POLICY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF LINEN & LAUNDRY
The aim of this policy is to ensure effective linen and laundry management to prevent cross infection between patients, and also to protect the staff that transport and handle used laundry.

Supersedes: V 2.0

Description of Amendment(s): Updating information and bagging procedure.

This policy will impact on:
Clinical practices, administrative practices, employees, visitors and patients

Financial Implications:
Litigation could be from minor to major impact for the Trust if health and safety issues are not followed with regard to disposal of sharps equipment, hidden in the linen or placed inside scrub suit pockets is not observed.
Major breakdown of the laundry equipment due to not following the Trust procedures for disposal of equipment, if proved will result in the re-cooping of funds from the Trust for the repair of machinery.

Policy Area: Trust Wide  
Version Number: 3.0  
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Review Date: August 2020  
Policy Title: Policy for the Management of Linen & Laundry

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Author: Facilities Contract & Performance Manager  
Impact Assessment Date: March 2016

APPROVAL RECORD

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<th>Committees / Group</th>
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<tr>
<td>Consultation: Infection Prevention &amp; Control Manager</td>
<td>March 2016</td>
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<td>Matrons</td>
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## Appendices

- **Appendix 1**  Procedure for the Storage of Linen Out-of-Hours/Major Incident
- **Appendix 2**  Instruction Sheet – Special Articles
- **Appendix 3**  Colour Coding Bagging Policy
- **Appendix 4**  Escalation Procedure
1. Introduction

Linen, particularly used linen within a healthcare setting can harbour large numbers of potentially pathogenic microorganisms. It is important that the appropriate precautions are taken to ensure contamination to/from linen does not occur as this might then lead to transmission of microorganisms to people or to the environment potentially causing infection. Such important precautions apply to all stages of linen management: storage, handling, bagging, transporting, and laundering.

The provision and management of laundry and linen services is an important function to enable sustainable delivery of patient care. Complying with guidelines set by the Department of Health Guidance CFPP 01-04 published July 2014 amalgamated earlier versions of Laundry guidance and superseded HSG(95)18. Staff will facilitate the continued delivery of these services, minimising risks to health and safety, complying with infection control requirements and ensuring best value for the Trust.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to;

2.1 Promote guidance for healthcare workers on the correct hygiene measures for the laundering of linen.

2.2 Highlight the risks of infection associated with handling dirty laundry, as well as keeping clean laundry free from the risk of recontamination in a closed or covered storage area.

2.3 Identify appropriate prevention measures to reduce the risk and protect patients, staff and the wider community.

2.4 Provide staff with a broad outline of what to do, and who to contact for more detailed advice in relation to the management of linen and laundry.

2.5 Where Trust linen is provided in the Community, the Policy must also be observed and adhered to.

3. Roles & Responsibilities

3.1 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Trust has appropriate policies, guidelines and procedures, and that there are robust monitoring arrangements in place. This responsibility may be delegated to an appropriate colleague.

3.2 Director of Finance

The Director of Finance has the delegated authority for facilities management across the Trust.
3.3 **Head of Facilities (Soft FM)**

The Head of Facilities (Soft FM) is responsible for ensuring that:

a) The guidelines within the Policy for the Management of Linen & Laundry are implemented.
b) All guidelines produced by a member of staff in their department are met in this document.
c) Responsible for monitoring the laundry and linen contract and ensuring that the Linen staff are adequately trained.
d) Procedures are put in place for a Major Incident.

3.4 **Facilities Contract & Performance Manager (Linen & Laundry)**

The Facilities Contract & Performance Manager is responsible for the day-to-day running of the contract and dealing with issues that may occur and affect the laundry managed service to the patients:

a) Monitoring the service supplied by the Laundry contractor and ensuring that wards and departments are kept up-to-date with the latest Bagging Policy and procedures provided by the Laundry contractor.
b) Spot check the quality of the linen.
c) Ensuring that wards and departments display the correct signage regarding the linen.
d) Investigate issues arising from delivery of clean linen, to the dirty linen collection and disposal.
e) Monitor the external storage area for dirty linen ensuring that there are regular collections and sufficient linen cages.

