


POLICY DOCUMENT

Policy Title:	Laundry Policy
Policy Group:	Housekeeping
Policy Owner:	General Manager
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Author:	J Speed
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Evidence:	
How implementation will be monitored:	Routine audit by General Manager User feedback
Sanctions to apply for breach:	Retraining and disciplinary action if required
Computer File Ref.	O:new policy book: housekeeping
Policy Accepted by MT	19 th May 2021
Sign-off by CEO	

1. Statement of purpose:

This Policy describes the extent of the service to be provided by the Laundry, records the main operating risks and the measures to be taken to manage those risks for the benefit of patients, staff, visitors and contractors.

2. Policy Statement:

The Laundry provides a reliable, cost-effective service to the hospital maintaining a supply of clean bed linen and a personal laundry service for all resident patients.

3. Choice of In-house or External Contractor

The Hospital has an in-house laundry equipped with washers, driers, press and ironer so as to be able to process all laundry on-site. This is considered to be the most cost-effective, secure and safe means, taking account of such issues as reliability, quality control, cross-infection risks, and required stock-levels.

Items that require specialist cleaning such as curtains are sent out to a specialist cleaning company. The Hospital will maintain a working arrangement with an external contractor to ensure an effective service for items regularly needing such attention and to provide a back-up resource in the event of difficulties in maintaining the in-house service.

4. Risk Management

The risks associated with the Hospital service are assessed as follows:

Hazard	Measures to manage risk	Person responsible	Residual risk assessment
No staff available to operate machinery	Many members of Housekeeping Dept trained in use of equipment	General Manager	Low
Machinery breakdown	There are 2 washing machines and driers. All equipment regularly serviced under contract	General Manager	Low
Infection in Hospital being transmitted via laundry	Washing machines operate on a medical sluice this ensures that the required temperature is reached on all washes Colour coding system is used to ensure contaminated linen is kept separate from other laundry	General Manager	Low
Not enough clean linen is available to meet demands	There are adequate stocks of linen held in stock to ensure there is always enough clean linen. The laundry operates at weekend to ensure that back logs do not occur. An emergency supply of clean linen is held should a situation arise when higher than usual demands are made on the department (for example – epidemic of D&V)	General Manager	Low

5. Choice of Bed linen

The hospital has chosen to use 'sleepknit' bed linen in all patient rooms in order to provide the most suitable bed linen for the patient group. This decision was taken because this type of bed linen is washable at much higher temperatures making it better from an infection control point of view. The bed linen is made of a material that is knitted so it fits closely over the mattresses, allows for the profiling beds to be moved to any position without moving. It is soft to the touch and is less likely to cause pressure ulcers in patients, as it does not crease.

6. Arrangements for Monitoring Compliance

A bi-annual audit of the policy and procedures will be conducted by the General Manager.

7. Review

This policy has been reviewed for adverse impact on people with protected characteristics within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 and no such impact was found.

Procedures:**Operating Details**

Security. The Laundry is to be locked outside normal working hours. The outer room is kept open for receiving bags of soiled articles. Only authorised personnel are permitted in the laundry.

Staffing: All housekeeping staff are trained in the operation of the laundry equipment and the laundry will be staffed from 8am until 16.00 Monday to Friday and from 8-1 on weekends and bank holidays.

The Housekeeping team leader will ensure that there is adequate cover assigned to the laundry and will assist the staff as required.

Personal hygiene

To maintain hygiene at the appropriate level, laundry staff

- must wash their hands:
- when entering or leaving the laundry
- after removing gloves after cleaning
- after handling used, infected or fouled laundry
- before handling clean laundry (wet or dry)
- before taking a break

Protective clothing and equipment

When working in the laundry, the correct clothing and equipment must be used at all times. Rubber gloves, and any other PPE indicated by product labels, must be worn when sorting laundry, cleaning the premises and handling chemicals.

Disposable gloves and aprons must always be worn when handling items contaminated with anybody spillage.

Eye protection must be worn when dispensing chemicals and changing the auto-dosing containers.

Face masks must be worn when cleaning the lint screen on tumble dryers and for any chemicals that give a warning on the label.

Staff handling of dirty linen

Linen should be carefully removed from a patient's bed and placed in an appropriate container according to the segregation category. Any linen or personal clothing should also be carefully removed and placed in the designated bag, not placed on the floor.

All dirty linen must be handled with care, to minimise transmission of microorganisms via dust and skin scales.

When handling dirty laundry, soiled or fouled linen, it should not be held close to the chest as this could potentially contaminate the employee's uniform (an apron should be worn).

Plastic disposable aprons must be worn when there is potential for contamination of the clothing, i.e. when loading washing machine, handling of dirty linen.

Any segregation required prior to washing should be carried out before transport to the laundry area; this removes the need for additional handling within the laundry. Staff members

should never empty bags of linen onto the floor to sort the linen into categories – this presents an unnecessary risk of infection.

Dirty linen must never be transported around the care environment unless within a linen bag and appropriately labelled.

Hands must be washed immediately following the handling of any dirty linen. If linen is soiled with blood or body fluids, or from an infected Patient, disposable gloves must be worn.

