Scabies factsheet. Information for service users, friends and families.

Date:

Dear Family Member/Friend,

Your friend or family member is currently being treated for Scabies due to an outbreak in the care home. **There is no immediate cause for concern, and you do not need to take any action at this time.** However, you may find the following information helpful.

What is Scabies?

Scabies is a common skin condition caused by a tiny mite which burrows into the skin. The body's reaction to the mite, its eggs and waste products **cause** the symptoms associated with scabies.

The mites are extremely small and cannot usually be seen with the naked eye.

Symptoms may include:

- Intense itching, often worse at night
- A rash with small red spots or bumps
- Fine lines or burrows on the skin

For more information about scabies, including photographs of common symptoms, please visit the NHS website: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/scabies/

Symptoms typically appear **3–6 weeks after first exposure**, although they may appear within **1–4 days** in someone who has previously had scabies.

In older adults, symptoms can sometimes be mild or atypical and may be more difficult to recognise.

How is Scabies spread?

Scabies is spread mainly through **prolonged skin-to-skin contact** (10 minutes or more of skin to skin contact) with an affected person, for example during personal care or holding hands. The risk of spread from clothing, bedding or furniture is low in most cases because the mite survives for only a short time away from the human body.
A person remains infectious until **24 hours after treatment has begun**.

How is Scabies treated?

Treatment is usually a medicated cream that is applied to the whole body as directed by a healthcare professional. A second application is usually required **7 days later**.
In some circumstances, an alternative tablet treatment may be prescribed.
Itching may continue for several weeks after successful treatment. This does not necessarily mean that treatment has failed and is often due to the body's ongoing reaction to the mites.

Do family members need treatment?

Family members and visitors do not usually require treatment unless they have been identified as a close contact of a scabies case or have been advised to seek treatment by a healthcare professional.
If you develop symptoms of scabies, please seek advice from your GP or pharmacist.

What is the care home doing?

In line with national guidance, the Infection, prevention & control team at Cumberland Council and the care home are taking appropriate measures to manage the situation. These include:

- Identifying residents, staff, other health professionals and family members who may have been exposed to scabies.
- Notifying individuals who may have been in contact with a confirmed or suspected case.
- Coordinating treatment for all residents and staff who require treatment.
- Implementing appropriate infection prevention and control measures.
- Monitoring for signs and symptoms of scabies.
- Keeping residents, relatives and relevant agencies informed throughout the process.

The infection prevention & control team (IPCT) at Cumberland Council follows national guidance and takes prompt action to identify individuals who may have been exposed to scabies.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the care home manager in the first instance.

Cumberland Council Infection Prevention and Control Team