

HR Department

HIV/AIDS POLICY

The University is committed to equality of opportunity in its employment. It is also committed to protecting and promoting the health of its employees. This policy is an amended version of the original policy which was produced on 12 December 1988.

1 Introduction

In accordance with WHO recommendations, it is intended that this policy will be reviewed in the light of epidemiological information and monitored for its successful implementation by the Human Resources Department.

The risks of infection through normal workplace contact are negligible. All authorities endorse the view that HIV cannot be transmitted by everyday contact and, for example, by sharing lavatories and shared utensils.

There should be no discrimination against anyone with, or at risk of acquiring HIV. Employees with HIV or AIDS should be treated in exactly the same way as any employee with any other life-threatening illness.

Individuals who know that they have HIV infection/AIDS are not legally obliged to tell their employer of their condition, but if the employer does know, complete confidentiality must be assured. The test of relevance needs to be applied: *i.e.* how essential is it to know someone's HIV status for a particular job? For recruitment to most posts, it is no more relevant than any of the better-known terminal diseases.

2 Recruitment

There will be no discrimination in recruitment against applicants internally or externally on the grounds that the applicant is HIV antibody positive or has AIDS. Applicants for jobs are not required to have HIV tests, but are required to disclose details of **any** past or present illness, including any HIV-related condition. This is part of the normal pre-employment screening to assess medical suitability for the job.

Applicants who are deemed to be fit at the time of interview will not be refused an offer of work because they have AIDS or are HIV antibody positive.

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3 Employment

If it becomes known that an employee is HIV positive/has AIDS, the University will ensure that reasonable arrangements are made to enable work to be continued. Working may enable that person to maintain confidence and social contact and therefore fight HIV/AIDS with more dignity.

Employees will not be dismissed or redeployed to alternative employment because they are HIV positive/have AIDS unless they request it or medical advice states that this is in the interest of the employee or other employees at the University.

Should victimization occur, the victimising employee may be subject to disciplinary procedures, but in any case will be referred for specialist HIV/AIDS counselling.

Leave will be given to carers of people with HIV/AIDS on an individual basis, subject to departmental discretion.

4 Antibody Tests

No employee will be required to take an HIV antibody test. The **only exception to this** would be those workers who may possibly come into contact with high risk specimens. Further information on this is given in reference 3, and it is emphasized that this refers only to specified research laboratory workers.

Where an occupation involves blood contact as in certain special laboratories the Health and Safety Commission's guidance on special precautions must be followed. (see reference 4)

5 Service Provision

No-one will be denied the use of a facility to which he or she is entitled because they have AIDS or are HIV antibody positive. The University will periodically review the measures taken to ensure that all users of facilities and all employees are adequately protected against HIV infection.

6 Confidentiality

Employees who are HIV antibody positive or have AIDS are not required to inform the University.

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If an employee discloses, in confidence, that he or she is HIV positive, that information will not be passed on without the employee's consent except in very exceptional circumstances. If the recipient of the information considers others have a need to know, this should be discussed with the HIV positive person. If consent to tell is refused, advice should be sought from the University Occupational Health Physician.

Deliberate breaches of this confidentiality by any other employee constitute a disciplinary offence.

7 First Aid

The University Guidance note on AIDS and First Aiders provides more detailed guidance, and all trained First Aiders are given instruction in safe procedures.

Standard precautions include covering exposed cuts, washing hands after applying dressings, and wearing disposable gloves and an apron when mopping up body fluids. Clothing may be cleaned by ordinary washing in a hot cycle. HIV is killed by household bleach, so spills can be disinfected using one part of bleach to 10 parts of water.

Mouth to mouth resuscitation should never be withheld in an emergency; no case of HIV infection has been reported as a result of mouth to mouth resuscitation.

REFERENCES

The following books are available in the University Safety Office, 11 AY21, Ext 9362.

1. "HIV/AIDS in Employment". Health Education Authority (1990).
2. "HIV The Causative Agent of AIDS and related conditions". Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (1990).

There are additional detailed references for those working in laboratory environments only; the two main ones being:

3. "University Policy on the Donation and Use of Human Specimens in Teaching and Research" (1992).

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4. "Safe working and the Prevention of Infection in Clinical Laboratories". Health and Safety Commission (1991).

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Robens Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, the Student Health Service, the Safety Office and the Human Resources Department are all able to offer further information and advice depending on the nature of the enquiry. Confidentiality between these agencies will be maintained at all times.

Independent advice can be sought from:

National AIDS Helpline:	Freephone - Tel: 0800 567123
S W Surrey Health Authority AIDS:	Tel: 01483 32828
Surrey & E Hants AIDSLINK Ltd :	Tel: 01483 300150

Confidential counselling and local information, befriending and support for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS