



# **STAFF MEMBER HANDBOOK**

**NOVEMBER 2009  
VERSION 1.04**

Welcome to The Anaesthetists Agency. We're pleased you've chosen to join us and look forward to offering you a wide range of assignments.

We've designed this handbook to give you an idea of what to expect from your time with us. Please read it carefully - it includes a number of guidelines and standards to make sure your experience, and patients in your care, is as good as possible. You may feel that much of the content of this handbook is not applicable to you in your role as an anaesthetist however, we are required as part of being on the National Framework Agreement to ensure that all locums are informed of the standards required of them when working in the NHS and/or service users' own homes.

If you have any queries about the contents of this booklet, please direct these to The Anaesthetists Agency at the address below:

The Anaesthetists Agency  
Solent House  
5 Bath Road  
LYMINGTON  
Hampshire  
SO41 3RU

Phone: 01590 675 111  
Fax: 01590 675 114  
Email [info@theanaesthetistsagency.com](mailto:info@theanaesthetistsagency.com)

### **Mandatory Health & Safety Training**

As well as briefing you on general issues such as timesheet procedures, On-Call and so on, we will assist you in sourcing necessary mandatory Health & Safety training covering:

- Patient Confidentiality & Caldicott Protocols
- Data Protection
- Risk Incident Reporting
- Handling Complaints
- Personal Safety including Lone Working
- Health & Safety including COSHH & RIDDOR
- Fire Safety
- Infection Control including MRSA and C. Difficile

All Members must complete this training on an annual basis.

You may also be required to attend training with the Authority where your assignment will be conducted.

## **Caldicott Protocols**

The Caldicott Review was commissioned due to the development of information technology and its capacity to disseminate information about patients/service users both rapidly and extensively.

An essential component of the clinical consultation in the provision of health care is confidentiality. All healthcare workers have stringent requirements with regard to confidentiality within their duty of care. However, information given about patients underpins the efficient operation of the NHS, and it is important that confidentiality does not impede upon the provision of effective patient care. Therefore, the Caldicott Review devised protocols and recommendations which assume the appointment of a Caldicott Guardian who is created to safeguard and govern the uses made of confidential patient information within NHS organisations. Caldicott guardians are senior health professionals.

All Anaesthetists Agency staff are required to familiarise themselves with the local policy on confidentiality within the establishment/NHS trust where they are working assignments.

## **Patient Confidentiality**

Any patient information obtained by you during the course of your duties is confidential and should not be disclosed to any third party if it is not legitimately in connection with their treatment or any other official investigation. Please take care with patient records when on assignment to ensure that they are not in undue danger of being accessed by unauthorised individuals.

Patients'/clients' information should only normally be shared with their consent - you should make sure patients/clients understand that their information may be shared with the various members of the team providing care. It is a patient's/client's decision what information should be shared with their family or others. Where a patient/client is considered incapable of giving consent, please consult relevant colleagues.

Where a patient/client has withheld consent, disclosures of information may only be made if:

- They can be justified in the public interest (normally where the disclosure is essential to protect the patient/client or someone else from risk of significant harm)
- They are required by law or court order

You should act in accordance with local and national policies if there is an issue of child protection.

## **Data Protection**

In addition to the above, you should adhere to the requirements of the *Data Protection Act 1998*. In brief, anyone processing personal data must comply with the eight enforceable principles of good practice – data must be:

- Fairly and lawfully processed
- Processed for limited purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate and up to date
- Not kept for longer than necessary
- Processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- Secure

- not transferred to other countries without adequate protection

For further information, please see the *Information Commissioner's* website, [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk), from which the above guidance is reproduced.

### **Risk Incident Reporting**

Under the Management of Health and Safety Regulations of 1999 you have a legal duty of care to report all accidents, incidents and near misses. These regulations impose a duty on employers to perform risk assessments on all work activities. If during the course of your work you identify a risk to the health, safety and welfare of your own personal safety, and/or that of your colleagues/patients/clients, you have a duty to report this. In the first incidence it should be reported to the person in charge of the establishment to which you are assigned, and to The Anaesthetists Agency office. An incident report form must be completed at the office. The 5 steps to risk assessment are covered in your mandatory Health and Safety training – as well as COSHH and RIDDOR.

### **Handling Complaints**

During the course of your work with The Anaesthetists Agency you will come across complaints from patients/clients. It is the policy of The Anaesthetists Agency to deal with any expression of dissatisfaction in a professional and precise manner. If you are on an assignment within an establishment, please report any complaints to the Nurse in Charge/ Senior Doctor/Hospital Administrator and document all details of the complaint. If you are assigned to a service user/patient in his/her home then please report the complaint to the Office. All complaints must be investigated within a specified time limit and resolved as soon as possible and this is the responsibility of The Anaesthetists Agency office. You may however, be requested to put details of the complaint in writing on a complaint record form and/or attend an interview to investigate details further.

If you personally are the subject of a complaint you will also be asked to record details as part of an investigation and in some circumstances it may be necessary to suspend you from duty whilst the investigation is in process

If you have any complaints about any aspects of your work at The Anaesthetists Agency please do not hesitate to contact us.

Any complaints from individuals will be dealt with in a professional and confidential manner and The Anaesthetists Agency have a “whistleblowing” policy, which is available to you on request.

### **Personal Safety Including Lone Working**

Lone workers are those workers who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. Lone working is not governed by any specific legislation but a wide range of legislation may apply depending on the nature of the work involved. In all instances the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations of 1992.

Generally, within the healthcare industry, lone workers can be regarded as those who work on a peripatetic basis such as GP's, community/district nurses, domiciliary homecare workers etc., or those personnel who work outside of normal hours e.g. domestics, porters, on call doctors, security etc.

In all cases where a worker is expected to work alone a risk assessment should be performed by the employer and steps taken to reduce risk to the lowest practicable level. The risk assessment should address:

- Whether the work can be done safely by a single person
- What arrangements are required to ensure the lone worker is at no more risk than employees working together.

If for any reason you consider yourself to be at risk if working in a “lone worker” situation please contact the office immediately so that a further risk assessment can be performed and arrangements can be made to ensure safe systems of work and your personal safety.

### **Health and Safety**

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, it is your duty to:

- Take reasonable care for the health and safety at work of yourself and any other people who might be affected by your acts or omissions
- Co-operate with your employer and others to enable them to comply with statutory duties and requirements
- Not intentionally or recklessly misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 further requires you to:

- Use any equipment, etc., provided in the interests of safety
- Follow health & safety instructions
- Report anything you consider to be a serious danger
- Report any shortcomings in the protection arrangements for health & safety

When on assignment, it is the client’s responsibility to familiarise you with their own Health & Safety policy and procedures, and with locations of fire escapes, First-Aiders etc. If you refuse to work for a client on Health & Safety grounds, we will attempt to find you other employment without prejudice.

### **COSHH**

COSHH stands for the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988. Using hazardous substances can put people’s health at risk. COSHH requires employers to protect both employees and others who may be exposed from work activities.

### **RIDDOR**

RIDDOR stands for the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995. RIDDOR requires that some work-related accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences must be reported to the appropriate authority. It applies to all work activities.

### **Fire Safety**

It is your duty and responsibility to yourself and others to be aware of the fire precautions and procedures at your place of work. All clients and staff must be aware of the evacuation procedure and not get complacent about it. Complacency kills.

### **Infection Control including MRSA and C. Difficile**

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) is the name given to a range of strains of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. MRSA lives on the hands or in the nose of around

one third of the healthy population and is usually harmless. It can however prove fatal if it enters the bloodstream of an already weakened patient. It is usually transmitted by touch.

*Clostridium Difficile* is a bacterium of the family *Clostridium* (the family also includes the bacteria that cause tetanus, botulism, and gas gangrene). *C. Difficile* is the major cause of antibiotic-associated intestinal infection that mostly affects elderly patients with underlying diseases.

**The single most effective measure for preventing cross infection (infection carried from one person to the next) is washing hands before and after every patient contact.**

In addition, please:

- Use liquid soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub when washing hands – make sure it comes into contact with all areas
- Remove wrist and preferably hand jewellery at the beginning of each shift where you will be regularly decontaminating your hands
- Wear disposable gloves and aprons when attending to dressings or dealing with blood and body fluids (sterile gloves should only be worn when performing aseptic techniques)
- Dispose of gloves and aprons after use
- Cover cuts or breaks in your skin or those of patients with waterproof dressings

If you come into contact with a patient who is later found to be contaminated with an infectious disease, you may need to attend screening sessions at the hospital's Occupational Health Department. You must inform The Anaesthetists Agency immediately. During this time and before you have been declared clear, we may be restricted in the placements we can offer you due to the risks of infection.

Some assignments may require that infectious disease screening is performed on all workers prior to working on that ward/unit. You will be informed prior to acceptance of assignment.

#### **AIDS/HIV**

- If you believe you may have been exposed to HIV infection in any way you should seek medical advice from your GP or Occupational Health Department and, where appropriate, diagnostic HIV antibody testing
- If you are found to be infected, you must again seek guidance from your GP or Occupational Health Department
- If you are found to be HIV positive and perform or assist with invasive surgical procedures you must stop this immediately and seek advice from your GP or Occupational Health Department regarding what action, if any, should be taken
- Please be aware that it is the obligation of all medical practitioners to notify their employer and, where appropriate, the relevant professional regulatory body, if they are aware of HIV positive individuals who have not heeded advice to modify their working practice

Please note that the above guidance does not supersede current Department of Health Guidelines (in particular *HSC 1998/226*) or local practices and procedures.

