

<b>Fire Policy Practice Guidance Note</b>		
<b>Upholstered Furniture, Window Coverings, Plastics and Bedding flammability-V04</b>		
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<b>KEY POINTS</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Furniture, bedding and other flammable items in all workplaces and premises that admit members of the public should have a certain level of fire resistance particularly if sleeping accommodation is involved.</li> <li>• In NHS premises, particularly in areas of mental health, all bedding, upholstered furniture, curtains and seating must be fire retardant.</li> <li>• Firecode – fire safety in the NHS, Health Technical Memorandum 05-03: Operational provisions Part C: Textiles and furnishings, classifies the majority of CNTW’s patient group as “high risk” or “high hazard” and these are terms used in corresponding British Standards.</li> <li>• This guidance note describes the requirements of the Trust with regards to fire retardant materials and refers to HTM 05-03 Part C, British Standards 7176 and 7177 as the benchmark guidance level along with other relevant guidance.</li> </ul> <p>This guidance note is for the attention of all staff and particularly those responsible for the management, selection, procurement, cleaning and repair of fabrics, furniture, bedding etc.</p>		
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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The fire-resistant qualities of all furniture, wall coverings and plastics are vitally important in the continuing pursuit of safety from fire with Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) premises.
- 1.2 Notwithstanding the fact that smoking is now forbidden in most public areas and places of work, the risk of fire from smoking is still very real, as is the risk of arson from clients who have access to lighters, matches etc. The risk associated with fire can be reduced, although not eliminated, by the correct selection of furniture and textiles.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Practice Guidance Note (PGN) is to set out specific guidelines to enable the Trust to be assured that the fire resistance of textiles, bedding and upholstery is clearly understood by Trust employees.

## **2 Scope**

- 2.1 This PGN together with any associated procedures and guidance notes, shall be observed by all employees of the CNTW Group and is applicable to responsible persons and their nominated deputies. It is also to assist in the selection, purchasing and repair of items for a particular hazard area.

## **3 Statement**

- 3.1 The Trust are committed to effective management and control of fire safety in order to reduce the risks to patients, staff, visitors and members of the public.
- 3.2 The Fire Safety Advisors will actively assist all responsible persons in ensuring the fire risk assessment is carried out satisfactory manner.

## **4 Standards and General Information**

### **4.1 General Standards**

- 4.1.1 Furniture, mattresses, fabrics etc., needs to conform to the guidance given in the Health Technical Memorandum (HTM) Firecode suite of documents, in particular HTM 05-03 Part C Textiles and furnishings and the current British and European standards.
- 4.1.2 Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 the choice of performance requirements for materials is a decision to be made by the nominated responsible person accountable for the fire safety of the work area.

4.1.3 Ward & Community home managers should specify what they deem to be the risk in their ward or work area and the materials selected should reflect the possible risk. For example, if a ward has service users who have a history of trying to ignite curtains or set fire to bedding, the choice of flammability of materials requested by the ward manager should reflect this.

4.1.4 The following is an extract from HTM 05-03 Part C, which categorises the following groups as high risk / high hazard:

- The elderly
- People with learning difficulties
- Young people with disabilities
- Medium secure and secure premises for people with mental health problems.

The majority of patients cared for by CNTW are included within these categories; the standards set out in the previously stated documents and associated documents will apply.

4.1.5 The tests referred to in the British Standards (BS) and the HTM specify the length of time an item will withstand heat and flame. High hazard rated items should only smoulder or self-extinguish when the flame source is removed. Appendix lists examples of buildings and other sleeping risks and the corresponding hazard they represent as far as ignition and burning of bedding is concerned. This guidance must be used when procuring bedding.

4.1.6 Whilst British and EU standards are guidance documents, there are two items of legislation specifying flammability requirements that are demanded by UK law – The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988 and General Product Safety Regulations 2005. Organisations selling beds or mattresses in the UK must be aware of these requirements, especially if the products are sourced from outside the UK and reference must also be made to the requirements set out in HTM 05-03 Part C.

