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| **Title of Policy:** | **Section:** |
| **Food Safety and Hygiene** | **Health and Safety** |

**Purpose**

Inadequate standards of hygiene associated with the preparation of food can lead to serious health problems. This policy outlines some of the dangers which may be present and provides excellent advice and guidance so as to avoid problems and instances of ill-health where the care and support workers of the Company prepare food for Young Persons.

**Statement**

The preparation and serving of food to a Young Person will usually form part of the Young Person’s Personal Care and Support Plan, with the precise nature of the support discussed and agreed either upon the commencement of service, or as part of an agreed modification in line with changes in the Young Person’s circumstances. The kind of support offered will vary, ranging from straightforward tasks such as sandwich preparation to a simple meal. Individual circumstances will determine whether the Company is to be registered as a Food Business, but irrespective of this determination, appropriate and acceptable standards of food safety, hygiene and preparation described here will apply in every situation and to all Care and Support Workers employed by the Company. The Company will ensure that its Care and Support Workers are adequately informed of their responsibilities and trained to the standards required.

**Procedure and Guidance**

**Legal obligations**

The following legal obligations may apply to the Company if it is registered as a Food Business:

1. General food law requirements relating to food safety, presentation, traceability and withdrawal, recall and notification to competent authorities of unsafe food and other obligations, mainly contained in Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002.
2. Requirements of the food hygiene regulations (including registration).
3. Requirements of the EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation (EU No. 1169/2011 or (EU FIC) including the provision of Allergen information.

The Company will register with the Local Authority as a Food Business in appropriate circumstances, and after having received relevant and competent advice from any relevant regulatory body and the Local Authority. The Company understands and accepts that it is not the nature of the premises as domestic or public, which is critical, but the nature of the circumstances in which food or food services are provided. In most circumstances Young Persons will provide their own food items and ingredients and make these available to the Care and Support Worker for preparation.

If the Care and Support Worker prepares the food, as part of the care and support package, and without direction/input from the Young Person, then this element of preparation could be considered to be a food business activity and therefore registration with the Local Authority will usually be required.

**Personal Care and Support Plans**

Where food preparation and service are to be an integral part of the Young Person’s Care and Support Plan then the Company will, as part of its due diligence:

1. Establish if the Young Person suffers from any food allergies or intolerances, such as, **for example** allergic reactions to foods such as peanuts; tree nuts; soy; milk; egg; cereals; seafood; fish; and sesame.
2. Confirm the precise nature of the support to be given.
3. Observe the cultural and dietary preferences expressed by the Young Person.

**Food service and preparation**

The Company will accept the following responsibilities as part of normal operations and care and support planning:

1. The preparation of sandwiches.
2. Preparation and service of simple meals and snacks purchased by the Young Person, such as, for example - chilled ready meals, frozen ready meals, salads, frozen, vegetables and occasionally rice and pasta, generally tinned soups etc.
3. The occasional hot snack, such as a boiled egg, bacon sandwich and similar quick and easy alternatives to a more substantial cooked meal.

**Key aspects of a safe and efficient service**

The following guidance must be followed by all of the Company’s Care and Support Workers involved in the preparation and service of food, irrespective of whether the Company is registered as a Food Business.

**Personal Hygiene**

1. Care and Support Workers must wash their hands before preparing and/or serving food.
2. Staff Uniforms must be kept clean at all times, and where available, protective aprons should be worn to prevent harmful bacteria passing on to food.
3. Watches and loose jewellery should be removed prior to food preparation and service.
4. Care and Support Workers must not touch their face or hair whilst preparing food.

**Fitness for Work**

1. Care and Support Workers should be fit for work at all times which means that they must not be **suffering from, or carrying an illness or disease** that could cause a problem with food safety (especially diarrhoea or vomiting).
2. Cuts and sores should be completely covered with a waterproof dressing.

**Cross Contamination**

Cross-contamination is when bacteria are spread between food, surfaces or equipment. It is most likely to happen when raw food touches (or drips onto) ready-to-eat food, equipment or surfaces. Cross-contamination is one of the most common causes of food poisoning and the Company’s Care and Support Workers are advised to:

* Clean and disinfect work surfaces, chopping boards and equipment thoroughly before preparing food and after use.
* Use different equipment (including chopping boards and knives) for raw meat/poultry and ready-to-eat food.
* Wash their hands thoroughly after touching raw food.
* Keep raw and ready-to-eat food apart at all times, including packaging material for ready-to-eat food.
* Store raw food below ready-to-eat food in the fridge.

**Effective Cleaning**

Effective cleaning is essential to get rid of harmful bacteria and stop them spreading. Unless the Company is tasked with everyday household cleaning responsibilities, the cleanliness of kitchen areas, food preparation areas, fridges, microwave ovens etc will be the responsibility of the Young Person.

