

# LRI Children's Hospital

## Using the Washing Machine for the Children's Wards

Staff relevant to:	Registered Nurses, Health Care Assistants, Housekeepers & Nurse Associates
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Written by:	J Wilson, J Burgess & M Hull
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### **1. Introduction and who this SOP applies to**

The purpose of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to ensure that all staff within the designated Children's Wards are aware of the correct process for washing baby clothes and linen using the washing machine situated on Level 0, Jarvis Building, LRI (001 05 91 025). The objective of the SOP is to outline the roles and responsibilities expected of all staff when using the washing machine and putting clothes and linen away. The SOP will be widely disseminated and readily accessible. The SOP applies to all members of staff within UHL who are involved in the processes of using the washing machine and putting linen and clothing away. The methods outlined in the SOP should be used at all times.

For the purposes of this SOP, the definition of linen does not include standard hospital sheets, pillow cases and blankets that are included in the commercial hire contract. This SOP includes the clinical areas own bed and cot sheets, blankets, pillow cases, duvets and duvet covers and baby clothes. All items should be suitable for high temperature cleaning and disinfection and tumble drying.

**Related Documents:**

[Infection Prevention UHL Policy](#)

[Hospital Linen - Infection Prevention UHL Policy](#)

## **2. Guideline Standards and Procedures**

### **Definitions:**

- **USED LINEN:** Linen which is not from a patient in source isolation and is not visibly soiled.
- **LIGHTLY SOILED LINEN:** Linen soiled with blood and/or bodily fluids.
- **INFECTED AND HEAVILY SOILED LINEN:** Linen from an inpatient in source isolation or which is heavily soiled with blood or bodily fluids.

### **Environment:**

The washing machine environment should ensure safe systems of work are in place to offer protection to staff against exposure to infectious linen to a level that is as low as reasonably practicable.

The environment in which the linen is being laundered should be such as to minimise the risk of recontamination of decontaminated linen.

Decontaminated linen should be stored in such a way as to avoid microbiological recontamination as far as is reasonable practicable.

The environment should be subject to a (weekly) clean by domestic services. We will need to monitor to see if this is enough it may get dusty more frequently with the tumble dryer.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) gloves and aprons, hand washing and drying facilities and Clinell Wipes should be available for use at all times.

### **General Principles:**

This SOP seeks to standardise practice and ensure that correct Infection Prevention practices are adhered to at all times when handling linen and operating the washing machine.

### **Procedures:**

1. All dirty linen baskets/bags must be on the dirty side of the room until ready to be loaded into the washing machine. No dirty linen should be stored in the room.
2. A disposable apron and gloves must be worn when handling all dirty linen.
3. Used Linen – Must be placed directly into the white polythene laundry bag ensuring the bag is only  $\frac{3}{4}$  full and securely fastened by knotting the bag to prevent spillage before leaving the clinical area.
4. Lightly Soiled Linen - Must be placed directly into the white polythene laundry bag ensuring the bag is only  $\frac{3}{4}$  full and securely fastened by knotting the bag to prevent spillage before leaving the clinical area.
5. Infected & Heavily Soiled Linen – Must be placed into a red water-soluble bag which is securely tied using the tear off strip (attached to the bag). This should then be placed directly into the white polythene laundry bag ensuring the bag is only  $\frac{3}{4}$  full and securely fastened by knotting the bag to prevent spillage

