**Code of Practice**

**for use of**

**Hydrotherapy Pool**

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1. **Introduction**

The responsibility for the implementation of all aspects of safety at hydrotherapy pools rests with the senior person at the premises where the hydrotherapy pool is located. An exception would be where the hydrotherapy pool is let or is allowed to be used by individuals, clubs, organisations or groups of persons other than service users of the Day Centres at which the pool is located. In these circumstances, the Day Centre Manager must formally place upon the individuals or leaders of such groups or organisations, the responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of themselves or their members using the hydrotherapy pool by their provision of adequate supervision in accordance with this Code of Practice.

A hydrotherapy pool should not be regarded as a small swimming pool. It presents much greater demands on hygiene practices due to its small volume, high temperature and user type. Specific infections due to mycrobacteria, adenovirus, enteroviruses, pseudomonas aeruginosa and Legionella are well authenticated. A number of cases of rare, but fatal, primary amoebic meningo-encephalitis have arisen from heated pools. Poolside foot infections by epidermophytes are prevalent. The responsibility for the successful management of hydrotherapy pool hygiene rests with the Day Centre Manager but depends on the co-ordinated efforts of cleaning staff as well as the co-operation of pool users.

A risk of drowning, contamination from chlorine, hazardous chemicals and water-borne infections exists at hydrotherapy pools, and appropriate precautions must be taken. These must include each of the following:**2. Aim**

To provide a safe and healthy environment for both pool users and care staff who access the hydrotherapy pool. **3.** **Objectives**

To monitor the pool in a systematic way to ensure that the water temperature and the chemical balance are maintained at the correct levels at all times.To ensure that all staff who are responsible for pool sessions are aware of emergency procedures, health and safety issues, pool management issues, and the manual handling of clients for who they have a responsibility. Staff that are responsible for pool sessions have a duty to ensure that support staff who may be called upon to assist at hydrotherapy sessions are aware of the indications and contra indications of hydrotherapy and have an ability to identify them

**4. Monitoring Requirements**

1. **Compliance with Public Health Laboratory Regulations**In order to comply with the regulations laid down by the Public Health Laboratory it is necessary that a record of names is retained for each person (clients, carers and staff) who enter the pool for each hydrotherapy session. This information is recorded in the appropriate record file that is retained at the hydrotherapy pool.
2. **Compliance with the Fire Safety Regulations**

A signing in and out diary is provided in reception and it is imperative that all groups sign in/out their client numbers in order to ensure that there is a record of the number of people who are currently on the premises in the event of a fire. In the event of a fire the person identified as the person in charge should if possible take this diary with them when evacuating the pool in order to ensure that they are able to account for the whereabouts of all persons (clients, staff, carers/parents) who were in the building at the time of the evacuation. The assembly point is at the side of the building to the rear of the drop off point. Please make yourselves aware of the fire exit routes throughout the building. These will be explained on your visit.

1. **Pool Closures**

In the event that the pool needs to be closed there will be a Pool Closed sign placed at the pool lounge door. Every attempt will be made to contact user groups in the event of needing to close the pool.

**5.** **Operational Management**

1. **Systematic Monitoring of Water Quality and Hygiene**

The Day Centre Manager will ensure that the hydrotherapy pool is regularly monitored for the outcome of disinfection and will ensure that the hydro pool water is of good colour, quality, appearance and sparkle. Water conditions must be hygienic for all pool users. Water quality must only be monitored by competent persons (e.g. Centre Manager, Team Leader, Senior) can be classed as competent. Observations must be in accordance with the defined programme and the record must be accurate. Entries should be made promptly and should be initialled by the observer. A diary/record sheet must be maintained and kept secure but readily accessible both to the observer and the Day Centre Manager. Deviations from the normal pool profile must be investigated and corrected.

The following parameters will provide a good balance:

pH 7.2 - 7.6

Free Chlorine 0.5 – 2.0 mg/l (ppm)

Temperature 28 – 38 (36ºC/97F) Relative humidity Target 60% Calcium Hardness 200 - 300 mg/l Alkalinity 80 - 150 mg/l Combined Chlorine Less than the free chlorine level ideally half.

