

Dress Code and Appearance Policy

W9

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Policy on a Page – key points

This policy applies to **all** staff employed by the Trust, clinical or non-clinical, both uniformed and non-uniformed staff groups

- All staff should wear a white name badge stating name and job title/role, badges are available with a pin or magnetic back. All employees must be identifiable by a Trust issued photographic identity badge which must be worn and be on the person at all times when on duty or acting in an official capacity representing the Trust
- Lanyards must not be worn when involved in direct clinical contact with patients ID badges need to be secured to clothing with a clip
- Staff employed in corporate departments and administrative areas should ensure that their dress and appearance portrays a professional image
- Very short skirt hem lines, low necklines, bare midriffs and clothing that reveals underwear are not acceptable
- All staff are expected to wear shoes or other footwear suitable for their role.

In addition to the above all clinical staff must comply with the following standards when working in clinical areas, examining or treating patients, including when attending ward rounds.

- All staff must be bare below the elbows when working in or entering clinical environments to facilitate effective hand hygiene.
- Footwear should be made from non-absorbent material (i.e. leather or synthetic, not suede). Buckles, fringes or small metal ornaments on footwear are not acceptable. To reduce the risk of slips in clinical areas, enclosed footwear with a well-defined tread pattern and a flexible sole is required.
- Fingernails should be short and free of nail varnish
- Clinical Uniforms are only to be used for official Trust duties inside or outside the hospital. When not engaged in work duties (i.e. travelling to and from work) clinical uniforms must be covered.
- It is unacceptable for staff to go shopping or enter other commercial premises in clinical uniform, (unless completely covered by a coat).
- Staff wearing scrubs should change prior to leaving the clinical area or cover items of clothing as determined locally. Staff should not wear scrubs in Trust hospitality areas i.e. restaurants or coffee bars unless covered by a clean theatre overcoat
- Staff must not wear scrub uniform when travelling to and from work.
- Uniforms should be changed daily and staff must pay attention to their personal hygiene.

1 Document Statement

- 1.1 The Trust recognises the importance of the appearance of all employees in creating a positive and professional image that enhances the confidence of patients, relatives, other staff, and visitors. This policy sets out the expectations of the Trust in relation to personal appearance, uniform and work wear. The policy is necessary for patients, visitors, and employees in order to:
- Minimise the risk of cross infection
 - Minimise the risk of injury to patients
 - Comply with Health and Safety regulations
 - Provide a positive and professional image
Provide a consistent approach to uniforms to support easy patient recognition of staff
 - Enhance Trust Security arrangements
 - Comply with Food Safety Legislation
- 1.2 The Trust will take a sensitive approach when such matters affect personal appearance, dress and uniform requirements. However, there will be circumstances in which there are genuine occupational reasons (e.g. the need to minimise the risk of cross-infection) as to why the wearing of certain articles and/or clothing is not permissible, and priority will be given in relation to section 1.1.
- 1.3 All healthcare workers have a responsibility to minimise the spread of Health Care Associated Infections (HCAs) by wearing the appropriate clothes in clinical settings, and complying with the expectations in this policy.
- 1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Infection Prevention & Control Policies, Food Safety Policy FD1, Health and Safety Policy HS01, Hazardous Substances Policy HS6, Personal Protective Equipment policy HS13, working with Children and Vulnerable Adult Guidelines and Control of Contractors Policy HS21. This policy is based on the principles, directions, and expectations regarding this subject matter and the recommendations of the Care Quality Commission and other regulatory/advisory bodies.
- 1.5 The policy is designed to guide managers and employees on the Trust's standards of dress code and appearance. It is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of dress and appearance. A common sense approach should be used in situations not specifically covered by the policy. For further advice and guidance please refer to a member of the Human Resources Team.

2 Overview

- 2.1 This policy applies to **all** staff employed by the Trust, clinical or non-clinical, both uniformed and non-uniformed staff groups as detailed throughout the sections below including those working in the Temporary Staffing Department, on Honorary Contracts, Secondments, visiting clinical staff, students and contractors. This policy supersedes all other relevant policies and guidelines.
- 2.2 Agency Staff, Honorary Staff, Secondees and students working within the Trust should be made aware of this policy as part of their induction and must comply with the principles, in particular in relation to infection control, identity and the standards of the area in which they are to work.
- 2.3 Non Clinical Work Experience Students must comply with the dress code as set out in the Work Experience Policy
- 2.4 In implementing this policy, managers must ensure that all staff are treated fairly and within the provisions and spirit of the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policy (HR01). Special attention should

be paid to ensuring the policy is understood when using it for staff new to the NHS or Trust, by staff whose literacy or use of English is limited or for persons with little experience of working life.

