

There is a common misconception that there are infection control issues with having carpet in care homes and mental health facilities.

This paper aims to answer some of these questions:

1. *Carpets create a hotspot for the spread of infections*

- Research by Dr Stephanie Dancer<sup>1</sup> from NHS Lanarkshire, found that the most common MRSA sites within hospitals were that of bed linen, gowns and tables rather than floors.

Dr Dancer states that cleaning should focus on objects which people touch rather than on areas of visible dirt such as floors to combat the spread of such infectious diseases.

Dr Dancer goes on to say that “Governments across the UK need to reconsider their approaches. We are just trying to remove visible dirt from areas such as floors when this is not the best approach”.

2. *Carpet is susceptible to contamination by fungi and bacteria*

- A rigorous study conducted by Lankford et al (2006)<sup>2</sup> suggests that certain pathogens such as VRE (Vancomycin-resistant enterococci) survive less well or for shorter periods on carpet than on other floor coverings, including rubber tile, linoleum, vinyl sheet goods, and vinyl composition tile.

In addition to discovering that carpet harbours less VRE, this research found that carpeting also transferred less VRE to hands via contact than rubber and vinyl flooring and performed as well in cleaning as any other flooring tested.

3. *The Care Quality Commission (CQC) states that we must remove our carpets because they are an infection control risk*

- The CQC actually states – “Carpets- There is no legislation that forces you to replace your carpets in favour of hard flooring or lino. You can have carpets as long as you keep them clean and infection free.”

4. *Infection control say carpets are not allowed anywhere*

- Health Building Note 00-09<sup>3</sup> - Infection control in the built environment (DH 2013) advises that carpets should not be used in clinical areas but is acceptable elsewhere.

5. *Carpet is very much harder and more expensive to maintain than hard flooring or lino.*

- Many studies, including a life cycle cost analysis for floor coverings in school facilities by Jeff Bishop<sup>4</sup>, and research have been conducted into the costs, time and difficulties of cleaning various floor finishes and carpets come out very favourably. Just because a hard floor finish looks

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/256714731\\_Lancet\\_MRSA\\_paper\\_SJD](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/256714731_Lancet_MRSA_paper_SJD)

Review: Importance of the environment in methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* acquisition: the case for hospital cleaning (2007)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ajicjournal.org/article/S0196-6553\(05\)00856-4/abstract?cc=y](http://www.ajicjournal.org/article/S0196-6553(05)00856-4/abstract?cc=y)=

Assessment of materials commonly utilized in health care: Implications for bacterial survival and transmission

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/170705/HBN\\_00-09\\_infection\\_control.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/170705/HBN_00-09_infection_control.pdf)

HBN 00-09 – Infection control in the Built Environment (2013)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.carpet-rug.org/documents/scientific\\_resources/0203\\_IICRC\\_Life-Cycle-Cost-Analysis.pdf](http://www.carpet-rug.org/documents/scientific_resources/0203_IICRC_Life-Cycle-Cost-Analysis.pdf)

Presents life cycle cost analyses of school building floors with light-to-medium traffic and heavy traffic, comparing them with the figures for carpet and vinyl composition tile (VCT). (2002)

clean it doesn't always mean it is. On an annual basis research suggests that it takes two-and-a-half times longer to clean hard floors than carpet and the cleaning chemicals needed for hard floors are seven times more expensive.

- The CQC states that "The choice is entirely yours depending on where the carpets are installed, and whether you are prepared to spend more time and money cleaning carpets when it is so much easier to maintain hard floors." Which is another common misconception about carpet.

There are many research papers about the use of carpet within care settings stating that the use of carpet has no influence on health care associated infection rates in areas housing immunocompetent patients.

A literature review has not found any papers advising against the use of carpeting in care homes or hospital facilities in non-clinical rooms, only that they shouldn't be used in areas such as laboratories, areas around sinks, caretaking rooms and where patients may be at greater risk of infections from airborne environmental pathogens such as burn units, ICU and operating theatres.

### Conclusion

Carpet Manufacturer Danfloor has two Collections; Equinox and ECONOMIX, which are manufactured with an impervious membrane. This means that any liquid spills stay on the surface of the carpet until they are cleaned, therefore assisting with cleaning and maintenance.

It also means that liquid spills will not seep through and contaminate the subfloor which can cause bacterial growth and odours.

These carpets are treated with Maedical i-link an anti-microbial yarn coating which supplies a 4-log reduction in the presences of harmful organisms including the bacteria that causes MRSA. It eliminates a wide range of bacteria, fungi, yeast and algae stopping the growth, smells and spread of infection related to them.

It works by attracting the microorganisms to the yarn coating, it then punctures the cell membrane, as if by a sword and then deactivates the microorganism before contamination and the spread of infection occurs.

### Benefits of carpet

- Create that home from home feeling – carpet is considered more comfortable and psychologically warm than hard flooring finishes and research suggests that visits from family and friends are longer when they visit in a carpeted room.
- Acoustically better – the use of carpets creates rooms that have greater impact sound reduction rates and reduce ambient noise levels therefore creating a therapeutic and relaxing environment.
- Carpets reduce injuries created by trips and falls
- Improved air quality - Many of the studies suggest that carpet retains dust particles, unlike hard surfaces where they regularly become air born. If carpets are regularly vacuumed these dust particles, and allergens that are bound within fine dust particles, are removed from the room without causing discomfort, especially to residents with breathing or respiratory problems.

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