3.5 **Site Management for Laundry Service**

a) To be fully aware of the service requirements, and manage the linen delivery, ordering and distribution to wards and departments as required in the specification.
b) Maintaining the standards in accordance with NHS National Guidelines, Trust Policies and best practice.
c) Ensure that the Trust always has adequate linen available for Major Incidents.

3.6 **Senior Sisters, Matrons and Departmental Heads**

The Senior Sisters, Matrons and Departmental Heads are responsible for ensuring that all staff are familiar with the Policy for the Management of Linen & Laundry and that safe use of the linen is carried out within their areas of responsibility.

The Colour Coding - Bagging Policy (Appendix 3) provided by the Laundry contractor must be adhered to at all times, in accordance with NHS National Guidelines, Trust Guidelines and Best Practice.

3.7 **Infection, Prevention & Control Team**

The Infection, Prevention & Control Team has responsibility for supporting staff in the implementation of this Policy across the Trust and ensuring compliance as part of a sustainable audit programme.

3.8 **All Employees (including Contracted Staff)**

All employees must ensure they have read and understand the Policy, and incorporate the guidance with the management and safe use of clean linen and correct disposal of all soiled linen into their clinical practice.
Laundry services must be provided in such a way as to observe Infection Control procedures, preserve the patient’s dignity and promote the patient’s care, as well as being appropriate to the patient group, gender, clinical status, religion and beliefs where appropriate.

4. Processes and Procedures

4.1 Definition of Linen

For the purpose of this Policy, “linen” shall mean all reusable textile items requiring cleaning/disinfection via laundry processing including:

- Bed linen: blankets, counterpanes, cot sheets and blankets, duvet covers, pillowcases and sheets (woven, knitted, half sheets, draw and slide sheets);
- Blankets;
- Canvases;
- Curtains;
- Hoist slings;
- Patient clothing (gowns, nightdresses and shirts, pyjama tops and bottoms);
- Staff clothing (coats, scrub suits, tabards, etc)
- Towels

4.2 Segregation of Laundry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Used</strong></td>
<td>Items soiled by use or fouled by excretions or secretions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infected / Infested</strong></td>
<td>Linen from patients known or suspected to have an infection this includes gastro-intestinal infection (ie clostridium difficile, Norovirus, patients with active diarrhoea, pulmonary tuberculosis, MRSA colonisation or confirmed, Hepatitis A, and other notifiable diseases). For further advice please contact the Infection, Prevention &amp; Control Team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heat-Labile</strong></td>
<td>Fabrics damaged by the normal heat disinfection process and likely to be damaged at thermal disinfection temperatures ie curtains and personal items.</td>
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4.3 Storage of Clean Linen

Clean linen should always be decanted and stored in a clean, designated area, preferably within a purpose built cupboard, off the floor to prevent contamination with dust and/or aerosols etc and should be smooth and impervious easy to clean as stated in the HTM 01-04. Any linen trolley/cupboard that is used for the storage of linen should be enclosed.

Linen should not be stored on the corridors when delivered, as this may also result in contamination.
4.4 Clean/Used Linen within the Hospital Environment

4.4.1 Clean Linen

Clean linen that has been rejected due to marks, a tear, holes or any other type of soiling mark, must be placed into a **pink plastic linen bag** and labelled in order for the Trust to receive a credit for the linen unable to be used (not fit for purpose).

4.4.2 Used Linen

Used linen must be placed into a **white plastic linen bag**, on mobile stands situated in the Sluice Room, and filled no more than ⅔ full and securely tied at the neck.

No other items should be contained within the bag being returned (foreign bodies etc) as this may cause serious damage to the machinery at the laundry, or result in a serious accident.

Dirty linen bags must be taken to the nearest Disposal Room for collection by the Waste Porter.

No dirty linen cages should be kept on the hospital corridors, and must be returned to the Waste Compound for re-use.