- 2.5 Managers must respect the confidentiality of the employee at all times and not disclose any personal information to a third party, with the exception of where advice is being sought from their line manager, the HR Department or the Occupational Health Department.

3 Definitions

Dress code - a set of rules specifying the required manner of dress

Uniform - Distinctive clothing of a set specification intended to identify those who wear it as members of a specific group of staff

Uniformed staff - Any staff who wear uniform that is purchased by the Trust and is to a specification as determined by the Trust

Clinical Staff - applies to all staff who work in clinical areas providing direct patient care and/or undertake administrative and general housekeepers duties in clinical areas. e.g. Ward Clerks and House Keepers

Personal Protective Equipment – is equipment which will protect a staff member against specific health and safety risks at work. This includes items such as protective eyewear, face visors, gloves and aprons, FFP3 respirators, high-visibility clothing, ear defenders and helmets. Certain types of footwear may also be regarded as PPE.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 Trust Board

The Trust Board has a strategic responsibility to ensure that the policy is communicated to all employees and is effectively implemented.

4.2 Trust Managers

All Trust Managers are responsible for the equitable implementation of this policy and for ensuring that all employees are aware of their responsibilities under it. Support and guidance may be sought from Human Resources.

Managers are responsible for ensuring the policy is adhered to in respect of the employee, seconded, temporary, /agency staff, honorary staff and students they manage.

Local uniform styles must be consistent with the principles contained in this policy and the law relating to protective personal equipment. All local standards must be approved by the responsible Directors/Operational manager for that area.

Managers have a responsibility to ensure that they are familiar with this policy and for explaining and enforcing the policy to their staff.

Managers are also responsible for bringing any mutually beneficial improvements to this policy to the attention of the Trust.

Managers are responsible for ensuring staff are issued with enough uniforms to be changed on a daily basis and are replaced as appropriate to avoid discolouration and wear and tear.

4.3 Employees

All Employees, honorary staff and students are responsible for following the standards of uniform, dress and appearance laid down in this policy and should understand how it relates to their working environment, health and safety, infection control, particular role and duties during the course of their employment, honorary duties, or training carried out within the Trust.

All staff are required to comply with this policy, subject to those exceptions agreed by relevant Directors and/or Operational Managers. Failure to adhere to these standards may constitute misconduct and result in formal disciplinary proceedings taken in line with the Trust Disciplinary Policy and Procedure (HR36), which could result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

4.4 Human Resources

The Human Resources function is responsible for:

- Providing support and guidance to employees and managers on the implementation and application of this policy
- Monitoring the application of this policy and updating it as required.

4.5 Trade Union Representatives

Trade Union representatives are responsible for supporting the fair and equitable application of this policy and providing support to their members when requested.

5 Policy Details

5.1 Trust wide standards of personal appearance

The following are the **minimum** standards of dress and appearance that all staff are to abide by. Managers may request a set of local specific standards to the dress code of their staff which may result in greater restrictions but cannot relax or breach the minimum standards listed below. This would normally be to cover additional health and safety reasons or Personal Protective Equipment. All changes must be approved as outlined 4.2

- All staff should wear a white name badge stating name and job title/role, badges are available with a pin or magnetic back
- All employees must be identifiable by a Trust issued photographic identity badge which must be worn and be on the person at all times when on duty or acting in an official capacity representing the Trust
- Lanyards must not be worn when involved in direct clinical contact with patients ID badges need to be secured to clothing with a clip
- Employees with honorary contracts, visiting clinical staff, students, and contractors must also wear identity badges as defined in policy SY01 Security Management.
- In addition to the ID badge, a limited number e.g. 2 professional /union badges may be worn
- Staff must comply with the appropriate dress and appearance code for their staff group/department
- Staff employed in corporate departments and administrative areas should ensure that their dress and appearance portrays a professional image to all users of NHS services, whether members of the public, patients, visitors, clients or colleagues
- Staff are not permitted to chew gum whilst on duty at any time