The Day Centre Manager will ensure that the pool water is inspected and tested by a competent person at the start and end of each day for Free Chlorine, pH, Combined Chlorine. Temperature should be checked at the start of the day. The pool should not be used unless the above parameters are achieved.

It is recommended that once a week the pool should be vacuumed for Total Dissolved Solids.

Periodic bacteriological examinations are carried out by outside agencies, as periodic bacteriological examinations do not contribute to the daily control of the pool but do provide valuable information about conditions of the water not given by the routine chemical and physical tests

1. **Pool Testing Equipment**

Pool testing equipment must be kept clean, neat and in a dry atmosphere. Only trained staff should undertake water tests and all tests must be recorded with any corrective action taken. Testing tablets and liquids can cause irritation and they must be respected as chemical products. The appropriate personal protective equipment, as recommended by the manufacturers, must be worn when conducting the tests.

1. **Emergency Lighting**The Day Centre Manager will ensure that the pool emergency lighting system is inspected annually by a competent person. Records of such inspections must be maintained on the premises. This is in conjunction with Centre Emergency Lighting tests.
2. **Pool Area Footwear**

All pool users must **not** wear outdoor footwear within the pool area. Users are advised to bring and use other footwear suitable for the pool area, to prevent outside contamination being brought in and to prevent cross contamination in the changing areas and on the pool surround. The poolside should be cleaned daily with pool water. Shoe covers will be provided and must **always be worn**, a bin is provided in the lounge area on exiting the pool area. As tyres of wheelchairs are often the cause of introducing dirt into the pool area, could all carers please ensure that wheelchair tyres are cleaned as much as reasonably practical prior to entering the pool area. The entire area around the pool may be cleaned weekly using a solution containing 200mg/l of free chlorine.

1. **Chemical Handling**

Current chemicals in use for the control of pool water quality and hygiene includeCalcium Hypochlorite and Sodium Bisulphate. All chemicals must be treated with care when being handled for storage of for use. Only persons authorised to do so by the Day Centre Manager or the Cleaning Contractor must handle or come into contact with chemicals. Only trained Day Centre staff and pool cleaning staff should undertake water tests and **all** tests must be fully recorded.All chemicals must be used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and be subject to a suitable and sufficient risk assessment. Chemical specification/ COSHH assessment sheets for each of the chemicals used must be kept in a prominent place in the storeroom/ mixing room. Where protective equipment, clothing and control measures have been indicated, they must be used at all times whilst using any of the substances. All chemical containers should be correctly labelled. Chemicals should not be transferred to foreign containers for any purposes.Sodium hypochlorite is the principle water disinfectant chemical currently in use. Only trained and authorised Day Centre staff and cleaning contractor’s staff will use and administer pool disinfectants. Sodium hypochlorite is an oxidising agent and as such is able to generate heat and toxic gas (chlorine).Any contamination will react with this product therefore the mixing room, storeroom and handling room must be kept spotless with no traces of:

\* Food, drinks, sugar\* oils\* Insects, animals (rodents)\* Cigarettes, paints, CO2 products - including extinguishers

This is not a complete list. In addition:

Floors must remain free of dust and debris and the room must not be damp.Any sodium hypochlorite spillages must be disposed of in the main drains immediately followed by extensive flushing and use of chemical reducer.Storerooms/mixing rooms containing sodium hypochlorite should be clearly labelled with the Hazardous Substance Warning sign. (Yellow triangle with the legend ‘Danger harmful chemicals’)Never mix sodium hypochlorite with any other product (this includes using the same measure implement for different chemicals)

1. **Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE)**

The Day Centre Manager is responsible for providing suitable PPE for Day Centre staff. PPE must be maintained, kept clean, stored in a suitable manner and replaced when necessary. All Day Centre staff who are authorised and required to use such equipment must receive training, information and instruction in its use and how to look after it.

Before any contact is made with calcium hypochlorite in its storage container the authorised person must:

\* put on rubber gloves\* put on goggles\* put on wellingtons\* put on dust mask (with clean filter)\* put on rubber apron provided.

1. **Pool Water Changing and Inspection**

The Day Centre Manager should ensure that the pool is regularly cleaned. For normal, regular cleaning, pools should be cleaned when full using a long handled brush. Algal slime should not be allowed to develop, and small brown algal spots on the walls of the pool should be removed with a wire brush.

