

DRESS CODE POLICY

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224	2	Current	Director of Human Resources	Joe Watt Chris Morley
Amendments:				
Amendments to bring the Dress Code Policy in line with the hand hygiene policy. Updates to the nursing uniform and Theatre sections.				
Document Objectives:				
This policy sets out the expectations of the Trust in relation to corporate dress code and the wearing of Trust uniforms.				
The policy applies to all staff, including those with honorary contracts, agency workers and students when working on Trust premises.				
Intended Recipients:				
All Staff				
Group/Persons Consulted:				
Trust Executive Group, Clinical Management Board, Operational Board, Staff Side, LNC.				
Monitoring Arrangements and Indicators:				
Compliance to be monitored within existing line management arrangements.				
Training Implications:				
General principles to be covered at local induction.				
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Contact for Review: Mr. J. Watt, Nurse Director				

Associated Documentation

Policies:

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Hand Hygiene Policy

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Risk Management Policy and Strategy

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Personal Protective Equipment Procedure

Legal Framework:

Nil

Codes of Practice and Guidance:

Nil

External Documentation

The Health and Social Care Act 2008, Code of Practice for the NHS on the Prevention and Control of Healthcare Associated Infections and related Guidance

Uniforms and workwear: Guidance on uniforms and workwear policies for NHS employers (DH March 2010)

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Version history

Version	Date Issued	Brief Summary of change	Owner's Name:
1	January 2010		Mr. M. Gwilliam Mr. J. Watt
2	March 2010	Amendments to bring the Dress Code Policy in line with the hand hygiene policy. Updates to the nursing uniform and Theatre sections.	Mr. J. Watt/ Mr. C. Morley

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Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Dress Code Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** This policy sets out the expectations of the Trust in relation to the wearing of uniforms for clinical staff and the corporate dress code, for non clinical staff.

The policy applies to all staff, including those with honorary contracts, agency workers and volunteers. Students undertaking clinical or other placements are expected to adhere to the policies agreed between Trust and the relevant education provider.

- 1.2** The Dress Code (and Uniform Policy) is necessary in order to:

- Present a smart and professional image, thereby increasing patient and public confidence.
- Support infection prevention and control
- Have regard to health and safety considerations for staff

- 1.3** The Trust considers the way employees dress and their appearance to be of significant importance in portraying a corporate and professional image to all users of its service, whether patients, visitors, clients or colleagues.

- 1.4** The Trust recognises the diversity of cultures, religions and disabilities of its employees and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and uniform requirements. However, priority will be given to clinical, health and safety, security and infection control considerations.

- 1.5** The Dress Code Policy is designed to guide managers and employees on the application of Trust standards of dress and appearance. The policy is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of dress and appearance and staff should use common sense in adhering to the principles underpinning the policy.

- 1.6** Local dress codes should be agreed for specific staff groups/services to clarify the sensible application of the Trust dress code.

Such local priorities must be wholly consistent with the principles contained in this Trust code and the law relating to protective personal equipment (PPE). The local dress codes must be subject to relevant assessments by the manager responsible for writing the policy, which would include an equality impact assessment and a risk and health and safety assessment (see STHFT's [Risk Assessment Form](#)). These local dress codes should be developed in consultation with Staff Side and health and safety representatives and then approved by the appropriate Executive Director.

- 1.7** All employees are supplied with a Trust identity security badge which must be worn and visible when in clinical areas, and available at all times when on duty or acting in an official capacity representing the Trust. Staff who choose to use a lanyard to display their security badge should ensure that they are secured to prevent them coming into contact with either the patient or their environment. They should be designed to be released if they are pulled sharply and regularly inspected to ensure that they are visibly clean.

- 1.8** All staff are required to comply with the principles of the Dress Code Policy. Failure to adhere to the Trust's standards of dress and appearance may constitute misconduct and may result in formal disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.9** Employees are responsible for following the standards of uniform/dress and appearance laid down in this policy and should understand how this policy relates to their working environment; health and safety, infection control, particular role and duties and contact with others during the course of their employment.
- 1.10** Managers are responsible for ensuring the Dress Code Policy is adhered to at all times in respect of the employees they manage.

2.0 Dress Code

2.1 For staff not required to wear a uniform, examples of acceptable staff clothing include:

- Female employees: skirts, blouses, smart T-shirts, jumpers, jackets, dresses, culottes, suits, trousers, slacks.
- Male employees: business suits, sports jackets, blazers, trousers, smart T-shirts, shirts (with collars - long or short sleeve) jumpers.

