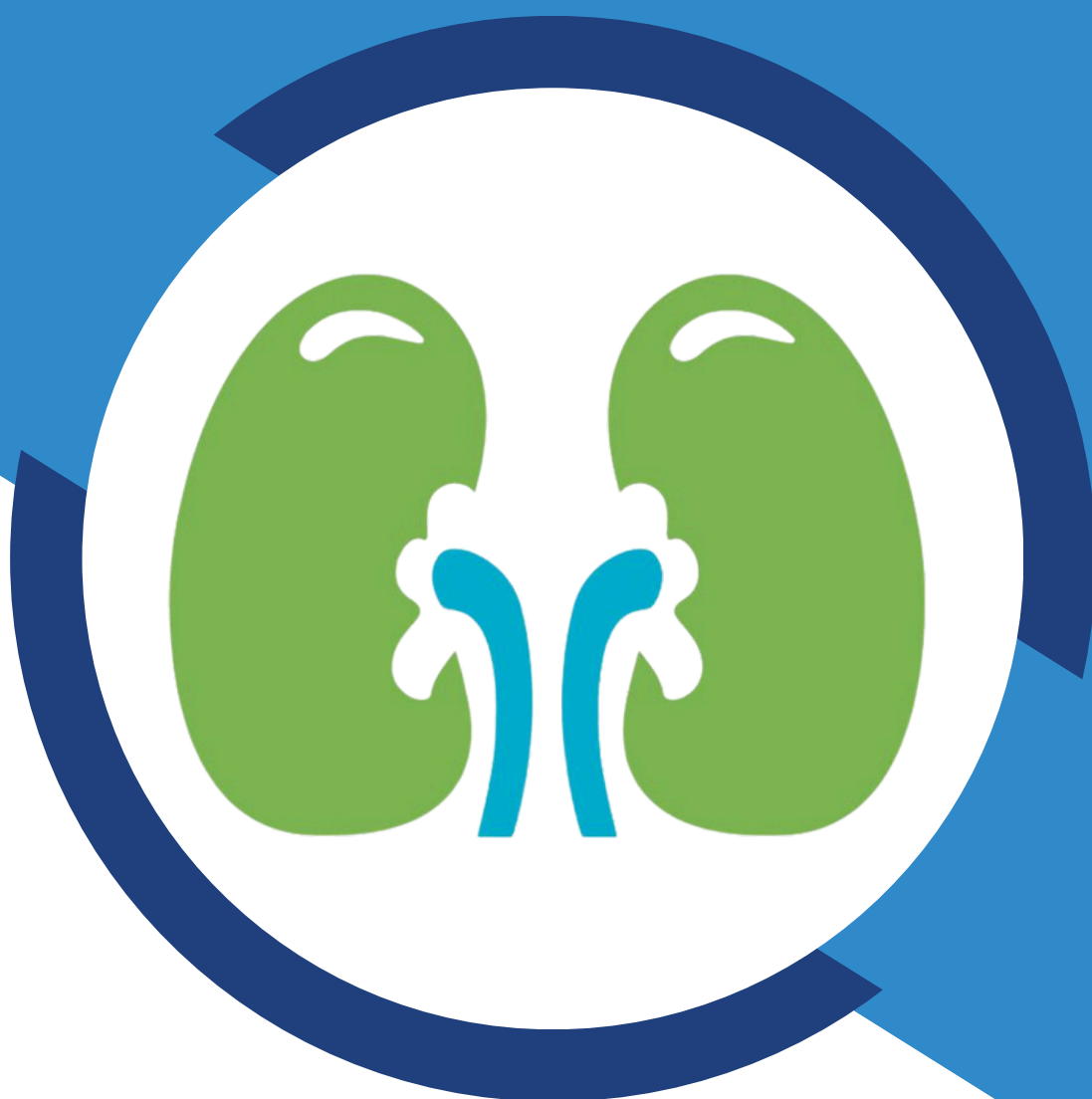


How-to Guide

Reducing Unnecessary Linen Use in Dialysis Centres



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UK Kidney Association

How-to Guide: Reducing Unnecessary Linen Use in Dialysis Centres

Project: Sustainable Kidney Care – Implementing Best Practice

Collaboration: UK Kidney Association and Centre for Sustainable Healthcare

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Although this guide has been developed by experts in sustainability and sustainable kidney care, local teams should use their discretion in its implementation according to local context and requirements



Introduction

The NHS is committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2045. Key frameworks such as the NHS Supply Chain Roadmap empower NHS teams to quantify and reduce carbon emissions across care settings. The Yorkshire & Humber Kidney Network's TRUNCHD (Trying to Reduce Unnecessary Carbon in HaemoDialysis) quality improvement initiative demonstrates real-world impact.

Scaling up simple interventions regionally could save approximately 120tCO₂e and £200,000 annually (Yorkshire & Humber Kidney Network, 2025). This guide focuses on reducing routine linen use by removing sheets/blankets from chairs and encouraging patients to bring personal blankets—as a practical, sustainable intervention.

Step-by-Step Implementation

1. Engage the Nursing Team

- Host a staff meeting to review current linen usage, purposes, and alternatives.
- Estimate baseline linen use.
- Discuss benefits, risks, and operational constraints.
- Highlight TRUNCHD's structure: multi-site workshops, sustainability tools, and carbon tracking (Yorkshire & Humber Kidney Network, 2025).

2. Consult with Patients

- Open discussion on current practice and patient comfort without linen.
- Explore willingness to bring and launder personal blankets.

3. Develop Patient Communication

- Co-design messaging with patient involvement.
- Explain rationale, environmental benefits, alignment with national strategies.
- Use posters, leaflets, and verbal reminders during dialysis visits.



You can access posters, brochures and additional case studies on the Kidney Care Sustainability Network [here](#).

4. Prepare for the Change

- Provide lockers for patient blankets stored on-site.
- Update SOPs, policies, and staff guidance to reflect optional linen use.

5. Revise Linen Practices

- Cease default placement of linen on chairs.
- Provide linen only on request or if clinically indicated.
- Maintain routine cleaning/disinfection per IPC standards.

6. Provide Patient Laundering Advice (IPC-Aligned)

Advise patients to:

- Launder blankets weekly or when soiled.
- Wash at 65 °C for at least 10 minutes, to ensure disinfection (Infection Prevention Control, 2024; CDC, 2023).
- Use tumble drying or ironing to further reduce microbes (Infection Prevention Control, 2024).
- Handle used blankets carefully—avoid shaking, handle and bag with clean hands (Infection Prevention Control, 2024; CDC, 2023).
- Launder separately from others' clothing (Infection Prevention Control, 2024).
- Perform hand hygiene after laundering or handling blankets (Infection Prevention Control, 2024).



7. Set Patient Guidelines

- Encourage clean, personal blankets as per laundering advice.
- Display clear washing guidelines in storage areas.

8. Monitor and Evaluate

- Liaise with laundry services to compare linen use before and after implementation.
- Estimate environmental and cost savings.
- Collect feedback from patients and staff to refine practices.

Conclusion

Reducing linen use in dialysis through patient-sourced blankets aligns closely with the NHS's Greener NHS strategy and nationally endorsed tools like the Supply Chain Roadmap. The TRUNCHD initiative provides strong evidence of environmental and financial gains (Yorkshire & Humber Kidney Network, 2025). Ensuring home laundering practices comply with IPC standards safeguards patient safety. This guide offers a structured, sustainable approach that combines clinical diligence, patient empowerment, and environmental responsibility—offering a replicable model for dialysis units across the NHS.



References

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