



**Service**

**NHS Lanarkshire Water Management Group  
supported by Property and Support Services  
Division**

**Procedure**

**Hot & Cold Water Services: Little used water  
outlets - Protocol on departmental action**

**Reference**

**SSD-SP-MBS-004 - LUWO**

**Classification: Open**

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**NHS LANARKSHIRE  
PROPERTY AND SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION**

**NHS LANARKSHIRE CONTROL OF INFECTION MANUAL**

**SECTION Q – MANAGING THE RISK OF LEGIONELLA INFECTION  
IN NHS LANARKSHIRE HEALTHCARE SETTINGS**

**PROTOCOL FOR LITTLE USED WATER OUTLETS**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to advise staff in charge of clinical areas / departments how to comply with Section Q (Para 9.2) of the Control of Infection Manual in relation to little used water outlets.

Paragraph 9.2 states;

All little used outlets (all outlets which are used less than twice per week) should be identified and a flushing regime agreed with the Nominated Person (Legionella).

The Nominated Person (Legionella) is the Manager appointed by Property & Support Services Division (PSSD) who is responsible for providing the appropriate technical advice i.e. the operational management of Little Used Water Outlets and any other advice relating to alterations and the safe use and design of water systems.

**Background**

One of the much publicised hazards associated with water systems is Legionella. Legionella bacterium is a common bacteria which will survive and multiply in water, with the optimum temperature for multiplication being 37°C. Legionella will survive for a matter of hours at 50°C, but only a matter of minutes at 60°C, whilst the multiplication rate can be considered insignificant at temperatures below 20°C. Sediment, sludge, scale and rust are a nutrient source for legionella and therefore regular cleaning of water systems is necessary.

The bacterium is not highly virulent, but may affect individuals who are especially susceptible. The route of infection is through inhalation of water droplets created by a spray or aerosol, containing the bacteria into the lungs. Elderly patients with existing lung problems or persons with existing illnesses or on immuno- suppressant drugs are most susceptible to legionella.

Domestic hot water systems have shown to be the most common source of legionella. It

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is for this reason that water is distributed above 50°C and reduced to a safe temperature at the point of use by thermostatic mixing valves.

Water distribution points such as taps and showers become "high risk" due to stagnant water when they are not used frequently.

Generally, all sinks, wash hand basins, showers and toilets are cleaned by Domestic Staff at least 5 out of 7 days and are therefore frequently used. However, there are occasions where Domestic Staff may not be able to clean a water outlet e.g. a bathroom used for storage. Also, there are occasions where there may be a temporary change to a ward/ department e.g. decant for redecoration or closure during holiday periods. There may also be occasions where a permanent change arises where a water outlet or area is no longer required due to a change in function of a ward / department.

### Action

1. Where any of these situations arise, staff in charge of clinical areas / departments **must** advise PSSD via Helpdesk. PSSD will ensure the outlet is added to the register of little used water outlets and regular flushing is carried out. Appendix 1 provides a decision flowchart.
2. Staff in charge of clinical areas / departments **must** also record this request in their Health and Safety Control Book (Section 3C -COSHH) A copy of a suitable record sheet is available via the Salus Homepage on Firstport.

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**Water Outlet Management: Decision Flowchart**

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