



## **Curtains, Carpets and Hand Washing Signs**

**Contracts and Regulations**

## Curtains around examination couches

We have had several questions from practices about curtains around examination couches.

**Do we have to replace material curtains with paper curtains?** Answer – No

The CQC does not specifically have guidance to cover curtains in a GP practice. Practices should follow [The Health and Social Care Act 2008, Code of Practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance](#).

Within the code of practice, it states that GP practices should: *“Provide and maintain a clean and appropriate environment in managed premises that facilitates the prevention and control of infections.”* The code of practice goes on to state, *“The environmental cleaning and decontamination policy should specify how to clean all areas, fixtures and fittings.”*

These are the parts which relate to curtains. The guidance also points towards NPSA guidance on infection control which states that:

*“Curtains/blinds should be visibly clean with no blood or body substances, dust, dirt, debris, stains or spillages.”*

The guidance also states that curtains and blinds should be cleaned or changed 6 monthly.

Guidelines by the Infection Control Nurses Association state *“there should be a procedure in place for regular decontamination of curtains”*.

There is no guidance which states that a GP practice must have disposable paper curtains. During a CQC inspection, they are looking for curtains which appear visibly clean and that there is a system in place to ensure that curtains are cleaned or changed at least once every 6 months.

Simple pragmatic guidance based on the evidence is:

- if disposable curtains are used, the date should be clearly entered and they should be replaced six monthly
- if re-usable curtains used, they should be taken down and cleaned at 60 degrees at least six monthly and immediately when soiled
- they should be vacuumed weekly as part of the general cleaning schedule
- they should be well maintained, free of tears and clear of the floor.

## Guidance on carpets in GP practices

There have been a lot of questions from practices about whether surgeries can have carpets.

Carpets should not be used in treatment and minor surgery rooms. The flooring in clinical areas should be:

- seamless and smooth
- slip-resistant
- easily cleaned
- appropriately wear-resistant.

This also applies to all areas where frequent spillage is anticipated. Spillage can occur in all clinical areas, corridors and entrances.

Carpets can be used in areas where the risk of spillage is lower, such as consulting rooms, waiting area, dispensing areas and administrative/storage/meeting rooms.

Where carpets are used in a GP practice, there should be consideration to needs. This includes having appropriate maintenance and cleaning programmes in place. Carpets, including all edges and corners, should be visibly clean, with no blood and body fluids, dust, dirt, debris or spillages. Floors should have a uniform appearance and an even colour with no stains or watermarks. In the event of spillage, the practice should have the appropriate equipment and protocol in place to clean the affected area.

More information can be found in Health Building Note 00-09: Infection Control in the Built Environment - [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/170705/HBN\\_00-09\\_infection\\_control.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/170705/HBN_00-09_infection_control.pdf)

## Hand washing signs

**Do practices need to have signs to instruct people to wash hands?** Answer – No

CQC does not stipulate that there must be laminated hand washing signs at all hand basins.

Where there is no guidance from CQC, we would look towards national guidance. There is no national guidance that states hand washing signs should be in place above hand basins.

What CQC would look for in relation to hand hygiene during an inspection is that:

- there are adequate hand washing facilities available and easily accessible to all staff
- practice staff should notify the practice manager of any lack of hand hygiene products (hand gels, soap or hand towels), or obstruction of to ensure that these remain available at all times and are not obstructed by bins or equipment
- all clinical staff are trained in hand washing techniques
- the practice has thought about risks of inadequate hand hygiene and processes are in place to prevent poor hand hygiene.



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