

CONTROLLED DOCUMENT

PROCEDURE FOR SAFE HANDLING OF LINEN

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CONTENTS

		Page
1	Introduction	3
2	Responsibilities	3
3	Procedure	3
4	Heat Liable Linen	4
Appendix 1	Procedures for Handling Soiled/Rejected Linen	5

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The aim of this procedure is to ensure the safe packaging of soiled/rejected (see Appendix 2) linen at source, such that subsequent handling by other groups of staff does not put them at risk of infection.
- 1.2. The use of a colour coded bag system ensures that the various categories of linen are identifiable on arrival at the laundry, enabling, where necessary, specialised laundry procedures and/or rapid processing of selected linen types.
- 1.3. The procedure is in accordance with HSG(95)18, 'Hospital Laundry Arrangements for Used and Infected Linen', Choice Framework for Local Policy and Procedures (CFPP) 01-04: guidance about decontaminating linen used in health and social care and should be used in conjunction with the UHB NHS Foundation Trust Isolation procedure.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

The contracted service provider has a responsibility to provide adequate quantities of laundry bags to enable compliance with the procedure, to adequately decontaminate linen and launder and finish to an acceptable standard all items of linen sent to it. Laundry bags must be to the agreed colour and type as detailed in pages 5-6 of this document.

3. PROCEDURE

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be worn for handling dirty or contaminated clothing and linen.
- Soiled or fouled linen should not be held close to the chest to prevent contamination of the uniform. An apron should be worn.
- Plastic soiled linen bags should contain no extraneous material, such as sharps, paper and human tissues, present hazards or cause concern to Trust staff and laundry workers or may damage laundry equipment. Ensure that such material is removed from soiled/rejected linen and empty pockets prior to being placed into the linen bag.
- No other packaging should be used for the primary storage of soiled/rejected/ returned linen.
- All bags containing soiled or rejected linen must be securely tied by hand.
- Soiled/rejected linen must be placed directly into the appropriate plastic linen bag (see Appendix 2).

- In the event of non-availability of appropriate plastic linen bags, check ward/department linen store room and out of hours the linen buffer store. Contact the matron/clinical site manager on for the hospital if linen bags cannot be obtained. (Refer to Laundry Service Provider out-of-hours procedure, held in the on-call manager's folder).
- **Infected/infested linen which can be disinfected by laundering** should be sealed in a water soluble plastic bag being then placed into a white plastic linen bag.
- **Infected/infested personal clothing** should wherever possible be returned to relatives for washing - guidance can be obtained from the Infection Prevention & Control Team.
- If relatives are unavailable the procedure for infested linen above should be followed.
- If a senior member of staff considers it necessary to destroy clothing, consent from the relatives should be sought.

NB. The 'return to sender' service approved by Sunlight Laundry should be used for all personal clothing.

- In exceptional circumstances, infected linen may require incineration. Advice should be sought from the Infection Prevention & Control Team. The linen should be placed in a plastic bag inside an orange clinical waste bag. The outer bag should be tied off with a 'Biohazard incinerate' label. Contact the Infection Prevention & Control Team for advice when a case is suspected.

4. WARD/DEPARTMENT WASHING MACHINES

Ward or departmental washing machines are not recommended. Many domestic type washing machines are not capable of attaining satisfactory thermal disinfection temperatures as required by HSG(95)18. The purchase of machines must be avoided wherever possible - if purchase is considered the Infection Prevention & Control Team and the Estates Department must be contacted.

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING SOILED/REJECTED LINEN

TYPE OF LINEN	TYPE OF INNER BAG	TYPE OF OUTER BAG
Used/Soiled	Not normally required	White plastic bag
Heavily bloodstained	Water soluble bag	White plastic bag
Excessively wet (not infected)	Not required	White plastic bag
Patients' clothing	Not required	White plastic bag
Staff uniform – Catering	Not required	Purple plastic bag
Operating Theatres- drapes & gowns	Water soluble bag	Green plastic bag
Theatre scrub suits & canvasses	Not required	White plastic bag
Rejected linen e.g. damaged, stained (see Appendix 2)	Not required	Pink plastic bag
Infected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifiable infectious diseases) • Diarrhoea of infective cause) • Blood-borne viruses) • ACDP Hazard Group 3) Water soluble bag organism) • MRSA) • Other infections as advised by) ICT)) White plastic laundry bag
Infestation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital linen • Patients' clothing (see policy) 	Water soluble bag Water soluble bag	White plastic laundry bag White plastic laundry bag - use 'Return to sender' service

Note: If spillage of cytotoxic drugs occurs onto any linen, treat as infected linen