2.2 Non acceptable Clothing

Unless part of a departmental uniform or Trust promotion, the following items of clothing are examples of unacceptable clothing, either on the grounds of health and safety or for the Trust's public image: Casual trousers or skirts (all colours and styles), tracksuits, casual sports T-shirts, leisure shorts, combat trousers, sweat-shirts, baseball caps/hats, overly tight or revealing clothes, including mini-skirts, low cut tops or those revealing the midriff and clothing bearing inappropriate slogans. Trousers or skirts that are of a length that they touch the ground when walking are not acceptable on safety and hygiene grounds, in some areas of the Trust (i.e. clinical settings such as wards and theatres).

2.3 Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment

The provision of personal protective equipment is the responsibility of Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, see '[Personal Protective Equipment Procedure](#)'. Each manager must ensure that personal protective clothing and equipment is available to the employee, if identified as necessary in the risk assessment, in accordance with the regulations (i.e. COSHH and local/statutory).

Staff in roles that require protective clothing are required to wear this whilst carrying out their duties in accordance with health and safety requirements. If individuals are unsure about such requirements they should discuss this with their manager. Given the fact the staff need to practice optimum hand hygiene, section 5.2.1 will apply when considering appropriate clothing.

2.4 Footwear

Footwear must be safe, sensible, in good order, smart and clean and have regard to health and safety considerations. Trainers, (unless specifically required for the job role) stiletto heels and plastic flip-flops are not acceptable.

Certain jobs require staff to wear protective footwear. These staff must wear the correct footwear for undertaking their work and if staff are uncertain they must check with their line manager.

2.5 Tattoos

Visible tattoos are to be discouraged and where present should not be offensive to others. Where they are deemed to be offensive they should be appropriately covered.

2.6 Jewellery and Piercing

Jewellery for staff who work in clinical areas must be kept to a minimum; a single 'wedding ring' or equivalent and one pair of metal, gold or silver simple discreet stud earrings are permitted. Earrings with stones are not permitted. Neck chains must not be worn. Rings should not have protruding jewels or metal work or indentations where dirt and fluids may accumulate. The ring must be mobile enough to allow the wearer to wash underneath the ring. To comply with 'Bare Below the Elbows' (5.2.2) wrist watches must not be worn in a clinical area where staff can reasonably expect to come into contact with patients or the immediate patient environment. This will include inpatient wards (particularly when undertaking ward rounds) theatres and outpatient departments.

Staff working in the clinical environment are not permitted to wear nail varnish or false nails.

Facial/body piercing is not permitted and must be removed before coming on duty. This includes tongue studs. If staff have piercing for religious or cultural reasons, these must be covered and must not present a quantifiable health and safety or infection prevention and control risk.

2.7 Hair

Hair should be neat and tidy at all times and in the clinical environment long hair should be tied back and off the collar. Headscarves worn for religious purposes are permitted in most areas, however there are specific arrangements in areas such as theatre (5.4.10), where they could present a health and safety and cross-infection hazard. Beards should be short and neatly trimmed, unless this reflects the individual's religion where it should be tidy.

2.8 Facial Covers

Staff who wear facial coverings for religious reasons are expected to remove them whilst on duty. This will ensure that the member of staff is identifiable and facilitate communication with patients and their relatives or friends.

3.0 Trust Clinical Uniform Requirement (For nursing staff please see section 4.0)

General requirements for uniform wearers:

- 3.1** The uniform should be worn in a clean and presentable fashion and all staff must have access to a spare uniform in case one becomes soiled during the shift.
- 3.2** Smart and appropriate shoes (enclosed toe) should be worn, with appropriately coloured tights if wearing a dress.
- 3.3** Nail varnish, false nails and false eyelashes are not permitted. Nails should be sufficiently short to ensure safe patient contact and good hand hygiene.
- 3.4** The uniforms issued must not be altered or added to by the individual. If changes are required, they should be undertaken by the sewing room.
- 3.5** All staff should change out of their uniform before going off duty; if this is not possible, staff are permitted to travel between home and work in their uniform as long as it is covered

appropriately. This should be discussed with the appropriate manager to seek agreement for the staff member.

- 3.6 The wearing of the Trust uniform in public places such as a supermarket, is not acceptable.
- 3.7 Maternity uniforms will be provided for staff as necessary.
- 3.8 Staff who smoke must not smoke in uniform, or be identifiable as a health care worker.
- 3.9 The Trust does provide a laundry service but staff who choose not to use it must ensure that uniforms are laundered in accordance with guidance provided on the uniform. In the event of any confusion, staff should contact the infection prevention and control nurses for guidance.
- 3.10 All staff leaving the Trust, who have been provided with a Trust uniform must return their uniform to the sewing room. Failure to do so will result in the appropriate deduction of pay from the final salary, in line with the terms and conditions of the contract of employment (section 26).

4.0 Specific Uniform Groups provided by the Trust

Details are set out below for the principal staff groups affected.

4.1 Nurses, Midwives, