
Overview

This standard is about intimate body searches of individuals as carried out by healthcare professionals. This may apply where individuals are suspected of concealing substances or objects. It includes confirming the grounds for the intimate search, seeking consent from the individual concerned and conducting the intimate search. Intimate body searches of individuals believed to have a Class A drug concealed would only be carried out in a healthcare facility with full resuscitation facilities and by healthcare professionals legally qualified to undertake such procedures.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

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Undertake intimate body searches

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

- P1 confirm the grounds for the intimate body search and that authorisation for the intimate body search has been obtained and recorded in the custody record
- P2 communicate with the individual and with police officers/staff clearly and in ways that promote understanding
- P3 respect the individual's privacy, beliefs and dignity as far as practicable
- P4 explain your own role and its scope, your responsibilities and accountability
- P5 explain the procedure for undertaking the search to the individual
- P6 confirm the individual's rights and wishes and obtain their valid consent
- P7 ensure that individuals who refuse to give consent understand the possible health consequences and options
- P8 ensure the search is conducted in suitable premises
- P9 obtain all available information on the condition of the individual on arrest and whilst in custody (including risk assessments)
- P10 arrange for the presence of an appropriate adult in situations where the intimate search is of:
 - P10.1 an individual with a mental health disorder or learning difficulties
 - P10.2 a child or young person who has consented to the appropriate adult's presence
- P11 obtain any information from police officers regarding which body orifices are suspected of concealing substances or objects
- P12 apply standard precautions for infection control and other necessary health and safety measures
- P13 explain what is required of the individual and expected sensations or discomfort they may experience
- P14 conduct inspection of body orifices which may be used to conceal substances or objects
- P15 pass anything found during the intimate search to a police officer, packaged and labelled in accordance with legal and organisational requirements
- P16 keep accurate, legible and complete records in accordance with legal, professional and organisational requirements and guidelines

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 the principles of valid consent and the ways in which an individual's ability to give consent may be compromised
- K2 how to establish the individual's best interests where there is doubt about the validity of consent
- K3 the consequences and available options when an individual refuses to give consent
- K4 situations where an intimate search may be justified even where the individual has refused consent e.g. where the individual has collapsed
- K5 when and how to obtain consent from a person with parental responsibility
- K6 people who may act as an appropriate adult, in accordance with national legislation and codes of practice
- K7 how to communicate clearly and in ways that promote understanding
- K8 how to keep accurate, legible and complete records in accordance with legal, professional and organisational requirements and guidelines
- K9 who can provide authorisation for an intimate search
- K10 who can perform an intimate search and in what circumstances
- K11 the potential effects and dangers posed by concealed substances
- K12 what constitutes suitable premises for an intimate search and the facilities and equipment that must be available
- K13 who should and should not be present during an intimate search
- K14 correct positioning of the individual for the inspection of body orifices, and how to use any related equipment
- K15 safe handling techniques for equipment and materials used during intimate searches
- K16 the importance of compliance with infection control precautions and the protective clothing which may be worn for the individual's and your protection
- K17 how to arrange for individuals' transfer to hospital and admission if necessary
- K18 national legislation and codes of practice governing intimate body searches

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Additional Information

External links

This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):

Dimension: HWB7 Interventions and treatments

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