


# Hydration and Nutrition

<b>Services covered by this policy:</b>	General Pre-school Children's Service The Hamlet at Home Adult Services
<b>Post holder(s) responsible for this policy:</b>	Operations Manager Adult Services and Senior Manager Childrens Service
<b>Date approved:</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
<b>Approved by:</b>	CEO – Pauline Morgan
<b>Signed:</b>	
<b>To be reviewed:</b>	September 2023

## A. Policy statement

Our belief is that everyone at The Hamlet should be happy and safe, is unique and valued, can explore choice and opportunities, is encouraged to unlock their potential, can communicate in their own way and is part of the wider community.

The Hamlet understands the importance of adequate nutrition and hydration and will take all practical measures to ensure that Hamlet Users benefit from a high standard of nutritional care.

Adequate hydration and nutrition are of importance to all Hamlet Users, regardless of how they take on fluids. For Hamlet Users who have a gastrostomy, refer also to the [Healthcare and Clinical Procedures policy](#).

## B. Purpose of this policy and why we have it

The Hamlet understands hydration to refer to the drinking of adequate amounts of fluid to keep the body healthy. It recognises that having an adequate fluid intake is an important part of maintaining a balanced diet and is essential for health and wellbeing. In this respect, The Hamlet is aware that the Food Standards Agency recommends a daily intake for an adult of six to eight glasses of water or other fluids (about two litres).

A healthy, nutritious, and balanced diet is of vital importance for the health and wellbeing of Hamlet Users and support staff should wherever appropriate, support them in all aspects of achieving an adequate diet, including where they have special dietary needs and preferences.

## C. Scope of this policy

- The Hamlet Users – children
- The Hamlet Users – adults
- Parents/carers/home support staff of Hamlet Users
- The Hamlet staff
- The Hamlet Volunteers
- Educational or work placements e.g. Occupational Therapy or Nursing

## D. Policy

The following nutritional principles will be supported:

- food and drink should be enjoyed
- a variety of different foods should be eaten
- the right amount should be eaten to maintain a healthy weight
- plenty of foods rich in starch and fibre should be included in the diet
- foods that contain a lot of fat should be avoided
- sugary foods and drinks should not be eaten or drunk too often
- vitamins and minerals in food are critical
- adequate hydration is also critical.

The importance of good hydration and nutrition will be actively promoted to Hamlet Users.

Wherever possible support staff will support the independence of Hamlet Users to cater for themselves, to choose their own foods, to choose when and where to eat and to prepare their own meals.

Support staff will help all Hamlet Users to be as independent in eating and drinking as possible and will work to ensure their dignity while they are doing so including the provision of special eating aids and special drink preparation.

Eating and drinking difficulties, or a need for assistance when eating or drinking, will be identified within each Hamlet User's [support plan / profile](#) and a plan of assistance agreed with the Hamlet User and / or their representatives, where necessary.

Where a Hamlet User requires help with eating or drinking, support staff will discreetly provide appropriate help with sensitivity and care and will work to ensure their dignity while they are doing so.

Allergies, sensitivities and intolerances will be identified within each Hamlet User's [support plan / profile](#) and a plan of assistance agreed with the Hamlet User and / or their representative/s. (See separate policy – [Allergies, Sensitivities and Intolerances in Hamlet Users](#))

Support staff should take into account any ethnic or cultural dietary needs of Hamlet Users and should be sensitive to religious and cultural beliefs surrounding food and drink. These should be identified in their [support plan / profile](#).

Special therapeutic diets will be supported, wherever possible, when advised by healthcare or dietetic staff.

All food will be prepared, cooked, stored and presented in accordance with the high standards required by the Food Safety Act 1990, and the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013. Mealtimes will be unhurried and relaxed with Hamlet Users being given plenty of time to eat and enjoy their food.

Drinks will be made available throughout the day.

Food and drink will be presented in a manner that is attractive and appealing.

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Hamlet Users will be provided with information on what constitutes a balanced diet to address any risk of poor nutrition and/or dehydration, which will help them make an informed decision about the type and amount of food and drink they need. Staff should report to management if a Hamlet User does not drink or eat their meal and should record this.

Where a Hamlet User is reluctant to drink enough water/fluid and this is having a negative effect on their health, The Hamlet will consider other ways of increasing their fluid intake.

Staff will be alert to any difficulties that a Hamlet User is having with regards to their nutrition or hydration and will report any worries or concerns to a senior member of staff.

Support staff should be alert to urine colour as a possible indication of hydration level. Odourless, pale urine will generally indicate good hydration levels. Dark, strong-smelling urine could be an indicator of poor hydration.

Where a requirement is identified for additional help or advice, the Hamlet User may be referred to a suitable expert such as a dietician or speech and language therapist.

## **E. Procedures and monitoring**

### **Support Plan / Profile**

Each Hamlet User's [support plan / profile](#) should include:

- Allergies, sensitivities and intolerances
- Likes and dislikes
- Specific equipment needed and how it is used
- Specific support needed from staff
- Whether or not the Hamlet User has an Eating and Drinking or Dysphagia plan written by a Speech and Language Therapist
- A copy of the Eating and Drinking or Dysphagia plan written by a Speech and Language Therapist (if there is one)

### **Preparing food or drink for or with a Hamlet User**

- Clean and disinfect the area to be used.
- Wash your hands thoroughly.
- Remind, encourage or support the Hamlet User to wash their hands. In very few cases the Hamlet User might use anti-bac hand gel instead; the need for this should be recorded in their [support plan / profile](#).
- Ensure you follow good food hygiene practices.
- Ensure the food or drink is prepared in the correct way for the Hamlet User e.g. thickness and temperature.

