

IPC Newsletter August 2025

Oral Health Improvement

The Health Protection Team are pleased to introduce a new team member who joined us recently- Chloe Marsden is our new Oral Health Improvement Training Officer and will be visiting Care homes in Westmorland and Furness to provide training to care staff to support improvements in the management of residents' Oral Health. Chloe works 3 days per week and will be in touch with managers to arrange suitable times to visit each setting (but please be patient- it will take her a while to get round all 72 homes in W&F!).

Scabies

We continue to see a high number of scabies outbreaks (and community cases) in Westmorland and Furness. Scabies is a skin infection caused by a microscopic mite (*Sarcoptes scabiei*) which burrows into the layers of the skin. The main symptom is intense itching associated with burrows, nodules and redness which generally starts 3 to 6 weeks after infestation. Itching is often worse at night and scratching can lead to breaks in the skin and bacterial infections. However, not everyone with scabies has symptoms, asymptomatic infestation has been shown to be common in older adults living in care homes. When a person has symptoms, they may last for weeks or months, can be hard to recognise and are often mistakenly attributed to other skin conditions, leading to avoidable transmission.

Crusted scabies (formerly known as 'Norwegian scabies') is a hyperinfestation where a much higher number of mites is present and is often associated with immunosuppression.

Scabies is mainly spread by skin-to-skin contact but is also thought that spread via contact with shed skin cells in soft furnishings, clothing and bedding is likely.

Management of scabies outbreaks can be challenging, but the Health Protection team will support you by discussing the management/ treatment plan with you and this will be based on the UKHSA best practice guidance found via this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scabies-management-advice-for-health-professionals/ukhsa-guidance-on-the-management-of-scabies-cases-and-outbreaks-in-long-term-care-facilities-and-other-closed-settings>

As with other infections, an outbreak is defined by 2 or more cases linked in time or place. In the event of an outbreak of scabies, because the onset of symptoms can be significantly delayed, and some residents may be asymptomatic, it is important that everyone in the Home is treated at the same time. Treatment options may be topical (Permethrin 5% cream or malathion aqueous 0.5% liquid) x 2 treatments or oral (Ivermectin 3mg tablets) as a single dose calculated on individual weights.

To contact the Westmorland and Furness Health Protection Team,

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