All used/dirty linen is to be stored in the Waste Compound for collection by the Laundry contractor and should be contained within the cages provided and not stacked on the floor.

4.5 Infected Linen within the Hospital Environment

The infected linen must be placed in a **red dissolvo liner**, and filled no more than ⅔ full and securely tied at the neck, and then placed into a **red plastic linen bag** with a label attached identifying the ward or department.

Clean linen that has been taken into a room where a patient has been under isolation precautions, must be removed and sent to the laundry for washing. This linen must not be used for another patient.

All infected linen is removed from each ward/department’s designated Disposal Room by the Waste Porter and stored within cages in the Waste Compound for collection by the Laundry contractor.

4.6 Special Articles

4.6.1 Patients’ Personal Laundry

Patients’ personal laundry should be given to relatives where possible; this should be contained in a plain appropriate plastic linen bag. If the linen is soiled or infected from a patient, staff should give the relatives appropriate advice on how to handle the clothing eg to be washed on a separate wash from the family clothing, at the hottest temperature as far as is practically possible for that particular fabric as per the manufacturer’s washing instructions.

If patient’s personal items are sent to the Trust’s Laundry contractor, they must be placed in a **blue plastic linen bag** and labelled, according to the agreed protocol, to ensure that they are returned.
4.6.2 Patients Wearing Laundry Nightwear

Any patient that has been provided with nightdresses or pyjamas to wear during their stay in hospital, must not be discharged home or to a Nursing Home with them, as these items do not belong to the Trust.

4.6.3 Curtains

Curtains must have the Trust identifiable label and must be placed in a blue plastic linen bag following local procedures with the Trust and labelled correctly.

Window and bedroom curtains should be changed as a minimum on a quarterly basis, or during periods of certain ward infections, and when visibly soiled.

4.6.4 Disposable Curtains

Disposable curtains should be changed as a minimum every 6 months or when visibly soiled, and must be marked to indicate the month of changing them.

Should curtains become soiled, or during particular infections, the curtains must be changed immediately.

Infected curtains must be disposed of as clinical waste in an orange waste bag.

4.6.5 Shower Curtains

Shower curtains must be changed monthly or when visibly soiled. They should be washed as per the manufacturer's washing instructions via the on-site laundry provision which is managed by the Healthcare Cleaning Team.

4.6.6 Mops (Non-Clinical & Community)

The Healthcare Cleaning Team provides fresh mop heads daily to all wards or departments. Mops are issued to each area of the hospital on an exchange basis, replacing each area’s quantity of soiled mops with clean. The used mop heads are laundered on-site to thermal disinfection standards (as recommended by CFPP 01-04) at 65 degrees centigrade for 10 minutes, or at 71 degrees centigrade for 3 minutes.

The mop heads are then tumble dried and bagged up for distribution to the wards by the Healthcare Cleaning Team.

4.6.7 Microfibre

The Healthcare Cleaning Team will thermal wash and supply daily all microfibre cleaning products used in the ward and clinic areas. They will be laundered to thermal disinfection standards (as above) and will also be tumble dried and bagged up for distribution by the Healthcare Cleaning Team to all clinical areas early morning.

4.6.8 Clean Room Gowns

Clean room gowns are provided as rental items to the HSDU Department. The gowns are delivered sterile direct from the Laundry contractor. Soiled gowns should be placed in a green plastic linen bag, and filled no more than ⅔ full and securely tied at the neck. The green bags will be collected with the normal soiled linen and
then segregated by placing them into a cage in the Waste Compound for collection by the Laundry contractor.

4.6.9 **Special Items - Glide & Lock Seat Covers, Slings etc**

Each customer owned (Trust) item must have a permanent Trust label. After use, place in a **blue plastic linen bag**, following the Laundry contractor’s Colour Coding Bagging Policy and labelled correctly. The items must be sent according to the agreed protocol with the laundry, to the Linen Room to log the returns and to ensure that they are returned to the Trust after cleaning.