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## Supporting a Hamlet User to eat or drink

- Consider where the Hamlet User will have their food or drink. Their [support plan / profile](#) should state if they have specific needs e.g. a quiet room or to be around others, to drink without sight of a clock, or away from a phone that might ring. Hamlet Users sitting in wheelchairs should be positioned or encouraged to position themselves so that others are unlikely to brush past or knock the back of the wheelchair. Some Hamlet Users might need a large area around them to be free of people or objects they might grab or hit.
- Consider the position the Hamlet User needs to be in to eat or drink safely. [Support plans / profiles](#) should state specifics for each Hamlet User but generally ensure they are in an upright position and that their larynx and chin are in line. Their head needs to be up, usually in a natural chin tuck, and not tilted.
- Consider the position you will be in when supporting the Hamlet User to eat or drink. Avoid awkward positions, lots of twisting or bending. An adjustable swivel chair can be used to avoid this. Some Hamlet Users may have swallowing difficulties, sight or hearing impairments that may require you to sit or stand on a particular side. Try to be at the same level as them so you are not bending over them and they are not having to look up or down at you.
- Clean and disinfect the table if you are using one.
- Wash your hands thoroughly.
- Remind, encourage or support the Hamlet User to wash their hands. In very few cases the Hamlet User might use anti-bac hand gel instead; the need for this should be recorded in their [support plan / profile](#).
- Put on an apron (unless out in public where it might cause the Hamlet User to feel uncomfortable or take away their dignity).
- The Hamlet User should decide if they want to wear an apron. Some might prefer not to wear one, but to change their clothes after eating instead.
- Ensure you follow good food hygiene practices.
- Think about how much food you put on a spoon/fork and the rate at which you are presenting food or drink. Make sure the Hamlet User is not rushed but are also not left waiting to eat. Some [support plans / profiles](#) will give exact guidance on how to do this for the Hamlet User.
- Consider how you make the experience enjoyable for the Hamlet User. Offer choice in how they eat e.g., all of the veg first or a few different foods in one mouthful. If they are not able to tell you this specifically, observe their reactions to each mouthful and adjust accordingly.
- Ensure the Hamlet User's dignity throughout the experience; focus on them and encourage or support them to keep clean.
- Sometimes, it might be necessary to switch staff supporting the Hamlet User part-way through their meal or drink, though this should be avoided if possible. Staff must wash their hands thoroughly before supporting each Hamlet User.

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- Report any incidents on an [incident form](#) and inform a senior member of staff. The Hamlet User's parents/carers/home support staff should be informed.

### When the Hamlet User has finished their food or drink

- Some [support plans / profiles](#) state that the Hamlet User should be in a certain position for an amount of time after eating or drinking.
- Remind, encourage or support the Hamlet User to wipe their face, tidy things away and wash their hands thoroughly.
- Wash your hands thoroughly.
- Ensure the area is cleaned and the table is disinfected after use. Where possible, the Hamlet User should be involved in this.
- Record what the Hamlet User eaten or drank if this is required. The format for this will depend on the Hamlet User and what information is needed.

### Training

All support staff who will be expected to offer food / drink support for Hamlet Users receive specialist training, appropriate to their roles and tasks, in food / drink handling and in aiding Hamlet Users with swallowing difficulties. This will include training in allergies and allergic reactions.

No staff new to care work will provide support with eating / drinking on their own or without direct supervision unless they have been assessed as competent to do so. For staff working in Adults Services and The Hamlet at Home this will be in line with Care Certificate standards.

Staff will only provide support with eating / drinking once a manager or team leader has signed off that they have been fully trained and are competent to provide this support.

Service managers have overall responsibility for ensuring that there is an up-to-date register of all staff who have been trained and assessed as competent to provide support with eating / drinking.

### Quality Assurance

Incident records are reviewed monthly by the appropriate Centre Administrator.

The Quality Assurance Officer will use audits to monitor practices.

The Hamlet staff members are expected to report concerns to their line manager or take the issue to the relevant Senior Manager or CEO if this is not appropriate.

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## **F. Regulations (Health and Social Care Act) and other legal references**

Regulation 14: Meeting Nutritional and Hydration Needs, which includes a requirement for community care providers to ensure that the nutritional and hydration needs of service users are met.

The standards require:

- hydration assessments to be carried out in accordance with recognised guidance
- water to be available and accessible to service users at all times — and other drinks to be made available periodically throughout the day
- service users to be encouraged to drink independently if they are able, but to receive appropriate support to drink if needed
- hydration intake to be monitored where necessary to prevent dehydration
- service users' religious and/or cultural needs and preferences being recognised in their nutrition and hydration assessment, and subsequently met.

Food Safety Act 1990

Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013

Food Information Regulations 2014

**This policy should be read in conjunction with any other relevant Hamlet policies and accompanying procedures.**

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