The Day Centre Manager should ensure that the pool is emptied if there is gross contamination of the water. (e.g. unformed stools). The pool should be hosed down, refilled and hyper chlorinated to 10-15mg/l. The pool circulation should then be continued for 24 hours before bathing is recommenced. If a formed stool is observed, the pool should be closed to bathers and the stool should be removed. The water should then be backwashed, rinsed and be subjected to 3 complete turnovers. The pool can be reopened when normal disinfectant levels have been re-established.

The Day Centre Manager should ensure that only competent persons are responsible for emptying and filling the pool. Pools are designed to operate filled with water at a given temperature range. Any variations to this normal state involves a risk of damage to the structure. Pools should be filled or emptied slowly so that the water level rises or falls about 750mm every 24 hours. Prior to emptying, the pool hall and water should be allowed to cool naturally to ambient temperature. Emptying should not be carried out where there is a risk from frost. Prior to refilling, the temperature of the pool shell should be lowered to that of the incoming mains water. The pool water temperature should be raised at a maximum rate of 0.25ºC/hour.

1. **Back Washing**

The filters of the hydrotherapy pool require regular back washing- reversing the flow of the water through the filters to clear any debris and to maintain the filtration rates of the filters. During the back washing operation, the filter water should be discarded and the pool volume made up with fresh water from the mains.Back washing ensures periodic replacement of the pool water with fresh water, helping to maintain the water balance as well as restoring the normal working order of the filters. “Hygiene for Hydrotherapy Pools”, advise that about 5% of the pool water should be replaced on a weekly basis.

1. **Temperature**

The temperature should be measured at the beginning of each working day.At Inspired day centre, it is aimed to maintain the water temperature between 33-36 degrees centigrade. The mid point which will be aimed at is 35 degrees centigrade. This range has been set to accommodate the natural variances in the temperature caused by external influences such as the water and the fall in the water temperature following back washing procedures. When the temperature falls at either end of this range, consideration should be given by the person in charge of the individual pool session, to the ability of the individual clients to accommodate to the temperature. For example, clients who have increased tone would be unlikely to tolerate lower temperatures due to the resultant increase in their level of spasticity, whereas clients who are more active may not have any difficulties adjusting to these lower temperatures.

1. **Responsibilities & Procedures**

Where pool users are known to have physical disabilities or other mobility problems, the Day Centre Manager must ensure that Day Service based staff and pool attendants are suitably trained in “people” manual handling risk assessment and “people” manual handling skills. Along with a Physiotherapy assessment programme carried out & adhered to.Where necessary GP & or Physio Therapist authorisation to use the pool must have been sought & evidence placed on record prior to any sessions taking place.

Individuals and seniors of non Day Service groups should carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of the people within their group to determine whether specialist handling skills/techniques are required to protect the pool user, pool attendant and others who may be assisting, from injury through poor manual handling techniques. The responsibility lies solely with the host at all times.

1. **Risk from Drowning**It must be made, as far as it is possible, physically impossible for clients and others to gain access to the hydrotherapy pool without proper authority from the Day Centre Manager and there being adequate supervision present.For both Day Service and outside use, at least one adult must act as the **Pool Side Attendant.** He or she must never leave an occupied hydrotherapy pool unless properly relieved by another competent attendant and must remain out of the water at a vantage point from where all pool users can be observed. A single individual must not use the pool.

The pool attendant must be qualified to at least Emergency First Aider standard.

The pool attendant must be a competent swimmer and be physically capable of rescuing and assisting people from the water.

Pool attendants must make themselves known to all pool users,and inform them that he/she has the authority to maintain a proper standard of conduct and discipline both in the water and on the pool surrounds.

1. **Emergency Procedures**

Staff and pool attendants must know what to do in an emergency and have the means to contact the emergency services. Emergency drills should be regularly practised. Day Centre based attendants can summon help from other members of staff by using the emergency alarm system installed in and around the centre. Should the emergency services be required they can be summoned using the centres telephones.Staff that are responsible for pool sessions have a duty to ensure that support staff who may be called upon to assist at hydrotherapy sessions are aware of the indications and contra indications of hydrotherapy and have an ability to identify them.In the event of a client suffering a cardiac/respiratory arrest and requiring immediate evacuation from the pool, we have been advised that in order to maintain staff safety the priority should be to get the client out of the water and then start CPR. The hoist and shower bed or plinth is available for evacuation purposes depending on the size of the client. In the case of an epileptic seizure, wherever possible this situation should be managed in the water, with the client being removed from the water once the seizure has ended.

