

Linen and Laundry Management Policy

This policy identifies the key processes and protocols for the management of linen and laundry.

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Version control and summary of changes

Version number	Date	Comments (description change and amendments)
Version 1	August 2009	Policy review – Amalgamation of: Infection Control Guidelines for the Management of laundry and linen. Reviewed to meet NHSLA requirements Reviewed to meet The Health and Social Care Act (2008)
Version 2	April 2012	Circulated for consultation to all members of the Infection Control Committee
Version 3	January 2014	Reviewed to ensure continuing compliance with the Health & Social Care act (2008) and NHSLA requirements.
Version 4	May 2017	Policy review as above
Version 5	December 2019	Policy reviewed and no significant changes References updated
Version 6	February 2020	Policy update as policy expiring

For further information contact:

Infection Prevention and Control Team 0116 2951668

Definitions that apply to this policy

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Specialised clothing or equipment worn by employees for protection against health and safety hazards and includes gloves, aprons, gowns, masks and eye protection.
Standard Precautions	Precautions designed preventing the transmission of blood – borne diseases such as human immunodeficiency virus, hepatitis B, and other blood borne pathogens when first aid or health care is provided. The precautions are designed to reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms from both recognized and unrecognized sources of infection
Linen	Linen includes all textiles used in hospitals and community settings, including blankets, pillowcases, mattress covers, bed sheets, towels and curtains.
Laundry Services	Laundry & linen services provided by the Trust laundry contract.
Clean Laundry	Items of linen that are new or have not been used.
Soiled/foul linen	Soiled/Infected linen is linen which is soiled with blood, faeces or any other body fluid from any patient. All laundry used by a patient with a known infection (whether soiled or not).

1.0 Purpose of the policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all staff employed by Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT) are aware of the appropriate steps they need to undertake to ensure the safety of all patients and colleagues in accordance with the Health & Social Care Act (2015).

2.0 Summary and key points

This policy has been developed to give clear guidance to staff in relation to the procedure for the management of laundry and linen used within LPT services. It describes the process for ensuring the delivery of effective infection prevention and control management of laundry and linen within all LPT settings. It forms part of the organisation's compliance with the Health & Social Care Act (2015).

Safe management of linen and laundry is important to minimise any risk from harm and is an important aspect of infection prevention and control. It is imperative that all staff handling laundry and linen do so adequately and safely.

3.0 Introduction

The Linen and Laundry policy applies to all staff employed by LPT in a wide range of teams and services operating from a number of properties over a large geographical area making up the overall estate.

The provision of healthcare carries with it inherent risks to the health care worker.

The document ensures that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in regard to safe practice and to promote effective evidence based patient care which is in accordance with revised national and local guidelines when handling linen or laundry.

4.0 Categorisations of laundry

Current United Kingdom guidance (NHS Executive 1995) HSG (95) 18 details three categorisations of laundry:

- **Used linen-** all used linen regardless of state (soiled or fouled)
- **Infected or foul linen-** laundry/linen from patients with diagnosed and confirmed infections, this includes wound infections, which have the potential to infect other patients and/or healthy staff. Linen that is heavily contaminated with body fluids and/or blood would be included in this category. Initially this type of linen must be contained in a water soluble bag. Infested clothes should be treated as infected. Unused linen in an isolation room must be treated as infected
- **Heat labile–** This refers to fabrics that would be damaged by thermal disinfection, such as wool and other synthetic materials

5.0 Handling/segregation of linen

It is the responsibility of the person disposing of the linen to ensure that it is segregated appropriately.

All linen must be handled with care to minimise transmission of micro-organisms.

Plastic disposable aprons must therefore be worn when there is potential risk of contamination of the uniform/clothing i.e. when making and changing beds.

Linen should be placed directly into the appropriate laundry bag on removal from the bed/patient.

Linen should not be placed on the floor or transported around a ward/area unless within an appropriately colour coded linen bag.

Hands must be washed immediately following the handling of any linen and after removal of disposable gloves and apron that has been used when handling soiled/infected linen.

Extreme care must be taken to separate all extraneous items (i.e. needles, dressings or personal items etc.) from linen before it is placed in laundry bags. Such items are potentially dangerous to staff when in transport and during the laundry process, and may also damage laundry equipment.

To avoid possibility of spillage of used linen, linen bags must never be more than two thirds full, and must be securely tied. These principles are to be applied to handling of linen within all healthcare settings.

6.0 Frequency of linen change

Bed linen or clothing should be changed and laundered between patients. The frequency of changing will depend on the individual case i.e. daily for patients nursed in isolation, immediately if fouled.

All linen that falls within the soiled/infected category must be placed within a red soluble alginate bag, inside a white plastic laundry bag. The soluble bag must be placed directly into the washing machine to prevent any cross-infection to staff or the environment, see appendix 1.