- before leaving the clinical area. The red water-soluble bag should be removed from the white bag and placed directly in the washing machine.
6. All baby linen should be washed separately to adult linen – this includes any sheets or blankets in addition to baby clothes.
  7. All dirty linen or baby clothes should be loaded immediately into the washing machine and not stored in the room.
  8. Use the footstep provided if required to access the detergent drawers. Check that the step is in a good condition and placed firmly on the floor ensuring the floor is free from hazards and water.
  9. Washing powder pods should be placed into the drum of the machine. 1 pod for Used/lightly soiled linen and 2 pods for infected & heavily soiled linen
  10. Turn the washing machine on and select a wash cycle with a temperature of no less than 65 degrees. This programme is to be used for all washing regardless of the fabric type.
  11. Wipe down the outside of the machine with Clinell Wipes in preparation for removing the clean linen from the washing machine to prevent any cross-contamination.
  12. Remove gloves and apron as per Infection Prevention guidance and dispose of in a clinical waste bin. Wash hands at the hand washing sink and dry thoroughly.
  13. Complete the washing machine log (to ensure that the correct process has been followed and to identify the clinical area currently using the machine).
  14. White plastic linen bag used for dirty washing to be disposed of in clinical wash bin..
  15. When the washing machine has finished, prepare by cleaning the washing basket provided with Clinell Wipes and also wiping down the outside of the tumble dryer with Clinell Wipes before use.
  16. Wearing disposable gloves and apron, empty the filter from the tumble dryer before use. Dispose of waste from the filter and gloves and apron into the clinical waste bin.
  17. Wash hands and put on a disposable apron and gloves before handling any clean laundry.
  18. Remove the clean linen from the washing machine and put into the clean washing basket.
  19. Load the linen straight into the tumble dryer.
  20. Prepare for unloading the tumble dryer by wiping a washing basket with a Clinell Wipe
  21. When the tumble dryer has finished, the linen can then be removed and placed into the washing basket.
  22. The washing basket must be wiped down with a Clinell wipe and a green sticker 'I am clean' placed onto it. The washing basket should not be removed from the room.
  23. The clean linen must be taken immediately in a clean white plastic linen to the appropriate storage area within the Clinical area.

## **Governance & Monitoring**

Any health and safety concerns or incidents should be recorded as a Datix. The washing machine will have a service contract to ensure regular maintenance and upkeep of the machine.

Datix investigations will be carried out by the Senior Nurse team and learning and a procedural review will take place and be widely disseminated through written and electronic communication, QUICKA/EQUIP meetings and updates.

The environment will be subject to a cleaning audit as part of the cleaning schedule. The SOP will be reviewed every 3 years unless a procedural review is required sooner due to changes in practice. Any changes in practice which require amendments to the SOP must be forwarded in writing to the SOP administrator for the SOP sub-group lead to authorise the review.

Documentation:

The washing machine log needs to be completed every time the washing machine is used. A copy of the log can be seen in the appendix.

### **3. Education and Training**

Staff will be trained in how to operate the machines. A nominated person on each clinical area will cascade train staff who are required to operate the washing machines.

A training log to be kept.

- Staff to ensure they undertake the yearly Infection Prevention eLearning module.
- Training and education in the processes of pathogen control, disinfection and hygiene (including hand hygiene), exposure to blood borne viruses, health and safety and infection risk reduction (including waste disposal) should be part of staff induction programmes.
- As part of the induction process this procedure will be fully explained to new members of staff (where relevant).
- Any changes to the SOP will be widely communicated to relevant staff by the sub group lead.

### **4. Monitoring Compliance**

None

### **5. Supporting References**

Department of Health: Health Technical Memorandum 01-04: Decontamination of Linen for Health & Social Care. March 2016  
UHL Hospital Linen Infection Prevention Principles  
UHL Infection Prevention Control Policy  
UHL Healthcare Environment Cleaning Policy  
Health and Social Care Act (2008)

### **6. Key Words**

**Contaminated, De-contaminated, Infection prevention, Linen, Soiled**

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The Trust recognises the diversity of the local community it serves. Our aim therefore is to provide a safe environment free from discrimination and treat all individuals fairly with dignity and appropriately according to their needs. As part of its development, this policy and its impact on equality have been reviewed and no detriment was identified.

<b>Contact and review details</b>	
<b>Guideline Lead (Name and Title)</b> J Wilson - Matron	<b>Executive Lead</b> Chief Nurse
<b>Details of Changes made during review:</b> New	