First aid facilities are available for use in the pool area changing room, please record details of the incident and the equipment used in the logbook.Note should be made that the hydrotherapy pool does not carry any resuscitation equipment.

Non-Day Centre attendants, using the pool outside normal Day Centre hours will also have access to the Day Centre telephones but must also have a mobile telephone in order to contact the emergency services.Emergency evacuation assembly point is the Helicopter Pad as indicated on the Fire Action points.

1. **Contraindications to Hydrotherapy**

**Absolute contraindications:**Acute vomiting and/or diarrhoeaMedical instability following a recent stroke, pulmonary embolism, status asthmaticus, status epilepticus or deep vein thrombosisProven chlorine sensitivityResting anginaShortness of breath at restUncontrolled cardiac failure

Menstruation (unless wearing tampon)

Weight in excess of 180kg due to the safe working loads of the available evacuation equipment

**Awareness/consideration needed of the following**: **Relative contraindications**

Irritates skin during a course of radiotherapy

Open infected wounds

Poorly controlled epilepsy

Unstable diabetes

Known aneurysm

Acute systemic illness – elevated temperature above normal range 36.5-37.5

**An awareness of the following is required,** **and hydrotherapy will continue/stop at the discretion of the staff member in charge of the individual hydrotherapy session:**

Fear of water; Haemophilia; Hearing aids; High/low blood pressure; Impaired Sensation, Vision or Hearing; Incontinence of faeces; Invasive tubes in situ – eg PEG’s; Poor skin integrity; MRSA Renal failure; contact lenses and conjunctivitis; grommets; tracheostomy; head lice; sickle cell

Anaemia; prone to blackouts; low calorie intake; risk of aspiration; fungal infections, especially

Between fingers as these can be highly contagious

(No additional precautions are required if known Heptitis B carriers use the pool)

1. **Open Sores/Grazes**

Clients should not be entering the hydrotherapy pool if they have open sores/grazes. Opsite dressing should be used to cover superficial scratches or grazes to enable clients to continue to use the hydrotherapy pool

1. **Risk Assessments for the Care of Pregnant Staff/Carers**

Care needs to be taken by any staff member entering the hydrotherapy pool when pregnant especially if the water temperature exceeds 35 degrees centigrade. In this instance a risk assessment should be completed by the area responsible for employing this member of staff.

1. **Faecal Contamination of the Pool**

It is recommended thatanyone with irregular bowel movements wears an incontinence swimsuit to reduce the likelihood of contamination in the water as this incurs a £50 charge if the pool must be closed for cleaning.

Contamination of the pool water with faeces/vomit will require immediate action.The person in charge of the session should inform other members of the team who will be able to implement procedures to ensure that the water is clean before the pool is reopened to bathers.

1. **Formed Stools**

Close the pool to bathersRemove the stool as soon as possibleHyperchlorinateReopen the pool when normal disinfectant levels have been re-established

1. **Loose Stool Dispersed**

Close pool to bathersEmpty the pool and hose downRefill and recommence circulationHyperchlorinate and reopen when normal disinfectant levels have been re-established

1. **Menustration**

Bathers on their menstruation cycle are unable to use the pool unless wearing internal sanitary wear as contamination in the pool will require cleaning of the pool for which a £50 charge will be incurred.

1. **Disposal of Clinical Waste**

A waste bin is available in the pool areas for the disposal of clinical waste. Please ensure this is used for the disposal of incontinence/sanitary wear.

1. **Maintaining of the General Tidiness of the Pool Area**

It would be appreciated if all the groups that use the pool would ensure that they leave the pool in a clean and tidy state for the next user group. This includes taking home of all used towels and swimwear. Chairs, shower chairs or changing beds to be replaced back to appropriate areas. If floors are excessively wet, please dry them with the mop available.

