

Bringing choice to the duopoly dominated healthcare laundry market

Mark Godley, executive director at healthcare laundry specialist Grosvenor Contracts, reviews the situation

The healthcare laundry service is 100% dedicated to the complete delivery of the following components:

- A product disinfected and evidenced to a safe standard
- Continuity of supply
- Adequate supplies to meet the clients' requirements
- Accurate/evidenced volumetric data

There has never been a better time to offer innovation and best value to the healthcare laundry sector. With one of the duopoly suppliers at capacity and the other at over 70% of the market, and clearly needing to relinquish some of its business, this is the time for smaller, more agile suppliers to test and implement new systems for the future.

Due to the dominance of the two main processors, the current generic laundry service and product is very much dictated by what is offered, with little flexibility or desire to deliver bespoke requirements. This is demonstrated by the one-fits-all attitude: hospital blue blankets for everyone, poly cotton bed linen with no option for a high grade product for premium charging departments etc., deliveries in standard metal cages, and no option for ward by ward product secure delivery systems. Constraints such as these demonstrate how rigid the service is.

There are, rightly, huge barriers to entry which smaller operators and start-ups will encounter when trying to access the market.

Reaching compliance is



Grosvenor Contract's barrier wash system

more than just about writing and implementing systems. It's based around working with them, training, monitoring, auditing and building a history of achieving validation standards in disinfection and environmental data throughout the process - from washing to delivery to the hospital. And, if that's not enough, you need to dedicate years of learning to tender for new contracts and gain access to the three key frameworks.

From our own experience at Grosvenor Contracts we know that it will take a new healthcare

“Moorfield NHS Eye Hospital recently achieved close to a 10% saving against the value of its annual laundry contract”

laundry supplier up to three years to achieve a full audit recommendation for EN14065 (RABC for healthcare laundries). It is important to stress that, without acute attention to the design of the laundry, many will fall short.

An example of this, and one that is quickly becoming a new outsourced market, is the disinfection and washing of microfibre mops and cloths. These items are a vital 'product component' for cleaning our hospitals and many trusts and third party operators have failed to dedicate adequate resources to

the washing of these items, leading to compliance and possible cross contamination issues.

To provide a turnkey solution for microfibre, Grosvenor Contracts has partnered with leading German mop manufacturer

Vermop.

Once compliance has been achieved, the complicated delivery infrastructure needs to be designed and implemented.

A key area for consideration is stock usage multiples - the amount of stock required to service a contract compared with its daily usage. For example, if a client uses 100 sheets a day, the laundry may have to purchase six to 20 times that amount depending on the frequency of collections and deliveries.

Careful planning of the route can help to reduce the risk of

like Grosvenor Contracts are investing in laundry software which offers key solutions, such as:

- web-based client ordering capabilities,
- service route coordination, to achieve the most cost-effective client focused delivery times
- item bar coding facilitation for customer owned/rental high value products that may require full traceability and monitoring.

These systems put you in a good position to adopt future radio-frequency identification (RFID) technology. Currently, these systems present a number of questions that need to be answered, mainly surrounding stock attrition and who carries the burden of this - the user or supplier?

The reliability of RFID readers is improving but then there is the issue of a generic tag, as stock movement from one laundry to another may see the laundry company washing and delivering competitors items for free! For a small laundry this could be as much as 5% of its processing revenue, in addition to the attrition rates of up to 70% pa in some cases.

By engaging with much of the above Grosvenor Contracts has recently enabled Moorfield NHS Eye Hospital to achieve close to a 10% saving against the value of its annual laundry contract.

Utilizing a bespoke, dedicated stock and a developing a proactive working relationship with the trust, which has focused on real delivery requirements and the drive to manage reject items, we have proved the business model and plan to build six new healthcare-compliant micro laundries over the next eight years. These will be strategically located around the country to create new capacity where needed.

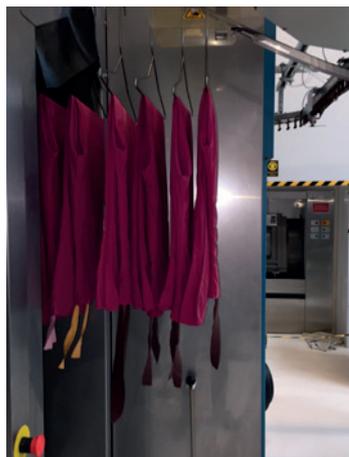
This success and development strategy shows our dedication to empowered employment, quality and choice in the healthcare laundry market place.

For further information, call Grosvenor Contracts on 0207237 0099 or visit www.grosvenorcontracts.com

ENQUIRY NO. 000



Another delivery leaves the laundry



cross contamination between soiled and clean linen. While good coordination with on-site staff will help to ensure that supplies are delivered before daily top-up rounds. This is particularly helpful to the client in situations where the capacity for on-site stockholding may be limited due to restricted storage space.

These are all exciting challenges to meet and from our experience create a very strong working partnership between the healthcare user and the supplier. To support these intrinsic components, companies