- Staff must abide by the Trust's no Smoking Policy
- Very short skirt hem lines, low necklines, bare midribs and clothing that reveals underwear are not acceptable
- The wearing of shorts is only permitted for non-clinical staff where it forms part of a Trust issued uniform and appearance remains professional and tidy.
- All staff are expected to wear shoes or other footwear suitable for their role. Unsuitable footwear includes flip flops. Staff should be aware that many floors in the Trust are slippery when wet (e.g. during cleaning, or in adverse weather) and therefore shoes with a well-defined tread pattern and a flexible sole are recommended.
- Staff must cover cuts and skin abrasions with a clean waterproof dressing (food handlers must wear blue coloured waterproof dressings)
- Staff are required to attend all training and study days in their normal work clothing unless otherwise agreed by the trainers and relevant line managers in advance. This is to ensure that the activities undertaken are practised in work clothing
- Staff have the responsibility to maintain their personal hygiene to reduce the possibility of offensive body odour. Deodorants and perfumes can be used however should not be so strongly scented as to exacerbate patients' conditions
- Mobile phones for business use are permitted - this reflects that for some staff (particularly managers and consultants) mobile phones may be the only way of contacting them at work. Use of medical apps or calculators for business purposes is acceptable. Staff must not use mobile phones for personal use under any circumstances when working in a clinical area; the use of mobile phones for personal use should be limited to unpaid breaks.
- Tattoos which may be deemed offensive to others must be covered using an appropriate method. However, tattoos on the forearms and hands must be left uncovered for hand hygiene during direct patient care activity. A common sense approach should be taken in what could be deemed offensive, for example, offensive language, inappropriate images and tattoos that could be perceived as racist.
- It is not appropriate for staff to wear jeans or any form of denim whilst on duty
- In Emergency circumstances, when staff are called in, a common sense approach should be taken to complying with the uniform policy, whilst still taking account of Health and Safety and Infection Control issues.

5.2 Dress code and appearance standards for all clinical staff

In addition to the above all clinical staff must comply with the following standards when working in clinical areas, examining or treating patients, including when attending ward rounds.

- All staff must be bare below the elbows when working in or entering clinical environments to facilitate effective hand hygiene. For the purposes of this policy this means that sleeves must be either rolled up or of a length that leaves the forearms completely uncovered, no wrist watch or any other wrist coverings are worn and no jewellery is worn below elbow level other than a single plain band ring, (without stones or engraving).
- Non uniformed clinical staff can wear jackets when not in the clinical area

- One pair of plain stud earrings (without stones) can be worn, (one stud in each ear)
- Hair should be clean, neat and tidy at all times
- Long hair must be tied up and **off the collar** with suitable hair ornamentation. This means that if hair is worn in a ponytail, the bottom of the ponytail must not be lower than the collar.
- Headscarves (hijabs) for religious purposes need to be off the collar and not allowed to drape freely when providing direct clinical care and therefore should not be lower than the collar.
- Discreet make up may be worn
- Footwear should be made from non-absorbent material (i.e. leather or synthetic, not suede). Buckles, fringes or small metal ornaments on footwear are not acceptable. To reduce the risk of slips in clinical areas, enclosed footwear with a well-defined tread pattern and a flexible sole is required.
- Fingernails should be short and free of nail varnish (false nails/nail art/jewels are unacceptable)
- Ties must be removed or tucked in during clinical activity. Bow-ties are permissible
- When undertaking on-calls staff must not sleep in scrub wear as they will become heavily contaminated
- When dealing with patients who pose a risk of infection Universal precautions must apply. Plastic aprons and gloves must be worn in accordance with the Trust's infection Prevention & control policies and guidelines
- Wear clothes that minimise the spread of infection (e.g. those made from cotton) and that can be laundered frequently
- Beards and moustaches should be short and neatly trimmed, unless this reflects the individual's religion where it should be tidy and not be below the collar.
- Ensure that clothes are thoroughly laundered and ironed. Presume some degree of contamination, even on clothing which is not visibly soiled

5.3 Additional standards for uniformed staff

The following additional standards apply to staff who wear a Trust uniform which denotes their role when giving clinical care, working in clinical areas or undertaking administrative duties in a clinical setting.