## **4.2 Specific Standards**

### **Mattresses and Bedding**

4.2.1 HTM 05-03 Part C Textiles and furnishings, includes the following tables setting out the standards for mattresses etc.

**Table 1 Mattresses, divans and bed-bases**

Medium risk		High risk	
British Standard	European Standard	British Standard	European Standard
BS 7177 Resistant to ignition source 5 in section 2 of BS 6807.	Resistant to ignition source: Smouldering cigarette of BS EN 597-1.  Resistant to ignition source: Match flame equivalent of BS EN 597-2.	BS 7177 Resistant to ignition source 7 in section 2 of BS 6807.	Resistant to ignition source: Smouldering cigarette of BS EN 597-1.  Resistant to ignition source: Match flame equivalent of BS EN 597-2.

4.2.2 The above table refers to BS 7177; this details performance standards with regard to mattresses and bedding and the level of fire retardency they are expected to conform to (see Appendix 1).

### **Upholstered Furniture**

4.2.3 HTM 05-03 Part C Textiles and furnishings, includes the following table setting out the standards for upholstered furniture etc.

**Table 2 Upholstered furniture**

Medium hazard		High hazard	
British Standard	European Standard	British Standard	European Standard
BS 7176 ignition source 0 and 5 Resistant to ignition source 5 in Part D of BS 5852.	Resistant to ignition source: Smouldering cigarette of BS EN 1021-1.  Resistant to ignition source: Match flame equivalent of BS EN 1021-2.	BS 7176 ignition source 7 Resistant to ignition source 7 in Part D of BS 5852.	Resistant to ignition source: Smouldering cigarette of BS EN 1021-1.  Resistant to ignition source: Match flame equivalent of BS EN 1021-2.

4.2.4 BS 7176 gives details of flammability testing for non-domestic furniture. Both standards use the same test ratings for particular hazard areas listed in the table below and in Appendix 1.

### **Curtains and Blinds**

4.2.5 Curtains and drapes can be considered a significant fire risk / hazard. Textile materials in the vertical orientation may burn rapidly with increasing speed as the flame spreads up and across the vertical surface.

4.2.6 Curtains and drapes should be of a “Type C” fabric in all patient accessible areas and “Type B” fabric in other areas. The items should be tested in accordance with BS 5867, which is detailed as follows:

## **Type A**

In all cases only the face of the fabric shall be tested. For combinations of curtains with linings, the face of both fabrics shall be tested.

Three specimens shall be tested in vertical direction and three in cross direction using a 10 second flame application time. In at least four specimens, no part of the lowest boundary of any flame shall reach either vertical edge nor shall the first defined marker on each of the four specimens be severed.

## **Type B**

As above but with the following requirement:

A 15 second flame application time is used. No part of the lowest boundary of any flame shall reach the top edge or either vertical edge of the sample. If all six of the samples comply with these requirements, they will be deemed to conform to the Type B requirement.

## **Type C**

This type is used to test these materials after 50 cycles of standard washing in accordance with the above standard. Eight sets of specimens are used. The test procedure for Type A shall be used.

## **Floor Coverings**

- 4.2.7 Textile floor coverings present a low risk of fire. The performance of such floor coverings is determined by EN 9239, and while such floor coverings in healthcare premises are acknowledged as being of low risk, it is still considered appropriate that they should demonstrate a degree of resistance to fire. Floor coverings should not be utilised for wall coverings as tests will not be representative of this application.

## **Plastic Furniture**

- 4.2.8 The flammability of all plastics can be divided into three general categories:

- **Highly flammable**
- **Flammable**
- **Flame retarding**

- 4.2.9 Plastic items in general use within the Trust should be Flame Retarding plastics or 'Thermosetting' plastics. These plastics will burn as long as an external flame is present, however, once the flame is removed, the plastics will self-extinguish. These plastics are the polyvinyl chloride, Teflon, nylons, polyesters, and any chlorinated plastic types. The flame retarding properties of these plastics are the result of their ability to develop a crust or oxide layer over the plastic melt which inhibits volatile gas from escaping.

