

IPC Newsletter May 2025

Spring is here!

Whilst it is lovely to see new life springing up around us and feel a bit of warmth from the sun, giving us the opportunity to enjoy our outside areas, there are a few risks we need to manage:

Visits from livestock

Cute and cuddly lambs, kids and other 'petting' animals are fine but it is essential that you risk-assess before the visit, discourage handling of livestock by anyone especially immunocompromised and most vitally- ensure that effective handwashing is carried out after touching any animal, this may mean supervision and support to wash their hands properly for some service users. Visits to Care Homes (& day centres/ schools/ nurseries, etc) by farm animals, reptiles and other animals have been associated with some very serious infections including E. coli, salmonella, shigella and campylobacter.

BBQs, summer fayres, garden parties

Food poisoning resulting from incorrectly cooked meat or fish, poor storage or over-warming of food (due to the hot weather) is also something to be aware of in the warmer months.

Gardening Activities

Legionella bacteria (which can cause 'Legionnaires disease') loves standing water- be careful when using hosepipes or switching on that fountain/ water feature. Water butts and watering cans can also carry risks of water-borne bacteria.

Garden soil can also carry bacteria and it is important that both staff and service users are encouraged to wear gloves and wash their hands carefully after removal if they are participating in any gardening activities. Any injuries should be cleaned and covered promptly and advice sought if there is any possibility of tetanus- prone injury (animal bites/ gardening injuries).

Dehydration/ sunburn

Extra fluid is required on warmer days to ensure that skin remains well-hydrated and supple and to reduce the risk of Urinary Tract Infections. When sitting outdoors, sun cream with an appropriate SPF for the individual's skin type must be applied, and a hat or suitable shading to protect from heatstroke. Remember that the sun/shade will move and change and frequent repositioning will be required for those with limited mobility.

To contact the Westmorland and Furness Health Protection Team,

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