If cleanliness is a problem, and considered to be a potential food safety issue, then this must be reported to the Manager without delay so that adequate solutions can be found.

Following established procedures in the prevention of cross contamination will reduce the risks associated with poor standards of general household cleanliness.

**Freezing Food**

On occasion, a Young Person may ask for food to be frozen, for use later, in which case Care and Support Workers should:

1. Freeze fresh food as soon as it has been delivered or prepared.
2. Freeze hot food as soon as it has been properly chilled down.
3. Divide food into smaller portions, if possible and put into containers, with lids, or freeze bags.

**Defrosting Food**

Harmful bacteria can grow in food that is not defrosted properly. Care and Support Workers are required to observe the following principles:

1. Food should be thoroughly defrosted before cooking, unless the manufacturer’s instructions tell you to cook from frozen.
2. Ideally, plan ahead to leave enough time and space to defrost small amounts of food in the fridge.
3. If food cannot be defrosted in a fridge, or time does not permit this, then place the food in a container with a lid and then place under cold running water.
4. If available, food can be defrosted in a microwave oven on the “defrost” setting.
5. On occasion, food may be allowed to defrost at room temperature, but foods that are not subsequently to be cooked or re-heated should not be left at room temperature for long periods of time.
6. Always check that food is thoroughly defrosted either before consumption or any further processing.

**Reheating Food**

It is very important to reheat food properly to kill harmful bacteria that may have grown since the food was cooked. Care and Support Workers should:

1. Make sure that you use equipment that reheats/cooks food effectively and follow the equipment manufacturer’s instructions.
2. Preheat equipment such as ovens and grills before reheating.
3. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions regarding time and temperature, where available.
4. Check and serve reheated food immediately.

**Ready-to-eat foods**

Ready-to-eat foods are foods that will not be cooked or reheated before serving. These include salads, cooked meats, desserts, sandwiches, cheese and foods that have been cooked in advance to serve cold. It is important to handle ready-to-eat foods safely to protect them from harmful bacteria. In particular:

1. Check chilled ready-to-eat foods to make sure that they have been kept cold enough; the “use by” date has not passed if there is one; and that the packaging is not damaged.
2. Keep ready-to-eat foods separate from meat and poultry.
3. Keep ready-to-eat foods covered.
4. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions on how to store and prepare the food if these are available.
5. When preparing vegetables and salad ingredients, peel, trim or remove the outer parts as appropriate; wash them thoroughly in clean drinking-quality water.
6. Store ready-to-eat foods such as salads, cream cakes, and desserts in the fridge until they are needed.
7. Don’t use ready-to-eat foods after the “use by” date if there is one.

**Policy Reviewed on Date of Implementation by the Following Company Officer:**

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| **Full name:** |
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| James McAlpine |
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| **Job Title:** |
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| Homecare Director |
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| **Signature:** |
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| J. McAlpine |

**Top Ten Tips**

1. Check with the Young Person if they have any allergies.
2. Maintain personal hygiene to the highest standards, and always wash your hands before handling food.
3. If suffering from an illness or disease, do not prepare food for a Young Person.
4. Ensure that all surfaces where food is to be prepared are clean before use.
5. Always keep raw and ready-to-eat food separate.
6. Store raw food below ready-to-eat food in the fridge.
7. Ensure food is thoroughly defrosted before cooking, unless instructions tell you to cook from frozen.
8. Always pre-heat equipment such as ovens/grills before reheating.
9. Always check that “use buy” dates have not passed.
10. Store ready-to-eat foods such as salads cream cakes and desserts in the fridge until they are needed.

**Food Allergy Information**

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| Peanuts | Peanuts, also called groundnuts, are found in many foods, including  sauces, cakes and desserts. They are common in Thai and Indonesian  dishes. Watch out for peanut flour and groundnut oil too. |
| Nuts | People with nut allergy can react to many types of nut, including walnuts,  almonds, hazelnuts, Brazil nuts, cashews and pecans. Nuts are found in  many foods, including sauces, desserts, crackers, bread and ice cream.  Watch out for nut oils, marzipan and ground almonds too. |
| Milk | People with milk allergy need to avoid foods containing milk, yoghurt,  cream, cheese, butter and other milk products. Watch out for dishes  glazed with milk and ready-made products containing milk powder. |
| Eggs | Eggs are used in many foods including cakes, mousses, sauces, pasta and  quiche. Sometimes egg is used to bind meat products, such as burgers.  Watch out for dressings containing mayonnaise and dishes brushed  with egg. |
| Fish | Some types of fish, especially anchovies, are used in salad dressings,  sauces, relishes and on pizzas. Fish sauce is commonly used in Thai  dishes. |