

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

POLICY ON AIDS

1 GENERAL POLICY

It is the policy of the University of Aberdeen to take all reasonable and practicable steps to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of all employees in relation to the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and the risks from it whilst at work.

2 THE FACTS

What is Aids?

The initial letters "AIDS" stand for "Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome". Following infection by a virus now known as HIV (previously known as LAV/HTLV-111) the body's normal defences against illness may break down. When this happens an individual is open to infections and tumours which otherwise would not have occurred.

Is there a risk of Infection at Work?

There is no risk when there is no direct contact with the blood, semen or other body fluids of infected individuals. Few jobs involve contact with these and the majority of employees are therefore safe from infection whilst at work.

Outwith Clinical Laboratories infection is not spread through the air (for example, by sneezing or coughing) or by touch. Nor is there any danger from handling objects which have been used by an infected person, or from sharing an office or washroom facilities with them. Those in jobs with an obvious potential occupational risk, (i.e. clinical and laboratory workers who deal directly with patients and specimens) should follow the specific guidelines and protocols prepared for their particular groups.

Can Someone who is Infected Continue to Work?

A person who is infected should be able to work as normal whilst medically fit to do so.

Is there a Risk for the Public?

Potential risk to the public arises only where the blood, semen or other body fluids of an infected employee can enter another person's body, for example, through an open wound.

Infected Employees

There is generally no obligation on individuals to disclose their infection or to submit to medical tests for the virus. Anything which can be interpreted as an inquisition into an employee's personal life-style will be avoided.

Should an Infected Person be Recruited?

Employers are free in law to decide whom they wish to employ. In almost all occupations there is no risk of an infected person passing the virus on to others, and this would not therefore generally be a reason for treating them any differently from other job applicants.

Should an Infected Employee be Dismissed?

Employment rights are not affected in any way just because an individual is infected.

3 FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, please contact your Human Resources Adviser.