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1. Christmas Decorations in Clinical Areas

The purpose of this guidance is to enable staff, patients and visitors to enjoy the festive spirit without compromising Patient Safety, the following guidelines have been developed for adoption across BGH and P&CS.

- All Christmas decorations must be Fire Retardant
- Decorations should be limited to one single area on wards to ensure effective cleaning regimes can be maintained
- Decorations attract dust so they shouldn't be suspended from walls and ceilings (Decorations stuck/adhered to walls or ceilings can also leave a residue when the item is removed which compromises cleanliness)
- Decorations must not be placed in any area where clinical procedures take place e.g. bed rooms on wards. Decorations can be displayed in corridors.
- The use of spray-on fake snow is not appropriate
- It is appreciated that Christmas trees cannot be cleaned therefore they must be replaced at least every five years and following an outbreak.
- All other decorations including lights must be able to be cleaned annually with a damp cloth and detergent.
- Should an infection such as Norovirus occur in an area when Christmas decorations are on display, then the Christmas decorations must be disposed of through the appropriate waste stream with the exception of lights which must be cleaned with a damp cloth and detergent
- Christmas tree lights must be checked by Estates before use and as with all other decorations not stuck/adhered to walls or ceilings.
- Hampers for raffles are acceptable where the items are appropriately packed.

2. Management of Flowers in Clinical Areas

This guidance is relevant to staff with responsibilities for clinical areas and volunteers with designated responsibility for flower management.

Senior Charge Nurses should ensure the guidance is followed by all relevant staff or volunteers.

Process for flower management

The following process should be in place in all clinical areas displaying flowers:

- Daily - clean vase and clean water.

Exclusions

Flowers are not permitted in the following high risk areas:

- ITU
- SCBU
- Renal Dialysis

Senior Charge Nurses have the discretion to prohibit flowers from all or part of their clinical area after recognising the associated risks (slips, trips, falls, broken glass, allergies and infection to immunocompromised patients)

Exclusion Process

- Senior Charge Nurse to complete risk assessment
- Senior Charge Nurse to notify Operational and Service Manager of their decision to prohibit flowers
- Service Manager to consider communication requirements relevant to the decision to prohibit flowers within the specific location e.g. RVS, Communications Team.

3. Patient Pamper Sessions

Volunteers should never provide treatments to patients from closed bays or wards. The volunteer is advised to check the infection status of patients with a trained member of staff and not carry out any treatments on infective patients or patients with broken skin areas.

Disposable basins are available from ward supplies and should be used if required. Towels are also available and should be placed in the used linen buggy in the ward at the end of each treatment.

Standard infection control precautions and hand hygiene procedures must be adhered to at all times as per the [National Infection Prevention and Control Manual](#).

4. Use of Handheld Devices in Clinical Areas

This guideline covers the process to be followed by clinicians to ensure infection control measures are being observed when passing handheld devices between nurses and patients in the Clinical environment.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the clinician to clean the device to minimise the risk of infection being transferred.

If the device has been passed to other staff or patients:

- The device, screen and cover should be thoroughly cleaned by the clinician using detergent wipes
- The device, screen and cover should then be dried with a paper towel.

Device **should not** be taken into isolation rooms or bays that are closed due to infection.

5. Use of Fans in Clinical Areas

The Infection Prevention and Control Team do not advocate the general use of fans in clinical areas due to the risk of circulation and spread of pathogens.

However, we recognise that our hospitals do not currently have effective air cooling systems so the decision to use fans should be informed by the balance of risk.

The following guidelines have been developed to safely support a comfortable environment for patients and staff during the summer months:

DO

- **Do take account of individual patient risk factors when thinking about where to locate a fan.** For example, avoid locating a fan next to a patient with an alert organism such as MRSA, *clostridium difficile*, or with an active skin condition such as psoriasis.
- **Do take account of wider health and safety risks.** For example, avoid trailing cables creating a trip risk or overloading electrical sockets creating a fire risk.
- **Do ensure that any fans in use are kept clean.** Contact estates if the internal parts need cleaning including fan blades.

DON'T

- **Don't use bladeless fans (e.g. Dyson) in clinical areas.** These types of fans have been associated with outbreaks.
- **Don't use fans in drug preparation rooms.** These areas are used for preparations that ultimately enter a patient's blood stream.
- **Don't place a fan outside an isolation room door**
- **Don't forget that isolation room doors should be kept shut.** However, this does mean that a fan could be located within an isolation room providing the door remains shut.

Cleaning

It is a nursing responsibility to clean the external surface of fans. For routine cleaning a detergent wipe should be used.

If the fan has been in an infected area, (i.e. isolation room or infected/closed bay) Tristel Fuse should be used to decontaminate the surface. The fan should be unplugged or switched off at the mains while being cleaned and excessive moisture around the buttons must be avoided as this could affect the electrical components within.

6. Books and Magazines in Patient Waiting Areas

Magazines and books provide a useful distraction for members of public in waiting areas and do not pose a significant infection risk. However, they do clutter surfaces and therefore impede cleaning.

General guidance is therefore required for patient waiting areas across NHS Borders.

The following points provide broad principles on this issue:-

- 1) Magazines and books clutter surfaces impeding cleaning so the number of magazines in waiting areas should be limited to around 10 and books limited to around 20.
- 2) Books and magazines can rapidly become tatty so should be regularly checked (added to monthly cleaning schedule) with any damaged, dirty or badly out of date material disposed of in general waste/recycling.

A periodic purge of magazines and books also provides an opportunity to remove any with potentially offensive content.