Linen Services and Patients’ Personal Clothing

Reference Number:
NHSCT/09/178

Target audience:
This policy is directed to all staff within the Mental Health Directorate.

Sources of advice in relation to this document:
Deirdre Lewis, Nursing Services Manager
Clare Medland, Community Domestic & Portering Manager

Replaces (if appropriate):
Legacy Linen Services and Patients’ Personal Clothing (GEN 05/07)

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Approved by:
Oscar Donnelly, Director of Mental Health & Disability Services

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(Replaced Staffnet Oct 12 due to minor changes)

NHSCT Mission Statement
To provide for all the quality of services we would expect for our families and ourselves
Mental Health and Disability Services

Operational Policy

Linen Services and Patients’ Personal Clothing

Reviewed September 2012
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Linen Services and Patients’ Personal Clothing

This policy to be read in conjunction with ‘Choice Framework for Local Policy and Procedures 01-04-Decontamination of Linen for Health and Social Care: Social Care Manual’.

Target Audience

This policy is directed to all staff within the Mental Health Directorate.

1.0 Personal Clothing

- In most circumstances patients’ personal clothing will be sent home with relatives to be laundered by them.

- Where a patient is suffering from MRSA their clothing should be put in a sealed polythene bag and given to relatives – the attached guidance notes may assist relatives in the safe laundering of such clothing.

- Patients who are able may take personal responsibility for laundering their own clothing on the ward based laundrettes. It should be noted that the Trust accepts no responsibility for any damage done to such laundry.

- Where patients have no relative willing or able to launder clothing at home such clothing will be laundered in ward base/hospital laundrettes.

- Ward Managers hold “Guidance on the patients’ personal clothing service” (Appendix 1).

- Ward Managers also hold copies of “Guidance for Relatives/Carers” (Appendix 2), “Disclaimer Notice” (Appendix 3) and “Information Booklets” (Appendix 4), for distribution to patients, relatives/carers.

2.0 Laundering of Patients’ Personal Clothing on Site

- The aim of ward based laundrettes is to provide a high quality laundry service for patients personal clothing only.

- All garments suitable for laundering will be processed at ward level.

- All patients’ garments unsuitable for laundering will be sent to a commercial laundry for dry cleaning, when there is sufficient demand. Collection on Mondays, with a seven day turn round time. Please contact Domestic Services Department if this service is required.
• Any garments classified as infected should be bagged according to the “Policy for Soiled Linen Disposal”.

• Problems regarding ward base/hospital laundrettes e.g. accidental damage to personal clothing should be discussed with the Community Services Manager in the first instance.

• **N.B. No items of personal clothing should be sent to the Northern Linen Services, Route Hospital Laundry. This includes personal laundry from patients suffering from MRSA, as such clothing will receive the recommended Thermal Disinfection Treatment which is likely to cause shrinkage or other damage.**

• No items of standard/non-standard linen can be processed in the ward based laundrettes

### 2.1 Standard/Non-Standard Linen

• All other linen i.e. sheets, draw sheets, pillowcases, blankets, duvets, towels, laundry bags, curtains, screens, patients’ lifting slings and nursing uniforms are laundered by:

Northern Linen Services, Route Hospital, Ballymoney
Phone: 028 2766 1296
Fax: 028 2766 1286

**Hours of Operation**

8.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. (Monday – Thursday)
8.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. (Friday)
(Closed from 1.00 p.m. – 1.30 p.m. for lunch Monday – Friday)

Northern Linen Services Manager – Mr. T. Nelson

### 2.2 Quality Control

• A “standard of finish specification” outlines the requirements in terms of staining, creasing, wrinkling, residual dampness, repairs, linting, handle and finished appearance.

• In addition to the above specification, tests are carried out to ensure that thermal disinfection is achieved in the wash process in accordance with Department of Health requirements.

### 2.3 Standard/Non-Standard Linens

• The contract requires the Linen Services Department to provide and maintain a stock of “standard” items as follows: - sheets, draw sheets,
pillowcases, blankets, towels and laundry bags. All other items are considered as “non-standard” and should be purchased by the ward/user.

2.4 Delivery / Turn-Round Times

- Frequency of deliveries for standard linen is negotiable between users and the Linen Services Department. Turn round times are specified in the contract, but in general the target is 3 working days.

2.5 Complaints/Queries

- In the first instance complaints/queries regarding standard linen should be addressed to the Laundry Supervisor at Northern Linen Services. In the event of a problem recurring, or being of a serious nature, the Linen Services Manager should be contacted. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be found, reference should be made to Assistant Director Mental Health (Clinical & Support Services).

