Title of Policy:	**Food Safety and Hygiene**
Section:	**Health and Safety**

Purpose

Inadequate standards of hygiene associated with the preparation of food can lead to serious health problems. This policy outlines some of the dangers which may be present and provides excellent advice and guidance so as to avoid problems and instances of ill-health where the care workers of Carers Choices prepare food for Clients.

Statement

The preparation and serving of food to a Client will usually form part of the Client's Personal Care Plan, with the precise nature of the support discussed and agreed either upon the commencement of service, or as part of an agreed modification in line with changes in the Client's circumstances. The kind of support offered will vary, ranging from straightforward tasks such as sandwich preparation to a simple meal. Individual circumstances will determine whether Carers Choices is to be registered as a Food Business, but irrespective of this determination, appropriate and acceptable standards of food safety, hygiene and preparation described here will apply in every situation and to all Care Workers employed by Carers Choices. Carers Choices will ensure that its Care Workers are adequately informed of their responsibilities and trained to the standards required.

Procedure and Guidance

Legal obligations

The following legal obligations may apply to Carers Choices if it is registered as a Food Business:

1. General food law requirements relating to food safety, presentation, traceability and withdrawal, recall and notification to competent authorities of unsafe food and other obligations, mainly contained in Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002; and
2. Requirements of the food hygiene regulations (including registration);
3. Requirements of the EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation (EU No. 1169/2011 or (EU FIC) including the provision of Allergen information.

Carers Choices will register with the Local Authority as a Food Business in appropriate circumstances, and after having received relevant and competent advice from the Care Quality Commission and the Local Authority. Carers Choices understands and accepts that it is not the nature of the premises as domestic or public, which is critical, but the nature of the circumstances in which food or food services are provided. In most circumstances Clients will provide their own food items and ingredients and make these available to the Care Worker for preparation. If the Care Worker prepares the food, as part of the care package, and without direction/input from the Client, then this element of preparation could be considered to be a food business activity and therefore registration with the Local Authority will usually be required.

Personal Care Plans

Where food preparation and service are to be an integral part of the Client's Care Plan then Carers Choices will, as part of its due diligence:

a) Establish if the Client suffers from any food allergies or intolerances, such as, for example allergic reactions to foods such as peanuts; tree nuts; soy; milk; egg; cereals; seafood; fish; and sesame
b) Confirm the precise nature of the support to be given
c) Observe the cultural and dietary preferences expressed by the Client.

Food service and preparation

Carers Choices will accept the following responsibilities as part of normal operations and care planning:

1) The preparation of sandwiches

2) Preparation and service of simple meals and snacks purchased by the Client, such as, for example - chilled ready meals, frozen ready meals, salads, frozen, vegetables and occasionally rice and pasta, generally tinned soups etc.
3) The occasional hot snack, such as a boiled egg, bacon sandwich and similar quick and easy alternatives to a more substantial cooked meal

Key aspects of a safe and efficient service

The following guidance must be followed by all of Carers Choices' Care Workers involved in the preparation and service of food, irrespective of whether Carers Choices is registered as a Food Business.

Personal Hygiene

1. Care Workers must wash their hands before preparing and/or serving food
2. Staff Uniforms must be kept clean at all times, and where available, protective aprons should be worn to prevent harmful bacteria passing on to food
3. Watches and loose jewellery should be removed prior to food preparation and service
4. Care Workers must not touch their face or hair whilst preparing food

Fitness for Work

1. Care Workers should be fit for work at all times which means that they must not be suffering from, or carrying an illness or disease that could cause a problem with food safety (especially diarrhoea or vomiting)
2. Cuts and sores should be completely covered with a waterproof dressing

Cross Contamination

Cross-contamination is when bacteria are spread between food, surfaces or equipment. It is most likely to happen when raw food touches (or drips onto) ready-to-eat food, equipment or surfaces. Cross-contamination is one of the most common causes of food poisoning and Carers Choices' Care Workers are advised to:

- Clean and disinfect work surfaces, chopping boards and equipment thoroughly before preparing food and after use

- Use different equipment (including chopping boards and knives) for raw meat/poultry and ready-to-eat food
- Wash their hands thoroughly after touching raw food
- Keep raw and ready-to-eat food apart at all times, including packaging material for ready-to-eat food
- Store raw food below ready-to-eat food in the fridge

Effective Cleaning

Effective cleaning is essential to get rid of harmful bacteria and stop them spreading. Unless Carers Choices is tasked with everyday household cleaning responsibilities, the cleanliness of kitchen areas, food preparation areas, fridges, microwave ovens etc will be the responsibility of the Client.

If cleanliness is a problem, and considered to be a potential food safety issue, then this must be reported to the Manager without delay so that adequate solutions can be found.

Following established procedures in the prevention of cross contamination will reduce the risks associated with poor standards of general household cleanliness.

Freezing Food

On occasion, a Client may ask for food to be frozen, for use later, in which case Care Workers should:

a) Freeze fresh food as soon as it has been delivered or prepared
b) Freeze hot food as soon as it has been properly chilled down
c) Divide food into smaller portions, if possible and put into containers, with lids, or freeze bags

Defrosting Food

Harmful bacteria can grow in food that is not defrosted properly. Care Workers are required to observe the following principles:

a) Food should be thoroughly defrosted before cooking, unless the manufacturer's instructions tell you to cook from frozen
b) Ideally, plan ahead to leave enough time and space to defrost small amounts of food in the fridge
c) If food cannot be defrosted in a fridge, or time does not permit this, then place the food in a container with a lid and then place under cold running water
d) If available, food can be defrosted in a microwave oven on the "defrost" setting
e) On occasion, food may be allowed to defrost at room temperature, but foods that are not subsequently to be cooked or re-heated should not be left at room temperature for long periods of time
f) Always check that food is thoroughly defrosted either before consumption or any further processing

Reheating Food

It is very important to reheat food properly to kill harmful bacteria that may have grown since the food was cooked.

Care Workers should:

a) Make sure that you use equipment that reheats/cooks food effectively and follow the equipment manufacturer's instructions;
b) Preheat equipment such as ovens and grills before reheating
c) Follow the manufacturer's instructions regarding time and temperature, where available
d) Check and serve reheated food immediately.

Ready-to-eat foods

Ready-to-eat foods are foods that will not be cooked or reheated before serving. These include salads, cooked meats, desserts, sandwiches, cheese and foods that have been cooked in advance to serve cold. It is important to handle ready-to-eat foods safely to protect them from harmful bacteria. In particular:

a) Check chilled ready-to-eat foods to make sure that they have been kept cold enough; the “use by” date has not passed if there is one; and that the packaging is not damaged
b) Keep ready-to-eat foods separate from meat and poultry
c) Keep ready-to-eat foods covered
d) Follow the manufacturer’s instructions on how to store and prepare the food if these are available
e) When preparing vegetables and salad ingredients, peel, trim or remove the outer parts as appropriate; wash them thoroughly in clean drinking-quality water
f) Store ready-to-eat foods such as salads, cream cakes, and desserts in the fridge until they are needed
g) Don’t use ready-to-eat foods after the “use by” date if there is one

CQC Registration and Inspection Compliance

Key Questions and Quality Statements applicable to this Policy	Care Quality Commission (Registration) Regulations 2009 applicable to this Policy
Safe • **Involving People to Manage Risks** • **Safe Environments**	

Legislative Compliance

Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 applicable to this Policy	Other legislation relevant to this Policy
Regulation 12: Safe care and treatment	

Policy Reviewed on Date of Implementation by the Following Company Officer:

Full name:

Paul Ramsden

Job Title:

CEO

Signature:

P. Ramsden