4.6.10 **Pillows**

Pillows must be protected by heat-sealed waterproof covers which are easily cleaned on the wards by the nursing staff (pillows cannot be sent to the Laundry contractor for washing due to the plastic cover).

Pillowcases must be changed with every new patient and when soiled.

4.7 **Training**

Managers must ensure that all new staff (including agency staff) are appropriately trained in relation to linen and laundry procedures, as part of their clinical induction.

4.7.1 All staff that deal with laundry (clean or used) must adhere to the Trust’s Policy for the Management of Linen & Laundry.

4.7.2 Clean linen should be handled with ‘Clean Hands’ so that contamination is avoided including during transport and storage.

4.7.3 Plastic linen bags should always be used when clearing away used linen from bed areas. Staff must not hand carry loose used linen, or leave them on the floor, in order to minimise environmental and personal contamination.

4.7.4 All staff must ensure that no extraneous items are disposed of with used linen, such as **equipment, dentures, spectacles, sharps, incontinence pads, stethoscopes and tissues etc** as they may harm the Laundry staff or cause serious damage to the machinery which, if proved, would be at a cost to the Trust.

4.7.5 The linen bags should never be overfilled and should be securely closed when ⅔ full and labelled where required.

4.7.6 Staff should wear aprons and gloves whenever handling linen from infected patients or linen contaminated with bodily fluids.

4.7.7 Staff should wash their hands after handling used linen, and after removing gloves and aprons.

4.7.8 All staff who wear scrubs suits specific to their job role and area must ensure that they wear a clean set which is the colour required in the specific area of work, as per the Dress Code Policy. Staff should ensure that they remove all items from pockets when placing used linen into the laundry bag for washing.

4.8 **Health and Safety**

**It is everybody’s responsibility** to ensure that all dangerous items are not concealed within any dirty linen eg sheets, blankets, towels, scrubs etc.
All scrubs or white coats should not be returned to the Laundry contractor containing any valuable items. They may not be recovered, or more importantly sharps items concealed within the pockets, can cause serious harm for Laundry staff handling the garments at the Laundry.

**By Law, the Trust could be prosecuted for seriously endangering the life of a member of staff, or machinery, when working within the contractor’s Laundry.**

Also the Trust can be fined for any serious damage to the laundry equipment, and any enforced closure to the Laundry whilst repairs are carried out, should this be proven that the Trust was liable.

### 5. Monitoring Compliance with the Document

5.1 The Trust will monitor the contract to ensure that the Laundry contractor is demonstrating compliance to the contract specification and in particular to HSG (95) 18.

5.2 The Trust will monitor the quality, storage and stock levels in both the Linen Room and on the wards, reporting back to the Laundry Services Manager at monthly review meetings.

5.3 The Facilities Contract & Performance Manager, Domestic Manager and Laundry & Linen Contract Manager will ensure this policy is implemented efficiently. Any breach of compliance should be reported to the clinical area in the first instance and then to the Infection, Prevention & Control Team who are informed of any infection control non-compliance incidents. A Datix Incident Report should also be completed.

5.4 The Facilities Contract & Performance Manager will monitor compliance with the Policy and undertake audits to ensure linen is segregated appropriately, and managed appropriately above 95% compliance.

5.5 The Facilities Contract & Performance Manager will monitor the recording of clean, returned linen not fit for purpose, to ensure that the Trust receives the appropriate credit. Returns are to be less than 5% of the total pieces washed each month.