## **Violence and Aggression**

It has been recognised for some time that workers in a hospital setting work within an environment where there is potential for threat, aggression or violence. Violence and aggression can be defined as including the following circumstances:

- Minor assault including situations where physical contact and/or injuries occur which require first aid treatment
- Threats with an offensive weapon without physical injury
- Aggravated assault resulting in injury requiring medical assistance
- Threatening behaviour which could include verbal abuse or threats and fear arising from damage to the physical environment
- Assault resulting in serious injury and/or death

Any violent, abusive or threatening behaviour is unacceptable.

You must report any incidents immediately to the person in charge and also to The Anaesthetists Agency office. The establishment where you are working the assignment will have policies for dealing with such incidents and an incident report form should be completed both at the place where you are working and at The Anaesthetists Agency office. Remember, all staff members have an obligation under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to have regard for their own health, safety and welfare at work, and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

## **Fitness to Practice**

It is important for your own health and that of those in your care that you are fit to practice whenever you attend an assignment. You must declare your fitness to practice or otherwise when you accept an assignment.

Because of the potential risks to your unborn child, you **MUST** let us know if you become pregnant. If you are concerned that your placement involves unnecessary risks to your health or fitness, or that of your unborn child, please do not hesitate to contact us. This is important, as we are required to perform a health and safety risk assessment for all expectant mothers.

You are required to complete a health declaration form on an annual basis as part of the annual update policy.

## **Immunisation**

You are required to keep the following immunisations up-to-date at all times:

- Hepatitis B
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Varicella
- Tuberculosis

Without proof of immunity/immunisation we will be unable to offer you assignments within the NHS.

(If performing exposure prone procedures, negative results for: Hepatitis B surface antigens, Hepatitis C and HIV are also required.)

## **Medicals**

Because of the importance of your fitness to practice, The Anaesthetists Agency reserves the right to request a certificate of fitness to practice from your GP or an Occupational Health Service. Our clients may also ask that you undergo a medical examination before commencing work for them. In these cases, future placements may be dependent upon your compliance with this request and its outcome, providing it was made with good reason.

## **Criminal Convictions**

We are required by the *Care Standards Act 2000* to obtain a criminal record *Disclosure* for all our Members. Please be aware that our clients may insist we inform them in writing of any criminal convictions you may have before accepting you for an assignment – we will only provide this information with your consent. The Anaesthetists Agency cannot be held responsible should clients decline your services following refusal to comply with this request or disclosure of a criminal conviction. Our own response to criminal record information will depend upon its nature and seriousness.

You are reminded that should you receive any cautions and/or criminal convictions whilst working on behalf of The Anaesthetists Agency you are required to inform us immediately.

## **Timekeeping**

Please make every effort to ensure you arrive at and leave all bookings at the agreed time. If for any reason you are unable to attend a booking you should contact The Anaesthetists Agency as soon as possible.

Please attend all bookings with your current Anaesthetists Agency ID Badge clearly displayed. Identity badges are renewed every two years and must be handed back in to The Anaesthetists Agency Office if you leave The Anaesthetists Agency.

Mobile phones should be switched off for the duration of your assignment.

Smoking is not permitted whilst on assignment.

## **Arriving for Work**

On arrival at a new booking, please take the opportunity to familiarise yourself with local policies and procedures. In particular, please be aware of the following, where relevant:

- Crash Call Procedure
- Hot Spot Mechanisms
- Violent Episode Policy
- Procedure for Alerting Security Staff
- Policy for Administration & Assistance with Drugs

If you have any queries regarding correct local procedures or are uncomfortable carrying out any of the duties you have been asked to perform, please raise these issues with your supervisor.

## **Dress Code**

The Anaesthetists Agency will inform you if there is any specific dress code in the establishment to which you are assigned. Staff are reminded that clean and tidy attire is

to be worn in order to promote professional standards and good standards of personal hygiene.

### **Training**

Please keep up to date with all relevant clinical guidance as well as attending to continuing professional development (CPD) requirements.

Records of In Training Assessments (RITAS) will be held on your personnel file at The Anaesthetists Agency – please ensure that you provide copies to your consultant of all gradings within the last 5 years.

You are required to maintain a written portfolio of your professional experience and attendance at professional development courses. This portfolio should also contain a written and agreed professional development plan.

The Anaesthetists Agency will from time to time as required circulate to all workers any information that is provided to be supplied by the authority.

### **Appraisals**

You are required to make formal arrangements to be appraised regularly by a medical practitioner who is entered on the Specialist Register.

