the infection

A full recovery is usually made within a week of infection

## Most likely causes of food poisoning include:

- A sick food handler
- Under-cooking foods
- Raw foods in ready-to-eat products
- Lack of temperature control
- Out of date foods
- Cross contamination
- Pests and waste food

## Foods Most Likely To Cause Food Poisoning

- Low acid, moist foods such as meat, fish, seafood, vegetables, milk, and eggs
- The risk is greatly increased if the foods are not heated to high temperatures
- The main risk from heated foods, baked, fried, canned, roasted etc. and dried foods, comes after the food has been processed, from poor handling and storage procedures
- In general, acid foods e.g. fruit products are not a source of food poisoning

## Food Contamination

Sources of contamination:

- Physical – e.g. hair, packaging material, plasters, jewellery, equipment, pests & insects
- Chemical – e.g. cleaning agents, pesticides
- Microbial – e.g. salmonella, campylobacter, E-coli
- Allergenic – e.g. nuts, wheat, green sprouting potatoes, fish, shellfish, dairy, gluten

## Food Handlers

When handling food, remember:

- Regularly wash your hands
- Practice good personal hygiene
- Report any illness
- Use appropriate PPE – an apron should be worn
- Never use fingers to test food
- Cover food whenever possible
- All food stored in fridges must be correctly labelled and dated
- Avoid cross contamination e.g.
  - all raw meat should be at the bottom of the fridge in separate covered containers
  - all cooked and dairy products should be stored above in separate covered containers

## **Serving Food**

When food is served, the following should be checked:

- That it is served at the correct temperature
- Date (use by and best before)
- Signs of contamination or damage
- Food should be served as quickly and efficiently as possible
- Meals should not be reheated or retained for service later
- All waste and unused food should be disposed of correctly
- Any crockery or cutlery should be returned for correct washing
- If any food you are asked to serve, either to patients or customers in the café, does not look to be in a suitable condition for eating and has possibly been contaminated, then please raise with the catering staff

If you have any questions about any issues about anything in this document, please speak to your manager or email [volunteers@thameshospice.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@thameshospice.org.uk) or [education@thameshospice.org.uk](mailto:education@thameshospice.org.uk)