Dirty linen is all used linen other than that listed above.

All linen that falls into this category must be placed within a white plastic laundry bag.

The above categorisation applies when either items are laundered by Trust's laundry service provider or by care staff in home/ward areas

7.0 The laundering process

Many micro-organisms will be physically removed from linen by detergent and water, and most are destroyed by a high temperature wash. Remaining organisms are likely to be destroyed by tumble drying and ironing.

Bed linen/heat resistant items

These items must, where possible, be processed through a cycle of 71 degrees C (for not less than 3 minutes) or 65 degrees C (for not less than 10 minutes). For washing machines of conventional or domestic design (not an industrial type) at least 4 minutes mixing time must be added to these cycle times. Care should also be given to not overfill the washing machine drum. Select the nearest cycle available on a domestic washing machine to match the above.

Personal items

All personal laundry should be given to relatives if possible in appropriate bags to launder (Appendix 1). If the laundry is from **a patient with a suspected or known infection** then staff are required to give relatives correct advice regarding handling and washing these items.

All personal items of clothing not able to be taken home by visitors or relatives should be laundered on site if possible.

Such items must be bagged before being transported to the laundry area. If no on site laundry facilities available patients clothing may be sent to the Trust laundry service provider. All items must be clearly marked with the patients name and location. If any garments have detachable belts this should also be clearly labelled.

Manual sluicing, soaking or hand washing of soiled items must never be carried out.

A sluice cycle or cold pre-wash must be used for all soiled items, any solid matter, i.e. faeces, must be removed prior to this.

Heat labile items

Should be washed on the hottest cycle possible for that item. Each patient's heat labile items must be washed separately and this includes hoist slings. Alternatively disposable items such as hoist slings may be used.

8.0 Uniforms and workwear

Uniforms must be changed daily. If a uniform is heavily contaminated it must be changed as soon as possible.

Uniforms must be laundered at the highest temperature the fabric allows and at a minimum of 40 degrees centigrade, dried quickly, or tumble-dried and ironed with a hot iron.

If a laundry service is available, it should include items such as uniforms and all

items to be laundered by this method must be clearly marked with the trust name and labelled with the ward/area and site. The laundry will not take responsibility for items sent which are unmarked.

9.0 Curtains and soft furnishings

Curtains in clinical areas must be laundered as a minimum six monthly, and immediately if soiled. This is organised by the Trust laundry service provider. Any curtains purchased for clinical areas must not be dry clean only.

All curtains and soft furnishings have to be approved by the Infection Prevention and control team. Purchasing of such items must be carried out via the procurement process. This includes items purchased for therapeutic use.

Alternatively disposable curtains should be considered. If curtains are being sent to the Trust's laundry service provider these should be placed in a blue bag and labelled (Appendix 1)

Curtains should always be changed following a post infection clean whether visibly soiled or not, they should then be placed in an alginate bag before being placed in a blue bag and labelled.

Within clinical areas soft furnishings such as chairs etc., must be purchased with water repellent upholstery. Any stained, soiled or ripped chairs which cannot be effectively cleaned should be discarded as soon as possible and replaced with appropriately covered chairs.

Pillows and duvets must be covered with a plastic waterproof material and be heat sealed to form a protective covering with no openings. If the integrity of the waterproof cover is compromised, soiled or stained it must be discarded immediately.

10.0 On Site Laundry

Any on site laundry must be situated within a designated room that is used for laundry purposes only. All on site facilities must have the following available:

- Separate washing machine and dryer (commercial WRAS approved)
- Hand wash basin with liquid soap and paper towel dispenser
- Disposable gloves and aprons
- Segregated area for dirty linen and linen skips
- Segregated area for temporary clean linen storage
- Waterproof dressings available to cover any cuts and sores on the hands
- A separate ironing area must be available away from used linen
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The design of the laundry facility must allow for a flow of items from the dirty to clean area.

All washing machines and dryers must be subjected to a planned programme of service and maintenance at least annually.

11.0 Storage of linen

Clean/unused linen

- Personal patient clothing awaiting collection should not be stored in the same room as clean/unused linen.
- All clean linen must be stored off the floor in an allocated clean environment namely a cupboard away from used/soiled linen, dust and pests.
- Linen cupboard doors must be kept closed to prevent contamination
- If taken into an isolation room and not used, the linen must be considered to be used and therefore laundered as infected linen before reuse.
- Clean linen must be in a good state of repair free from stains, holes and tears.
- Any shelving in the linen store must be capable of being wiped down/cleaned.

Used linen

- All linen bags must be stored in a secure area away from the public access whilst awaiting collection
- Linen trolleys, where used, must be cleaned daily to prevent build-up of dirt and dust

Use of linen outpatient/clinics

Fabric sheets should not be used in outpatient/clinic areas where disposable alternatives should be used i.e. couch roll which should be changed between patients.

