

Fire retardant waste bins meet environmental concerns at Princess Alexandra Hospital

An audit of waste bins in use at Princess Alexandra Hospital, in Harlow, identified the need for a standard product to meet the requirements of several government guidelines, including infection control and fire and safety regulations.

Dorothy Bioletti, business and quality manager, explains: "The audit identified that some bins were not fire retardant - they were just frame style sack holders. Bins had been sourced on an ad hoc basis around the hospital and lacked consistency. We decided to standardise them so they met fire regulation standards and had the ability to improve the segregation of waste. This approach meant we also met the environmental concerns that were raised such as quiet operation for patient areas, ease of cleaning and bag removal."

HTM 83

Health Technical Memorandum 83 (1994) Fire safety in Healthcare Premises - combustible waste, General Principles section 3.12 states: "It is expected that receptacles such as imperforate non-flammable or metallic bins, both types to be supplied with well fitting lids will be provided for this purpose."

The communication and involvement of Christine Tetlow, the lead Infection control nurse, and all the ward matrons, were key in assessing the local needs of wards and



other clinical areas. Christine gave advice to ensure that the bins were cited conveniently to facilitate waste segregation, the product could be easily cleaned, and had a hands-free operation to prevent cross infection.

Dorothy explained that the next step was to select a supplier and method of implementation: "We opted for Environmental Hygiene Products (EHP), an approved NHS supplier and we already had some of the newer bins on the ward.

"Instead of the yellow body bins that we had which were quite bright we opted for white bodies with interchangeable lids. EHP handled the implementation in various stages, including coordinating production and handling the delivery to meet our schedule."

The first batch of bins arrived in June followed by a two week rolling programme of deliveries. Dorothy and her colleagues from across the site - facilities, matrons, ward staff and domestic services - ensured a smooth transition for each delivery.

The need for waste bins to ensure fire retardancy was emphasised by Tommy Hill, a trainer and technical consultant

to the Fire Protection Association, who said: "I have videos of bins being used to start fires. They're a target for the arsonist, so its essential waste bins are fire retardant.

"And the smoking ban has pushed people into little used areas where they use the bins. I will certainly be recommending Environmental Hygiene Products' bins to trusts and hospitals."

Proven

Gary Cambell, managing director of Environmental Hygiene Products, said: "Every bin we sell on the NHS Supply Chain contract is fire retardant. We have a bin at the factory that prevented a fire at a hospital - someone in A&E deliberately tried to start a fire by filling the bin with newspaper to set light to it, but the self-closing lid formed an airtight seal and extinguished the fire."

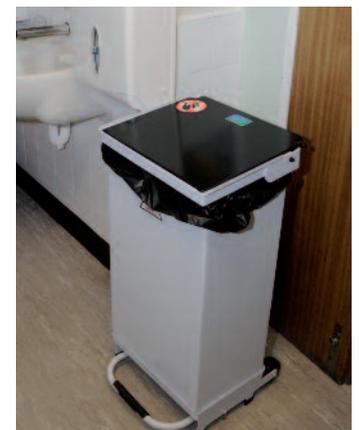
Dorothy concludes: "Standardisation across the trust is ongoing and the process makes purchasing a lot easier as we are using just one supplier. The girls at EHP were very helpful.

"The success was down to everyone working closely together as a team."

For further information, call Environmental Hygiene Products on 01862 893978 or visit www.ehpl.net



Teamwork: Princess Alexandra Hospital's business and quality manager facilities, Dorothy Bioletti (right) and infection control lead nurse Christine Tetlow



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