Infection Control Policy

Policy Created: February 2026

Last Reviewed:

Next Review: February 2027 (or sooner if significant changes in legislation, guidance, or organisational activities occur)

Reviewed by:

Responsible Officer: CEO

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Approved by: CEO

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1. Introduction and Commitment

Pathways Associates CIC is a disabled-led Community Interest Company dedicated to enabling people with learning disabilities, autistic people, and their families to live the lives they choose as equals in their local communities.

We recognise that infections can disproportionately affect disabled people and vulnerable groups, and we are committed to preventing and controlling infection risks in our activities to protect health, safety, and wellbeing. This policy promotes safe practices while ensuring our flexible, mostly remote/event-based model remains inclusive and accessible.

It aligns with UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) guidance, HSE standards for small organisations, and relevant legislation (e.g., Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, COSHH Regulations 2002). This policy supports our Health and Safety Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, and Corporate Responsibility Policy, embedding infection control into our values:

- **Led by lived experience** — Involving disabled people and families in shaping accessible, non-discriminatory measures
- **Partnership** — Collaborating with partners, health authorities, and stakeholders to share best practices
- **Inclusion and respect** — Ensuring controls respect diversity, protected characteristics, and individual needs
- **Innovation** — Seeking creative, practical solutions to reduce risks without creating barriers
- **Integrity** — Acting transparently and accountably in all infection-related matters

We commit to a proactive, proportionate approach to infection control, prioritising prevention and rapid response.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Pathways Associates CIC activities, including:

- Co-produced training and learning programmes

- Policy, strategy, and capability development support
- Expert Hub, Self Advocates Training Partnership, and events
- Remote working, travel, and internal operations

It covers:

- Colleagues, associates, volunteers, and Experts by Experience
- Participants, families, partners, contractors, and visitors

It addresses risks from common infections (e.g., COVID-19, flu, norovirus) and any emerging threats.

3. Key Objectives

We aim to:

- Prevent infection spread through effective hygiene, vaccination promotion, and risk assessments
- Respond quickly and compassionately to suspected or confirmed cases
- Protect vulnerable individuals, ensuring measures are inclusive and accessible
- Comply with legal and guidance requirements, reporting where necessary
- Foster a culture of awareness and shared responsibility for health
- Learn from incidents to continuously improve our practices

4. Core Principles

Our infection control is guided by:

- **Prevention first** — Prioritise simple, effective measures like hand hygiene and ventilation
- **Accessibility** — Adapt controls (e.g., provide masks/alternatives for those with sensory needs)
- **Proportionality** — Risk-based actions suitable for a small CIC, focusing on high-contact activities like events

- **Transparency** — Communicate clearly and share updates in accessible formats
- **Compassion** — Support affected individuals without stigma or blame
- **Evidence-based** — Follow current UKHSA/NHS guidance, adapting to changes

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- **CEO / Responsible Officer**
  - Oversee policy implementation and risk assessments
  - Ensure resources for controls and training
  - Lead responses to outbreaks and report to authorities
- **Managers / Event Leads**
  - Conduct infection-specific risk assessments for activities
  - Implement controls and monitor compliance
  - Support team members and participants
- **All Colleagues, Associates, Volunteers, and Experts by Experience**
  - Follow hygiene practices and report symptoms/concerns
  - Participate in training and risk mitigation
  - Promote inclusive safety measures
- **Board of Directors**
  - Review infection control performance quarterly
  - Ensure learning from incidents is applied

If an incident involves safeguarding or regulated activities, follow our Safeguarding Policy and notify CQC/UKHSA.

6. Procedures

We embed infection control through:

- **Risk Assessments**
  - Conduct for all events/activities, covering transmission risks and controls (e.g., spacing, ventilation)
  - Review annually or post-incident
- **Prevention Measures**

    - Promote hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and cleaning protocols
    - Encourage vaccinations (e.g., flu, COVID-19) where appropriate
    - Use PPE (e.g., masks) based on risk, with alternatives for accessibility
- **Response to Suspected/Confirmed Cases**
    - Isolate and support affected individuals compassionately
    - Notify CEO immediately; follow UKHSA guidance for contact tracing
    - Communicate with participants/families in accessible formats
- **Remote Working and Events**
    - Default to virtual where possible to reduce risks
    - For in-person: Check venues for hygiene standards; provide sanitiser and signage
- **Reporting and Monitoring**
    - Report notifiable diseases to UKHSA
    - Log incidents in a secure register

7. Training, Awareness, and Support

We commit to:

- Providing annual infection control training for all (accessible, e.g., easy-read materials)
- Raising awareness via inductions, meetings, and resources (e.g., UKHSA posters)
- Offering support for those affected, including mental wellbeing checks
- Drawing on best practice from UKHSA, NHS, and sector guidance

8. Monitoring, Review, and Continuous Improvement

- This policy is reviewed annually or following outbreaks/guidance changes
- Performance is monitored via risk assessments, incident logs, and feedback
- Learning is co-produced with Experts by Experience and shared

- Feedback is welcomed to ensure the policy remains effective and inclusive
- Annual summaries are included in our CIC report for transparency

9. Conclusion

Pathways Associates CIC is dedicated to robust infection control that protects our community while upholding inclusion and wellbeing. By preventing risks, responding effectively, and learning together, we honour our disabled-led values and ensure safer environments for people with learning disabilities, autistic people, and their families.