Care must be taken to remove any non-laundry items from dirty linen before it is placed in washing machine. These can cause injuries to staff handling the laundry, and may also damage laundry equipment.

To avoid spillage of dirty linen, linen bags must never be more than two thirds full, and must be securely tied with a knot prior to transport to the laundry and appropriately laundry bag.

Bins or trolleys used for the transportation of dirty linen must be easy to clean, and must never be used to transport clean linen.

Categorisation and Segregation of Linen

It is the responsibility of the person disposing of the linen to ensure that it is segregated appropriately. All linen can be categorised into the following three groups:

- a) Clean or unused linen
- b) Soiled or infected linen
- c) Dirty or used linen

Any linen that has not been used since it was last laundered.

All clean linen must be stored off the floor in a clean, closed cupboard, and must be segregated from used / soiled linen. Linen cupboard doors must be kept closed to prevent airborne contamination. Linen must not be stored within the sluice or bathroom.

If taken into a room and not used, linen must then be laundered before use.

Clean linen must be in a good state of repair, as tearing or roughness can damage the patient's skin. The condition of linen in use should be monitored by the laundry staff.

Any used linen which is soiled with blood or any other body fluid.

The above categorisation includes all linen used by a Patient with a known infection (whether soiled or not).

All soiled / infected linen must be placed in a red safetex laundry bag or soluble bag. The soluble bag must be placed directly into the washing machine to minimise contact and prevent transmission of infection to laundry staff or contamination of the environment.

All used linen other than that listed above.

All linen that falls within this category must be placed within a clear plastic or laundry bag.

This system of categorisation applies whether the items are being laundered on-site or by the laundry contractor.

Bags of dirty / used or soiled / infected linen must be stored in a secure area, away from public access, whilst awaiting collection.

Mobile trolley or laundry ring.

All laundry must be sorted at source in the bedroom, bathroom, toilets, etc. A mobile laundry bag trolley is to be used. The trolley is taken to the source of the laundry. Bags are sorted as follows:

- Red bag - for all reusable self-opening bags and red dissolve sacks
- Green bag – for wet/dry towels, flannels, all used dry bedding and personal clothing for St Anthony.
- Blue bag – for wet/dry towels, flannels all used dry bedding and for personal clothing for St Mary.
- Net sacks – tights and bras
- Clean reusable self-opening bags and all the laundry bags are kept in sluice room.

In house laundry service

- There is a supply of clean linen laundered and stored in such a way as to avoid contamination.
- Stocks are rotated on a first in, first out basis and a linen inventory is kept.
- Soiled linen is put into the red safetex bags and not handled directly by those working in the laundry
- Clean linen and soiled linen are transported and kept separately.
- Soiled linen from infectious patients is clearly identified and suitable precautions are taken for its processing.
- Heavily soiled items should also have a pre-wash/sluice cycle selected.
- A personalised laundry service for patients is operated at the patient's request. The following guidelines apply:

“We suggest that you bring easy-care clothing clearly marked with your name. The on-site laundry offers a service for patients' clothing but we cannot guarantee results. Please do not allow delicate or special clothing to be sent to the Laundry.”
(Patients' Guide, “Welcome”)
- All patient owned items are labelled on admission.
- The Laundry will keep washing from each ward/department separate to make sorting and returning to the correct location easier.

- All cloths and mops used by the housekeepers are washed on a hot wash and stored correctly
- The Kitchen cloths and tea towels are washed separately and returned at the end of the day

The enhanced process

The enhanced process should be used when triggers are identified relating to the possibility of infectious linen or clothing being generated. Example triggers include:

- Unexplained diarrhoea and vomiting;
- confirmed infection;
- Unexplained rashes;
- confirmed cases of scabies/lice;
- Unexplained fever.
- The enhanced process should be performed in a machine as for the standard process, but using a cycle with a minimum temperature of 60°C, or the highest temperature suitable for heat-sensitive items.
- To achieve the best practice requirements all enhanced processes should use a washing cycle that has either:
 - A thermal disinfection cycle that reaches 71°C for at least three minutes or 65°C for at least ten minutes; or a chemical disinfection process that satisfies the requirements. (both options are available)

Staff assigned to the laundry will be responsible:

- For collecting laundry from wards throughout the day
- Washing and drying all laundry. Carrying out stain removal as required.
- Ironing patient clothes and making minor repairs as required to seams and replacing buttons etc.
- Ironing Duvet covers and sheets as required (sleep knit bedding cannot be ironed so must be carefully folded)
- Sorting clean patient laundry and returning to patient rooms for nursing staff to put away.
- Washing and ironing items brought over from Marie Therese House
- Washing towels and gowns from Hydrotherapy and returning to the department
- Washing towels, pillow cases and other linen from physiotherapy departments (inpatients and out patients) and returning to the department when clean and dry
- Washing linen from nurse's home on pre-arranged day and returning to the linen store when clean and dry
- Arranging with ward staff for the regular rotation of curtains to ensure that all curtains are cleaned on a three monthly basis

- Marking up any new clothes or linen within 24 hours of them being brought to the laundry.

