

Q: What will I learn from this feature?

A: The value of an investment in a water-softener

Down scaling your laundry burden

If stubborn stains are a problem on wash day, perhaps, it's the hardness of your water to blame, says Kevin Johnson, managing director at Monarch Water

In any care home setting the process of cleaning dirty laundry can seem like an eternally troublesome task, but by reviewing water quality care home operators can make this arduous process easier and more economical.

With hard water affecting over 60 per cent of the UK, limescale build-up can be a real problem when it comes to cleaning dirty laundry. Not only can limescale impact on wash results, but it makes machines less energy efficient while increasing the need for detergent – hiking up the cost per load.

In the UK it's estimated that limescale costs £1 billion through replacement, servicing and maintenance, with hard water responsible for around 70 per cent of equipment failures. With commercial and on-premise laundry operations using high volumes of water it's vital

that care home operators consider water treatment when reviewing their laundry set up, to reduce potential future costs due to limescale.

A commercial application using just 2,000 litres per day in a hard water area of only 300ppm will use water containing 233kg of scale in just one year. That's nearly a quarter of a tonne.

When it comes to water softeners one size does not fit all therefore it's important that care home operators review the hardness of their water in addition to the machine's capacity and consumption of water to ensure they make the right choice of water treatment system.

A thickness of just 0.5mm of scale pushes fuel costs up by 9.4 per cent and 1mm to 12 per cent more. Investing in a water softener will not only prevent any further build-up, but remove any existing residue from the machines. It will also provide constant protection from aggressive minerals to help extend the working life of equipment – increasing efficiency and therefore reducing energy bills.

It's not just the machines' longevity and running costs that will benefit from soft water either. Improving the softness of water aids stain-removal over and above using more detergent or increasing water temperature. In fact, decreasing the hardness of water was found to be 100 times more effective than these commonly-used measures. It's also worth noting that the life of a garment can be lessened by up to 40 per cent when washed in hard water and some linen and fabrics may have to be discarded before wearing out.