12.0 Items of linen that must not be sent to laundry

Items of linen used by patients with the following confirmed or suspected infections must not be sent to laundry:

- Anthrax
- Lassa fever/other viral haemorrhagic fever
- Plague
- Rabies

All items of linen used in the above categories must be dealt whilst wearing gloves and aprons, double bagged and in sealed, hazardous waste bags with 'For incineration only' clearly marked on the bag and staff should arrange for immediate disposal from the ward/area.

If further advice is needed in regard to the above please contact the Consultant Microbiologist at Leicester Royal Infirmary on 03003031573 or the Leicester Partnership Trust infection control team via switchboard.

13.0 References and bibliography

LPT policies via intranet

Ayliffe GAJ et al (1992) *Control of Hospital Infection- a practical handbook*.
London: Chapman and Hall.

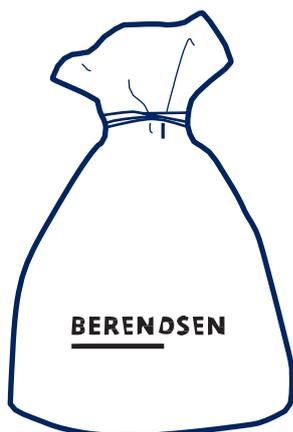
Department of Health: *The Health and Social Care Act, Code of Practice for health and social care on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance* (2015)

NHS Executive (1995) *Hospital Laundry Arrangements for used and infected linen* – HSG (95) 18 London: NHSE

Department of Health (2013) *Choice framework for local policy and procedures 01-04 - Decontamination of linen for health and social care: Guidance for linen processors implementing BS EN 14065*

CFPP01:04 – COLOUR CODING BAGGING POLICY

LINEN HIRE ITEMS



White Berendsen Bag

REJECTED LINEN



Rejected / Return Items Only
Pink Berendsen Bag

INFECTED LINEN HIRE ITEMS



Inner – Dissolvable Red Bag Outer - White Berendsen Bag

CUSTOMERS' OWN ITEMS



Blue Berendsen Bag

INFECTED CUSTOMERS' OWN ITEMS



Inner – Dissolvable Red Bag Outer - Blue Berendsen Bag

SURGEONS' GOWNS, THEATRE DRAPES



Green Guardian Bag

INFECTED SURGEONS' GOWNS, THEATRE DRAPES



Inner – Dissolvable Red Bag Outer - Green Guardian

This bagging policy immediately supersedes all previous linen bagging policies in adherence with DoH document CFPP01:04

Appendix 2

PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING

<p>Privacy impact assessment (PIAs) are a tool which can help organisations identify the most effective way to comply with their data protection obligations and meet individual's expectations of privacy. The first step in the PIA process is identifying the need for an assessment.</p> <p>The following screening questions will help decide whether a PIA is necessary. Answering 'yes' to any of these questions is an indication that a PIA would be a useful exercise and requires senior management support, at this stage the Head of Data Privacy must be involved.</p>			
Name of Document:		Linen and laundry management policy	
Completed by:		Mel Hutchings	
Job title	Infection Prevention and Control Nurse	Date	16/12/19
			Yes / No
1. Will the process described in the document involve the collection of new information about individuals? This is information in excess of what is required to carry out the process described within the document.			No
2. Will the process described in the document compel individuals to provide information about themselves? This is information in excess of what is required to carry out the process described within the document.			No
3. Will information about individuals be disclosed to organisations or people who have not previously had routine access to the information as part of the process described in this document?			No
4. Are you using information about individuals for a purpose it is not currently used for, or in a way it is not currently used?			No
5. Does the process outlined in this document involve the use of new technology which might be perceived as being privacy intrusive? For example, the use of biometrics.			No
6. Will the process outlined in this document result in decisions being made or action taken against individuals in ways which can have a significant impact on them?			No
7. As part of the process outlined in this document, is the information about individuals of a kind particularly likely to raise privacy concerns or expectations? For examples, health records, criminal records or other information that people would consider to be particularly private.			No
8. Will the process require you to contact individuals in ways which they may find intrusive?			no
<p>If the answer to any of these questions is 'Yes' please contact the Head of Data Privacy Tel: 0116 2950997 Mobile: 07825 947786 Lpt-dataprivacy@leicspart.secure.nhs.uk In this case, ratification of a procedural document will not take place until approved by the Head of Data Privacy.</p>			
IG Manager approval name:			
Date of approval			

Acknowledgement: Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust

Appendix 3

Key individuals involved in developing the document

Name	Designation
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Karen Plowman	Advanced Nurse Practitioner
Chris Rippin	Clinical/Operational Continence Lead
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Helen Walton	Property Manager, Estates & Facilities
Katie Willetts	Senior Nurse - FYPC