Laundry services carried out by contractors

Items that require specialist cleaning are sent out to a contractor. Items usually cleaned in this way are bed linen, table cloths and “dry clean only” items of patients’ clothing.

To ensure correct operation of washing machines

- Check maximum load/weight control –
 - Do not under or overload the machine
 - Ideally the machine should be two thirds full
- Check for “foreign objects”
- Check correct operation of controls
- Check Emergency disconnection of gas supplies
- Electrical disconnection
- Cleaning filters in tumble drier. Turn off main electrical supply to machines

Tumble Dryer

All items should then enter a drying process (when the item is compatible). Once removed, they should be stored in a clean area above floor level and not be kept in the laundry area.

- When using a tumble dryer, it must never be opened and/or unloaded without completing a cool down, this is a major cause of fabric damage or creasing by rapid cooling and heating process.
- Always set time and temperature
- Always remove items from tumble dryer at the end of the cycle (danger of fire/creasing)
- Fold items immediately
- Never leave items in basket (spontaneous combustion/creasing)
- Turn off at the wall at the end of the day
- Never put items on top or sides
- Do not leave running and unattended for long period
- Clean filter with a soft brush at least once daily (wear the PPE mask).
- Daily wipe top, sides and door with R3 Universal cleaner and a yellow cloth
- Weekly vacuum the lint screen and drum carefully using the soft brush attachment on the hose

Blanca press

- Only trained staff should use the Blanca Press.
- It must be switched off between uses.
- Display a ‘hot surface’ sign where machine is left unattended and still hot.
- At the end of the day, ensure the press is turned off and the thermostat is set to ‘0’.
- Change the cover weekly and wash at 65c.
- Clean the sole plate weekly.

Hot iron and Ironing board

- Do a visual electrical check before use

- Store a hot iron safely while it cools
- Don't leave unattended and still turned on
- Display a 'hot surface' sign as necessary
- Clean regularly
- Boards – ensure the covers are fitted correctly

Cleaning of the Laundry and equipment

It is most important that the laundry is maintained in a clean condition at all times. The staff designated to work in the laundry are responsible for daily cleaning as follows:

Daily cleaning tasks

Use a yellow cloth

- clean all sinks and draining boards with R 3 universal cleaner
- clean dirt and debris from all surfaces
- Empty waste bins, replace bin liners.

Daily disinfection

- work surfaces, sinks, taps, trolley, tops of washing machines and door handles
- use R 3 universal cleaner solution
- wash laundry bags on a thermal disinfection programme
- Daily clean the machine using R 3 Universal cleaner and a yellow cloth
- vacuum or sweep floor
- mop using a green mop and bucket
- use Universal solution
- display the caution sign
- Turn the machine off at the wall at the end of the day

Washing machines in use to be cleaned once daily

The Head Housekeeper is responsible for assigning staff to carry out weekly and monthly cleaning as follows:

Weekly

- Floor to be scrubbed
- Damp dust all other surfaces within standing height
- Vacuum behind machinery
- Run the machine empty on the hottest wash with no detergent
- Vacuum vents.
- Powder/softener inlet on machine to be washed out-once weekly and left to dry to prevent mould growth.

Monthly

- All items stored in Laundry to be reviewed and surplus or unwanted items brought to attention of General Manager.
- Use a long handled duster to clean high level pipes
- clean behind equipment
- remove cobwebs
- clean internal glass

Maintenance

There is a cycle of Planned Maintenance. Staff working in the Laundry are required to co-operate fully with maintenance staff to maintain the programme. Any defects in the

equipment must be reported on a Maintenance Requisition slip. Urgent problems may be reported by telephone initially. Laundry staff must be attentive to signs of a defect developing and may not undertake any maintenance work themselves.

Purchases

Supplies of washing powder etc. should be obtained through stores. The Housekeeping Team Leader is responsible for maintaining stocks of these supplies and will prepare orders for signature by the Chief Executive Finance Manager using nominated suppliers and approved products.

Health & Safety

The Health and Safety Policy must be fully implemented at all times. The following points are particularly relevant to the Laundry.

Risk of Infection

A colour coding system is in use and this should enable any infected article to be clearly identified. The colours used are:

Red	all infected or heavily soiled items
Green	all bed linen and towels & Patients clothing
Yellow	White sheets

Staff must wear gloves and aprons when handling infected linen. This and any soiled items should be run through the "sluice" cycle on the machine before being washed in the normal way. All staff are advised to have immunisation for Hepatitis B.

Risk of Scalding:

There is always the possibility of scalding particularly in using the rotary ironer. All staff must receive instruction before using the equipment.

Risks from Lifting:

It should not normally be necessary to handle heavy loads. All staff should be trained in correct technique.

COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health):

All items must be clearly labelled and whenever possible, kept in the suppliers' original packaging. Product data sheets are kept by the General Manager to provide information on all hazardous substances in use in the Laundry.

Fire Safety:

The Laundry is considered to be a high fire risk area. Special care must be taken to guard against fire. Regular cleaning to prevent a build-up of lint is essential. All staff must be familiar with the Fire Policy. It is recommended that machinery is switched off immediately the Fire Alarms sound (except Thursday testing).