The Anaesthetists Agency will check and record the performance of all newly qualified workers or those workers returning to work twice in the first three months. We also check performance of all locums at the end of assignments. You are entitled to see the results of assignment reviews from our customers – please ask and we will supply you with details.

For our records you are required to inform us of the date of your appraisals and when the next one is due.

### **Professional Standards**

Whilst this booklet outlines The Anaesthetists Agency's own policies and standards, these do not supersede the General Medical Council's Good Medical Practice guidance which can be found on the website of the General Medical Council. A copy is also held at The Anaesthetists Agency office for your reference if required.

The General Medical Council guidance states:

“Patients must be able to trust doctors with their lives and health. To justify that trust you must show respect for human life and you must:

- Make the care of your patient your first concern
- Protect and promote the health of patients and the public
- Provide a good standard of practice and care
  - Keep your professional knowledge and skills up to date
  - Recognise and work within the limits of your competence
  - Work with colleagues in the ways that best serve patients' interests
- Treat patients as individuals and respect their dignity
  - Treat patients politely and considerately
  - Respect patients' right to confidentiality
- Work in partnership with patients
  - Listen to patients and respond to their concerns and preferences

- Give patients the information they want or need in a way they can understand
- Respect patients' right to reach decisions with you about their treatment and care
- Support patients in caring for themselves to improve and maintain their health
- Be honest and open and act with integrity
  - Act without delay if you have good reason to believe that you or a colleague may be putting patients at risk
  - Never discriminate unfairly against patients or colleagues
  - Never abuse your patients' trust in you or the public's trust in the profession.

You are personally accountable for your professional practice and must always be prepared to justify your decisions and actions.”

You are required to maintain your registration with the General Medical Council and you are also required to inform The Anaesthetists Agency should you be subject to investigation or suspension from the GMC register at any time.

### **Code of Conduct**

Please conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times when working through The Anaesthetists Agency In particular, we ask you to pay special attention to:

- Quality of care and clinical procedures
- Consideration and respect for clients, colleagues and supervisors
- Confidentiality and integrity
- Punctuality
- Standards of dress and courtesy

You are responsible for your own actions when completing an assignment and, in cooperation with your colleagues and supervisor, for the care of your patients/clients. You should comply with all reasonable requests, using your professional judgment at all times. If you have any questions or concerns about your work, please try to resolve these locally at first. You should not attend work under the influence of alcohol or any illicit substance or smoke at work.

The Anaesthetists Agency staff members are not permitted to accept any gifts or gratuities from clients, nor to witness any wills/last testaments or legal documents; or to give financial advice to clients.

### **Equal Opportunities**

The Anaesthetists Agency seeks to offer equality of opportunity to all our Members and will treat all allegations of discrimination with the utmost seriousness. In accordance with these principles, Members may not discriminate on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, nationality, colour, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or disability.

### **Record Keeping**

Good records are essential to safe and effective patient care and should be:

- Clear, legible and indelible
- Factual and accurate
- Written as soon after the event as possible
- Written in black ink

- Mistakes should not be covered with correction fluid or scribbled out so as illegible. One line should be scored through the mistake and your initial and date written.
- Signed, timed and dated

Records should:

- Be written with the involvement of the patient, client or their carer where possible
- Be written in terms the patient or client can understand
- Be consecutive
- Identify problems that have arisen and action taken to rectify them
- Show care planned, decisions made, care delivered and information shared

Please bear in mind that full records are essential should any questions be raised about the care and standards of care delivered.

### **Computer Use**

Where our clients grant you access to their computer systems these must only be used **as authorised** and not to gain access to any other data or programs. In general, please ensure that you:

- Keep any passwords safe
- Keep to the client's policies and procedures
- Log off immediately after use

Specifically, you must:

- Observe any local policies and procedures regarding passwords, floppy disks, CD ROMs and data storage/transfer
- Not load or introduce any programs onto the computer
- Not access any information service or bulletin board including the Internet without specific prior authority from your line manager
- Not download any files or connect to any network or other computer equipment without prior authority as above

### **Allegations of Abuse**

The Anaesthetists Agency will take seriously any allegations of abuse by or against staff working through us. If we receive complaints of this sort against you, we may not be able to assign you whilst we carry out a full investigation. Ultimately, if allegations are well founded, we may not be able to offer you work in future. Where allegations are sufficiently serious, we may need to report you to the GMC and/or the Police.

Information on the protection of children and protection of vulnerable adults is covered within the mandatory training.

## **Making a Complaint**

If you have a complaint about the way you have been treated on assignment or by our staff, please direct this in the first instance to:

Mr Philip Osmond  
The Anaesthetists Agency  
Solent House  
5 Bath Road  
LYMINGTON  
Hampshire  
SO41 3RU

Phone: 01590 675 111

Fax: 01590 675 114

Email [info@theanaesthetistsagency.com](mailto:info@theanaesthetistsagency.com)