

CQC Guidance - Curtains guidance

We have had several questions from practices and inspectors 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, our guidance states that a practice should follow The Health and Social Care Act 2008, Code of Practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216227/dh_123923.pdf).

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 (<http://www.nrls.npsa.nhs.uk/EasySiteWeb/getresource.axd?AssetID=75245%20>) 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, we 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.