- Uniform should be worn in a clean and presentable fashion and changed daily
- Uniformed staff should be provided with adequate supplies of uniforms that reflect this policy's requirements for daily, laundered uniforms
- Staff who are issued with a uniform are solely responsible for the maintenance and security of the uniform. Information on tax relief for the laundering of uniforms is available from the HM Revenue and Customs website
- The uniforms issued must not be altered or added to by the individual, except for reasons of sizing

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- Additional clothing, such as a cardigan, may be worn, in line with uniform specification but must be removed before delivering direct patient care and cannot be worn in the clinical area. Such garments should complement the uniform and meet the specification for each staff group. Non-Trust/NHS logos are not permitted, e.g. (Sporting brands)
- Footwear should be comfortable and shoes should be non-slip, have enclosed toes and heels, provide adequate support with a heel size of no more than one inch. To reduce the risk of slips in clinical areas, footwear with a well-defined tread pattern and a flexible sole is required.
- Clogs are only permitted to be worn in agreed designated areas
- Fob watches should be securely pinned onto the uniform. Wrist watches must not be worn
- 'Red armbands' must be worn by the Nurse /Midwife who is in charge of the shift
- Staff should not wear any additional jewellery. Visible facial/body (including tongue) piercings are not permitted and must be removed before coming on duty
- Socks or tights should be worn at all times unless permission is given by a senior member of the Management Team. Socks must complement the uniform. Tights should be neutral, black or navy.
- Ankle socks must not be worn with a dress
- Pens or scissors should be carried in an appropriate place, e.g. hip or breast pockets
- Ornate Belt buckles can be worn with clinical dresses but must be removed or turned around when providing direct clinical care
- Smoking in uniform is only allowed if the uniform is fully covered.
- All staff are encouraged to change their uniform before going off duty
- If clinical staff feel the wearing of uniform may compromise client / clinician relationship the decision for them to wear non uniform will need the approval of the Director of Nursing and Quality and their line manager.

5.4 Travelling in Uniform

- Clinical Uniforms are only to be used for official Trust duties inside or outside the hospital. When not engaged in work duties (i.e. travelling to and from work) clinical uniforms must be covered. The uniform must be covered completely with a full length coat at all times. For dresses this means a coat that covers the length of the dress and for trousers and tunics this is a coat that covers the length of the tunic
- It is unacceptable for staff to go shopping or enter other commercial premises in clinical uniform, (unless completely covered by a coat).
- Staff should be aware of what they are doing in uniforms and the possibility of bringing the Trust into disrepute being identifiable as a member of NHS staff outside of work; this could result in disciplinary action.

5.5 Dress code and appearance - scrubs uniform

- Staff wearing scrubs should change prior to leaving the clinical area or cover items of clothing as determined locally.

- Staff must not wear scrub uniform when travelling to and from work.
- Staff should not wear scrubs in Trust hospitality areas i.e. restaurants or coffee bars unless covered by a clean theatre overcoat
- Staff wearing scrubs must wear well-fitted dedicated footwear. These must be cleaned/decontaminated on a regular basis, particularly when visibly dirty or when contaminated with blood or body fluids. Local leads should ensure that local procedures are in place for this to happen; this footwear is not to be worn outside of designated clinical areas. The use of over shoes is not required for infection Prevention & control reasons.
- Contaminated/Blood stained scrub wear must be removed at the earliest opportunity and not be worn outside of the clinical area.
- Hair must be entirely covered with a clean, disposable hat. It is recommended that beards are covered with a hood.
- It is recommended for reasons of infection control that all scrub teams should wear surgical masks. The wearing of masks by other personnel is at the discretion of the individual leads involved. Every individual should wear a mask when prostheses/implantation surgery is being performed, or if the patient is immuno-compromised, or where indicated by local risk assessment.
- Masks and hats must be removed and disposed of at the end of each case, as they are single use items. Masks and hats must never be worn outside the surgical/clinical area or worn around the neck.
- Protective eyewear with visors, appropriate aprons and gloves must be readily available in every medical and surgical area and dental surgery and their use enforced as per Infection Prevention Control guidance and where indicated by local risk assessment.
- Visitors to sterile theatre areas will be advised by theatre staff on what to wear. Any visitor entering these areas must change into the appropriate scrubs and suitable footwear.

5.6 Maternity uniforms

Standard dress/uniform will be supplied to pregnant staff upon request. The uniform will be representative of the appropriate grade of staff.

5.7 Health and Safety

The provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) is the responsibility of the Trust. Each manager must ensure that personal protective clothing and equipment is available to the employee in accordance with relevant H&S regulations, Trust policy and local /statutory recommendations including local risk assessments.