2.6 Soiled Linen Handling

- The “Northern Linen Services Policy for Soiled Linen Disposal” 3rd Edition printed in 1998 (attached with this procedure) outlines the requirements for the safe handling and transportation of soiled linen.

2.7 Documentation

- Each delivery of linen is accompanied by a delivery note which provides a record of articles received. Quantities received will be checked against the delivery note and the note signed by the Domestic Services Department staff.

3.0 Home Laundering of MRSA Patients’ Linen

   Guidance Notes for Relatives

- Personal clothing may be safely laundered by relatives at home but the following precautions should be taken.

- Used clothing should be transported from hospital to home in a sealed polythene bag.

- Clothing from the patient should be kept separate and washed separately.
• Normal wash programmes should be used i.e. garments should be washed at as high a temperature as is recommended on the care label.

• A separate towel and wash cloth should be kept for use by the patient.

• Non-washable clothes should be avoided. However if they are unavoidable they should be dry-cleaned as often as possible and at the end of treatment.

• All garments should be changed and washed as often as is practical.

• Regular hand-washing when handling patients clothing is vital.

4.0 Policy Team

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Miss Clare Medland</td>
<td>Community Domestic Services Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs Deirdre Lewis</td>
<td>Nursing Services Manager</td>
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5.0 Equality, Human Rights and DDA

This policy has been drawn up and reviewed in the light of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) which requires the Trust to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity. It has been screened to identify any adverse impact on the 9 equality categories and no significant differential impacts were identified, therefore, an Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

6.0 Alternative Formats

This document can be made available on request on disc, larger font, Braille, audio-cassette and in other minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.

7.0 Sources of Advice in relation to this document

The Policy Author, responsible Assistant Director or Director as detailed on the policy title page should be contacted with regard to any queries on the content of this policy.
8.0 Date Policy Agreed: 28 July 2009

Policy accepted and agreed by:

Signature of Director of Mental Health Services: Mr Oscar Donnelly
Date: 28 July 2009

Signature of Clinical Director: Dr G Lynch
Date: 31 July 2009
Appendix 1

Patients’ Personal Laundry Service

Ward Managers Guidance

The following are the guidelines regarding patient’s personal clothing.

1. Patients personal items of clothing will normally be sent home with the relative/carer.

2. Patients personal items of clothing which are MRSA infected will be placed in a sealed bag and returned to the relative/carer. (Guidance notes for home laundering are available).

3. Any items that cannot be laundered by the relative/carer, if suitable, will be processed in the ward/hospital launderettes.

4. Items of clothing processed in the ward/hospital launderettes will be finished to the highest quality finish and should be returned to the patient within 3 working days.

5. Where a garment has been identified as having specialist cleaning Requirements, i.e. "hand wash only" or "dry clean only", the relative/carer should be informed and a disclaimer notice completed by the relative/carer.

6. Any item of clothing purchased by the Ward Manager for patients should be suitable for machine washing.

The relative/carer will have responsibility for the decision in respect of the cleaning process. **The trust cannot accept any liability in this respect.**

If the relative/carer wishes the garment to be cleaned within the normal laundry process, then the relative/carer will, as a result, accept all responsibility for the outcome.
Patients’ Personal Laundry Service
Guidance for Relatives/Carers

Normally patients’ personal items of clothing are sent home with relative/carer.

If items of clothing are MRSA infected, these will also be placed in a sealed bag and returned to the relative/carer. Guidance on the home laundering of MRSA infected clothing is available at ward level.

When the relative/carer is unable to launder personal clothing then these will be laundered in one of the launderettes located in Holywell Hospital and returned to the patient within three working days.

Every effort will be made to make sure that items of clothing are returned without damage. However, the Trust cannot accept liability for articles of clothing with specialized cleaning requirements or for the natural wear and tear of clothing through persistent laundering.

Where a garment has been identified as having specialist cleaning requirements for example "dry clean only", "hand wash only" or any other special instructions which is outside the Trust's laundry finishing guidelines, the nursing staff will inform the patient's relative/carer.

The relative/carer will have responsibility for the decision in respect of the laundering process.

Please provide garments which are:

1. Clearly labeled with the patient's name.
2. Suitable for machine washing (according to the textile care label inside the garment).
Appendix 3

Disclaimer Notice

Holywell Hospital, Antrim

Patient’s Name: ________________  Ward: ________________

I confirm that the decision to send the items of clothing belonging to:  
__________________________ to ____________________ has been made by me and I accept that the Trust will not be liable for any damage to, or loss to these items during laundering.

1 _____________________________________________  
2 _____________________________________________  
3 _____________________________________________  
4 _____________________________________________  

Signed: _____________________________________________

Relative / Carer

Date: __________________________