


Allergies, Sensitivities and Intolerances (Hamlet Users)

Services covered by this policy:	General Pre-school Children's Service The Hamlet at Home Adult Services
Post holder(s) responsible for this policy:	Senior Manager and Registered Manager
Date approved:	7 th October 2021
Approved by:	Pauline Morgan - CEO
Signed:	
To be reviewed:	October 2022

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.

This policy describes how The Hamlet assesses risks to Hamlet Users from food allergies and the procedures followed in the event of anyone suffering an allergic reaction or illness.

B. Purpose of this policy and why we have it

Every Hamlet User has the right to a varied and nutritious diet and experiences that provide for their dietary needs and offers health, choice and pleasure. However, The Hamlet also recognises that some individuals have an allergy, which means that there will be certain food items containing allergens that they cannot eat and items they cannot use.

The Hamlet understands that an allergic reaction can be produced by even a tiny amount of an allergen that a person is sensitive to. Symptoms of an allergic reaction can be very serious, ranging from mild itching around the mouth to vomiting, diarrhoea, wheezing and, on occasion, potentially fatal anaphylactic shock.

The Hamlet will therefore act to ensure that Hamlet Users are given appropriate information to warn them when foods or environments contain potential allergens. They will also be provided with a range of allergen free food choices so that their nutritional intake is not compromised and their enjoyment of food and mealtimes is not diminished.

Hamlet Users who have allergies, sensitivities or intolerances but lack the capacity to be able to choose safe options will be protected by staff helping them to achieve a healthy diet or access activities.

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
- Visitors

D. Policy

What are allergies, sensitivities, and intolerances?

An allergy is a reaction produced by the body's immune system when exposed to a normally harmless substance.

Allergies are different to sensitivities and intolerances.

A sensitivity is the exaggeration of the normal effects of a substance. For example, the caffeine in coffee may cause extreme symptoms such as palpitations and trembling.

An intolerance is where a substance causes unpleasant symptoms, such as diarrhoea, but does not involve the immune system.

- Activities involving food (e.g. baking) will be planned with reference to the preferences and choices of individual Hamlet Users and with any known food allergies in mind. The Hamlet will plan to ensure that any Hamlet User who has a food allergy, sensitivity or intolerance has alternative food choices that meet their preferences.
- Where a Hamlet user may lack the capacity to understand the information given, or to make choices based on the information provided, support staff will be expected to comply fully with the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Every effort will be made to help the Hamlet User understand their choices and no assumption of incapacity should be made. Where necessary, best interests decisions will be made to help Hamlet Users with allergies, sensitivities or intolerances avoid foods that may make them ill.
- Special allergen-free therapeutic diets will be provided when advised by healthcare or dietetic staff.
- All food will be prepared, cooked, stored and presented in accordance with the standards required by food hygiene regulations and the food allergy legislation. Hamlet staff will be trained to have an understanding of food allergies, sensitivities and intolerances and will be careful in the use of ingredients and in the prevention of contamination of different foods with foods that might produce a reaction. Staff are expected to know the

Name of policy:	Allergies, sensitivities, and intolerances (Hamlet Users)
Date approved:	7 th October 2021

ingredients in all meals prepared by The Hamlet and other food establishments /outlets and to ensure that this information is as described on menus and other allergen information sources.

- See [Hydration and Nutrition policy](#) for how The Hamlet manages food and drink brought onto the premises by Hamlet Users for their own consumption.
- In all aspects of food preparation and serving, The Hamlet will comply with *Allergen Information for Loose Foods* published by the Food Standards Agency.

E. Implementation and monitoring

Preventing reactions

The Hamlet should ask if the Hamlet User has any known allergies, sensitivities or intolerances when carrying out the [core assessment](#). They and their parents/carers/home support staff should inform The Hamlet of any changes. The Hamlet should also request updated details annually.

Details of the Hamlet User's known allergies, sensitivities or intolerances, reactions and treatment should be recorded in their [support plan / profile](#).

Preschool only: children have [snack and lunch placemats](#) with details of their known allergies, sensitivities or intolerances, reactions and treatment. Each child also has an individual allergy risk assessment carried out by a member of the preschool team with the child's parents/carer.

Lunchboxes or bags should have the Hamlet User's name on.

The Hamlet should try to educate the Hamlet User about their allergies, sensitivities or intolerances and how to stay safe.

The Hamlet should risk assess activities that involve known or common allergens such as fur, feathers, straw, balloons, latex.

Where possible, Hamlet Users with allergies, sensitivities or intolerances should not miss out on activities because of them. Activities should be tailored to meet their needs so they can be involved.

Managing allergic reactions

Details of the Hamlet User's known allergies, reactions and treatment should be recorded in their [support plan / profile](#). This should include how and when their parents/carers/home support staff should be informed.

Preschool only: Each child should have an [individual allergy risk assessment](#).

The majority of The Hamlet support staff should have First Aid training, including managing allergic reactions.

A Hamlet User may have allergies that have not yet been identified. The Hamlet staff should be aware of signs of possible allergic reactions:

Name of policy:	Allergies, sensitivities, and intolerances (Hamlet Users)
Date approved:	7 th October 2021

- Swelling of tongue and/or throat
- Difficulty in swallowing or speaking
- Wheeze or persistent cough or severe asthma
- Difficult or noisy breathing
- Stomach cramps or vomiting after eating a food or an insect sting
- Dizziness / collapse / loss of consciousness (due to a drop in blood pressure) / floppiness in babies
- Vocal changes (hoarse voice)

Adrenaline auto-injectors

If a service has a Hamlet User that has an adrenaline auto-injector (e.g. EpiPen or Jext), The Hamlet should ensure training for some of the staff team supporting them. At least one staff member who is trained to administer the adrenaline auto-injector should be on hand for the Hamlet User while they are in The Hamlet's care. (See also [Medicines policy](#)) Training on using adrenaline auto-injectors may be included in a First Aid course or be delivered as a stand-alone session.

Managing sensitivities and intolerances

Details of the Hamlet User's known sensitivities or intolerances, reactions and treatment should be recorded in their [support plan / profile](#). This should include how and when their parents/carers/home support staff should be informed.

The majority of The Hamlet support staff should have First Aid training, including managing effects of sensitivities or intolerances.

Training

Induction training for new contracted support staff on nutrition will cover Care Certificate Standard 8: Fluids and nutrition.

All support staff will receive specialist training on nutrition appropriate to their roles and tasks. This will include training in food allergies and allergic reactions.

A qualified emergency first aider trained in the immediate management of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis will be onsite at The Hamlet at all times. Groups going offsite should include at least one qualified emergency first aider.

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

CQC Fundamental Standards Compliance

Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014:

Name of policy:	Allergies, sensitivities, and intolerances (Hamlet Users)
Date approved:	7 th October 2021

The Hamlet understands that Regulation 14: Meeting Nutritional and Hydration Needs, includes a requirement for providers to ensure that the nutritional and hydration needs of Hamlet Users are met.

Other Legislation and Guidance

Food Safety Act 1990

Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013

Food Information Regulations 2014

The EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation 1169/2011 has required food businesses to provide allergy information on unpackaged food, emphasising any of 14 specific allergens identified in Annex II of the legislation. These regulations will apply for the foreseeable future.

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

Name of policy:	Allergies, sensitivities, and intolerances (Hamlet Users)
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