1. **Occupational Health Problems**

The often-prolonged exposure of staff and pool users to hydrotherapy pool conditions can cause problems. Dry skin may result from the degreasing effect of the disinfectant in the water. Staff should ensure that they and their service users should limit their immersion time in the water to no more than 1½ - 2 hrs in any one session. An emollient cream, such as aqueous cream BP, may be helpful after bathing.

1. **Safety considerations for the running of hydrotherapy sessions**
2. **Poolside Equipment**

Pool lifting and lowering equipment must not be used by unauthorised persons. The Day Centre Manager will maintain a register of authorised staff who have undergone training in the correct use and checking of such equipment.

Non Day Centre staff, who wish to use such equipment must be authorised to do so by the Day Centre Manager by proving that they have had suitable and sufficient training to use the equipment competently and safely, certificates of such training will be required.

The Day Centre Manager will ensure that pool lifting equipment is inspected annually by a competent person and properly maintained. Records of such inspections must be kept together with a record of any remedial actions which were carried out or any other recommendations.

Individuals and the seniors of non-Day Centre groups must ensure that a suitably stocked First Aid box is available and make themselves familiar of its where about’s whilst they are using the pool.

Before pool sessions begin an individual staff, member should be nominated in charge. He/she will be responsible for maintaining safe practice and ensure strict observance of safety precautions and ensure that someone remains on the pool side who will undertake the role of pool observer.

1. **The Nominated Person in Charge shall ensure that:**

There is a staffing level appropriate to the number of clients and their individual needs. The minimum cover is one staff member working in the pool and a further staff member (poolside observer) working within the pool area and readily able to cover in the case of an emergency.

* Whilst clients are in the water, there should always be a member of staff with them.
* Clients are in the water for no longer than 20-30 minutes
* No member of staff should be in the water for longer than 1½ - 2 hours without taking a break.
* The nominated individual responsible for the hydrotherapy session should ensure that within the staff group present, there are people who have the following skills
* Possess an up to date knowledge of resuscitation techniques and indicated by the possession of a valid and recognised first aid certificate.
* Be a competent swimmer and be able to remove clients quickly from the water in the case of an emergency.
* Be able to competently operate all equipment available within the pool area including operate the pool hoist; Changing beds; Hoist/sling and other small handling equipment at the pool
* Have a suitable knowledge of manual handling techniques and risk assessments appropriate for the client group attending the session
* Be confident in their ability to handle and work with the clients whilst they are in the water.

**The poolside observer will**

* Check the pool and surround for slippery surfaces and other hazards
* Whilst clients are in the pool, observe carefully for all risk situations. If such an incident occurs, ensure that the person in charge is made aware and able to take remedial action.
* Drinks (tea, coffee, and squash) should be available for clients and staff following a pool session, poolside observers should ensure that everyone is offered a drink before they leave.
* Record the names of everyone who entered the pool during the session, both staff carers and clients, in order to comply with the Public Health Laboratory Regulations.

1. **Emergency considerations for the hydrotherapy pool** A radio is available in the pool area for the group leader to call for assistance should an emergency arise. The group leader should give consideration as to how they would evacuate the pool in the case of any emergency – this plan should also include consideration of evacuating one person from the pool and also the need to evacuate the pool and the building completely.

During the normal opening times, individuals and leaders of non-Day Centre groups must determine through the Day Centre Manager that the pool is hygienic to use prior to the session taking place. During out of normal hours, pool users must have in place arrangements to ascertain that the pool is hygienic and safe to use.

1. **Cleaning of the Dirty Areas**

Domestic cleaning of these areas is undertaken daily. Sinks and toilets are to be cleaned with the appropriate COSHH material. If there is no visible contamination, toilet seats can be cleaned with a neutral detergent. Floors are cleaned daily with pool water. In the event of contamination e.g. by urine or faeces, cleaning should be undertaking using a chlorine solution.

This Code of Practice is by no means exhaustive & may change in accordance with regulations. All care should be taken by the host & or Manager to ensure that users & staff alike are kept safe, & all Health & Hygiene & Health & Safety procedures have been maintained. The Code of Practice is in place for not only the protection of Inspired, but all users, therefore, any risks created & or noticed by any users/hosts or staff to inform the Management immediately.