Staff who are issued with a Trust uniform or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must ensure that these items are not used for any purpose other than duties required to be undertaken directly by the Trust.

5.8 Equality and diversity considerations

The wearing of items arising from cultural or religious norms is in most circumstances respected by the Trust, providing that the health and safety and security of patients or staff is not compromised (see section 1).

Within patient settings, staff who wear facial coverings for religious reasons are required to remove them whilst on duty. This is to ensure that the member of staff is identifiable, and to enhance engagement and communication with patients, visitors and colleagues.

Within patient settings staff of Muslim faith may wear Trust uniform, with elbow length sleeves in order to comply with both religious norms, and infection prevention requirements. This clothing must allow for acceptable hand hygiene.

Headscarves/Scarves (Hijabs) must be worn unadorned, should be no longer than shoulder length and not allowed to drape freely when providing direct clinical care.

Employees wearing any additional items of clothing must follow the infection prevention and laundry guidelines outlined below in section 5.9.

Jewellery based on a belief system is permissible provided that the dress and uniform code guidelines in this policy are adhered to as outlined in section 5.

Political beliefs are not covered within the UK regulations outlined in section 1. When wearing non-uniform clothing at work, employees and managers should give due consideration to ensuring that the clothing is not offensive. The wearing of T-shirts or other garments with political statements is not allowed.

Symbols and badges are not permitted, unless they are in recognition of an approved Trust campaign, a recognised professional body or Trust ID badges.

The above are intended as a guide for managers and employees. Staff are encouraged to discuss any additional clothing requirements with their line managers who will seek guidance from Human Resources where required.

5.9 Laundering

Uniforms are NOT Personal Protective Equipment. As such in the event of staff handling contaminated and or hazardous substances then appropriate PPE must be worn.

Infection Prevention and Laundry requirements; The Trust has a duty to provide guidance to employees on handling and decontaminating socially soiled uniforms. Ideally, uniforms should be washed:

- In a washing machine at the temperature directed on the uniform
- With laundry detergent in the quantities advised by the manufacturer (type, for example, biological or non-biological is not important)
- Dried as quickly as possible, or tumble dried, and must be ironed

Uniforms should be changed daily and staff must pay attention to their personal hygiene. Uniforms should be changed immediately in the event of contamination with blood or body fluids.

Food handlers must refer to the Trust's Food Handling Code of Practices for guidance.

6 On leaving the Trust

Staff will return a complete set of uniforms to their manager when they leave the Trust, (including but not limited to uniform, ID badge, lanyard/clip, name badge). Failure to do this may result in the recovery of the outstanding balance from their salary.

7 Training Needs

There is no mandatory training associated with this guidance but should form part of the local induction process to ensure that all staff are aware of the Trust's expectations with regard to uniform standards.

If staff have queries about its operation, they should contact their line manager in the first instance.

8 Review process

This policy will be reviewed 5 yearly unless there are significant changes at either national policy level, or locally.

In order that this document remains current, any of the appendices to the (policy/ guideline / procedure) can be amended and approved during the lifetime of the document without the document strategy having to return to the ratifying committee.

9 Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and no concerns have been identified to require a Stage 2 Full Assessment being necessary.

10 Process for monitoring compliance

All line managers are expected to monitor standards of dress and appearance and take appropriate action if this policy is not adhered to.

Compliance with this policy will be monitored formally via monthly Rate and Exemplar Ward Programme.

All staff should feel able to challenge colleagues who are not compliant with the measures outlined in this document.

Where staff are non-compliant and refuse to respond appropriately to the challenge, the member of staff should be reported to their line manager, who is responsible for addressing this with the individual. If the case of repeated non-compliance arises, disciplinary action will be considered in line with the Trust performance and capacity policy

11 References

Department of health (2010) Uniforms and Work wear: Guidance on uniform and workwear policies for NHS employees. Leeds: Department of Health

Royal College of Nursing (2013) Guidance on uniforms and workwear. London: RCN

St George's University of London – Religion & Belief Code of Practice: Guidance

Trust Policies – All available on the intranet

Smoking Policy HR39

Safe Food Handling - Code of Practice 6

Food Safety in Ward Kitchen's and Safety Food Handling Practices – Code of Practice 13

Infection Prevention & Control Policy – Standard Precautions IPC24

HS01 Health and Safety

HS06 Control of Hazardous Substances

HS13 Personal Protective Equipment

HS21 Control of Contractors Policy