

## Version 2 May 2023

The NHS Birthday is a great opportunity to celebrate. However due to continuing requirements regarding infection prevention and control requirements for healthcare, the advice for celebrations has been updated. More than ever, we are aware of the potential of contamination from the environment and whilst festival decorations are recognised as an important part of celebrating, our main objective as a health care organisation and health care workers is that we protect patients from the potential of cross contamination.

It is still important that those who wish to celebrate are supported in doing so in a safe way, which is why we have produced this guide. We've tried to focus on the things that we can do, rather than those that we can't, but there is also a list of the activities that unfortunately cannot take place. Please keep this in mind when planning celebrations in your wards and departments.

Don't forget – you can also have virtual celebrations.

## Within working hours

### Indoor areas

Whilst decorations can be a good way to orient older patients to a time and place, there are several drawbacks to their use from an IPC perspective. Here are a few options to consider:

- Put posters or decorations behind glass if you have a lockable noticeboard on your ward. Posters can also be laminated and wiped regularly with sanitising wipes.
- Keep decorations to one small area of the corridor, day room or waiting area so that cleaning can be maintained. Produce a "Platinum Jubilee Corner" cleaning schedule to keep the area covid-safe.
- Raffle prizes and hampers can be given away, if display of the prizes is required, they should be covered in a impermeable to fluid wrapping i.e. cellophane. Raffle tickets can be used but must be kept in a clear plastic bag and pens used to complete details should be wiped between use.
- Reception areas, desks and other spaces in the clinical area should be kept as free from clutter as possible. A small string of battery-operated lights could be displayed at a high level to brighten up the space. (Compliant with health and safety)

In the event of an outbreak of infection i.e., covid-19, norovirus, or other outbreak, you must be prepared to **remove and throw away** any decorations that you use.

Where possible all decorations used in clinical areas should be single use and disposable at the end of the celebration period. Any that are not single use and disposed of will need to be thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated when taken down.

If there is an outbreak of infection (Covid-19 related or any other infection) then the decorations that are displayed must be taken down and disposed of.

If decorations are to be placed in an area with patients who are known to or suspected of infection, they must be discarded once removed.

If decorations are used in an area where there is no outbreak of infection, then if it is decided that they are to be reused they must be cleaned and decontaminated prior to being stored, covered, in a non-clinical area. They must be cleaned and decontaminated using clinell wipes or Chlor-Clean. This includes all decorations, including, but not limited to bunting, posters, memorabilia, and souvenirs etc. Any paper decorations must be disposed of following use.

**Fuddles and office parties**

Team gatherings within the healthcare settings should be managed according to recent infection prevention and control guidelines and advice but you can still have fun. Prepare 'grab bags' for staff to collect throughout the day including sandwiches, snacks, drinks, and cakes. Bags should be prepared whilst wearing a surgical mask and after thoroughly washing hands.

- The important thing to remember is that wherever there is food, there will be people! If you plan to have any kind of celebration like the above, please.
- Buffets should not take place.
- Any food must be individually wrapped and allocated accordingly.

**Fancy dress**

Lots of staff like to dress up for celebratory events to support patient morale and put smiles on colleagues' faces, however the uniform and work wear policy should be adhered to, with hand hygiene and bare below the elbows a requirement., there are some alternatives you could consider:

- Wear union jack socks/tights
- Decorate your hair with bows and fancy hair ties, long hair should still be tied away from the face and not be below shoulder length (making sure all parts are secured so no parts can come loose).
- Remember to stay 'bare below the elbows' and take off rings and false nails to maintain high hand hygiene standards. This is trust policy.

**Team Photos and social media**

It is often a tradition during celebratory events to take photos to celebrate the season. Please remember if you take any photographs or selfies the following must be adhered to, photos that do not meet these requirements will not be published on the trust site or Facebook page:

- Correct PPE must be worn and appropriate social distancing in the photographs (they will not be used via the LPT page otherwise).
- Groups must be avoided we should be role modelling national guidelines.
- All clinical staff must be BBE irrespective of setting.

**Events and celebrations during non-working hours**

We understand the importance of spending social time with our colleagues and friends outside of work, particularly during times of seasonal celebrations, which creates great working relationships and shared experiences. However, with infections circulating within the wider community, including Covid-19 as a healthcare worker guidance can be different. The following advice should be considered for any events or gatherings.

- Consider that socialising with large numbers of staff outside of work may result in a high number of the team becoming infected and requiring to self-isolate at the same time if one of the parties is symptomatic or diagnosed positive for a transmissible infection for covid-19. This could potentially have a large impact on the workforce.
- Hands, Face, Space should be adhered to wherever possible to support the prevention of cross contamination via contacts.
- Wear masks where indicated with the trust guidelines
- Consider ventilation, good hand hygiene practice and cleaning of surfaces to support infection prevention and control requirements.