4.2.10 If a plastic container or plastic furniture is required in a patient area, ensure during the purchasing process that thermosetting plastic is requested if there are concerns about fire safety

### **Blankets, sheets, towels, quilt covers**

4.2.11 These items should meet the requirements of BS 5866-4 1991, BS 5815-3 1991.

## **4.3 Labelling of items:**

4.3.1 All reputable companies will label individual items of furniture, mattresses, bedding, curtains etc. with a label denoting the ignition source rating it is resistant to, examples are in Appendix 2:

## **5 Purchasing Check-List**

5.1 If bedding or furniture is being considered for purchase the following guidance should be adhered to before purchase:

- **British and EU standards**

All items should conform to the relevant standards – BS 7176 and 7177 and/or BS EN 1021-1:2006 depending on the item to be purchased.

- **Labelling**

Beds and mattresses must be correctly labelled (as shown in Appendix 2). The label content, format and design is specified in BS 7176 and 7177. Labels should be positioned so they are easily seen and should not be capable of being removed easily.

- **Plastics**

Any plastic items such as waste bins being considered for purchase should be thermosetting plastic. Any reputable retailer should be able to confirm whether their products are suitable for healthcare use. With plastic items, the cost of the item will normally give an indication of its quality.

- **Curtains and Blinds**

Curtains and other window coverings such as vertical blinds or roller blinds should conform to the standards above, BS 5867 Part 2 2008 – Type B or C as determined by risk area.

## **6 Summary**

6.1 This document is designed to provide guidance on the purchase of furniture, fabrics and bedding with reference to the requirements of fire safety legislation. The responsible person must be aware of the different levels of fire rating particularly if the purchase is for patient areas and that mental health premises generally require a higher level of fire resistance when compared against domestic or other standards. Any deviation from these standards should only be done based on a defined clinical need and should be appropriately risk assessed, documented and approved prior to any change being adopted.

**BS 7177: 2008**

**Performance Requirements for Various Premises**

Hazard Category	Requirements	Examples
Low hazard (domestic use)	Resistant to ignition source: smouldering cigarette and match flame as specified in BS EN 597-1 and 2:1995.	Domestic dwellings including static caravans.
Medium hazard	As above plus: Resistant to ignition source 5 as specified in BS 6807: 2006 Clause 9	Boarding schools, Day Centres, Halls of residence, hospitals, hotels, residential homes.
High hazard	As for low hazard plus: resistant to ignition source 7 as specified in BS 6807: 2006, Clause 9	Certain hospital wards, offshore installations, old people's homes.
Very high hazard	As above (7+) plus: additional requirements at the discretion of the specifier with high hazard requirements being a minimum,	Locked psychiatric accommodation, prison cells.

- The Procurement Team should always be consulted if staff or service users wish to purchase their own items of furniture, bedding or other potentially flammable materials

## APPENDIX 2

### Examples of labelling required for bedding, bed bases and mattresses:

	<p><b>MATTRESS LABEL:</b></p> <p>The label displays the ignition source category (7) and text confirming the level of hazard the item conforms to and the guidance from which the information is taken.</p> <p>The label shown is for a high hazard area and required ignition source 7 as its minimum requirement. These labels have blue and white colouring and will show the appropriate ignition source category and information depending on the hazard level of the area it is to be used.</p>
	<p><b>CARELESSNESS CAUSES FIRE</b></p> <p>Supplier – Acme Furniture Company Model No: Classic headboard Batch number: 608 Date manufactured: January 2010</p> <p>Item contains PU foam fillings which conform to Schedule 1 Part 1</p> <p>Item contains cotton fabrics which pass the appropriate tests specified in the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988</p>
<p>The label above is a display label for a bed headboard, footboard or side rail. All parts of a bed must carry these labels and they should be attached to each item</p>	<p>The label above is a permanent label also attached to parts of a bed unit. This should have the date of manufacture, the name of the manufacturer and brief details of what materials are used to make up the item.</p>

**Examples of other labels:**



**BS 7176 – for non-domestic furniture (medium hazard)**



**BS 7177 – Low hazard**



**BS 7177 – Medium hazard**



**BS 7177 – Very high hazard**