### 6. References

- NHS Executive (1995) HSG (95) 18 Hospital Laundry Arrangements for Used and Infected Linen
- Health Service Guidelines (1995) Hospital Arrangements for Used and Infected Linen HSG( 95) 18
- Infection Control in Practice: “How hospital linen and laundry services are provided” Journal of Hospital Infection
- Service Level Agreement with Berendsen Laundry for the Laundry Provision 2002-2017
- Berendsen Colour Coding Bagging Policy (Appendix 4)
Associated Trust Documents for Reference

Uniform and Dress Code Policy 2015

Infection Prevention & Control - Hand Hygiene Policy 2016

Infection Prevention & Control - Standard Precautions Policy 2015

Infection Prevention & Control - Cleaning Policy

Health and Safety Policy
Appendix 1

PROCEDURE FOR THE STORAGE OF LINEN OUT-OF-HOURS/MAJOR INCIDENT

In the case of a Major Incident, the Trust currently has two linen cupboards which hold an emergency supply of various pieces of linen. The cupboards have been established to negate the need to remove stock from the Linen Room in the case of a Major Incident.

The emergency linen cupboards have been strategically placed on both the bottom and top streets for the convenience of all the wards. The cupboards are sited as follows:

- Cupboard 1 - bottom street under the stairs that lead to the restaurant and near to the WRVS
- Cupboard 2 - top street near to the back entrance to the Orthopaedic Theatre and Ward 10

The Laundry contractor will monitor the cupboards during the working week and top up stocks as and when required. Frequent cleaning of the cupboards and fresh stock rotation is also the responsibility of the Laundry contractor.

The Bed Manager is responsible for allowing access to the Linen Room for emergency supplies, however stock must only be used when supplies have been diminished on the wards. In the case of a Major Incident, linen stocks should only be removed from the emergency linen cupboards by prior permission from the Bed Managers or during the week from the Facilities Department (Soft FM). Staff will continue with the existing out-of-hours procedure of contacting the Bed Manager if they require additional or emergency supplies of linen.

Bed Management and the Laundry contractor will have access to the keys for the emergency linen cupboards, which will be retained in the electronic key cabinet.
INSTRUCTION SHEET – SPECIAL ARTICLES

Staff who require linen to be laundered which is deemed as a special article as detailed in paragraph 4.6 must follow the Trust Instruction Sheet. The Laundry contractor cannot guarantee that special articles will be returned if protocols have not been followed as detailed below:

- Special or new articles must be labelled with a Trust heat resistant label before they can be sent to the Laundry contractor to be laundered. Labels are supplied and affixed by the Linen Room located on the service corridor, MDGH.

- Special articles should be placed in a blue plastic linen bag following local procedures and placed in the Disposal Room for collection by the Waste Porter.

- The Linen Room should be notified on either extn 1679 or by fax on the same number, if special articles or changes are required to the ward’s linen order.

- In order to keep an audit trail, the Linen Room should be supplied with a contact name and number, ward/department, and a brief description of the special article.

- Special articles are laundered separately by the Laundry contractor and will normally be returned within one week. Queries regarding unreturned items should be directed to the Linen Room in the first instance.

- Patients’ Personal Laundry is laundered with the agreement of the Laundry contractor. Any requests should be directed to the Laundry contractor and then if not satisfied to the Facilities Department (Soft FM).
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 Bag

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

For more visit us at www.berendsen.co.uk
ESCALATION PROCEDURE

Operational Issues

1. Any linen and laundry issues on the wards eg shortages should be reported to the Linen Room Manager for resolution:
   Linen Room Manager  01625 661679

2. Where issues continue, they should be reported to the Linen Room Manager, however if no resolution is found, contact Facilities (Soft FM):
   Facilities Contract & Performance Manager (Linen & Laundry)  01625 663974

3. For changes to the Linen & Laundry contract eg additional service requirements contact:
   Facilities Contract & Performance Manager (Linen & Laundry)  01625 663974
   or
   Head of Facilities (Soft FM)  01625 661626 (well in advance of changes required)

4. During periods when the Linen Room is closed (after 4.00 pm during the week and weekends) if there are shortages of linen the Bed Managers via Switchboard (dial 0) can allow access to the Linen Room to obtain additional stock. A note of stock taken should be left in the Linen Room to inform the Linen Manager.
   In the case of a Major Incident, the Bed Managers have access to the electronic key cupboard for keys to the two Major Incident linen cupboards for additional linen, which are located on the main corridors of the ground and first floors, MDGH.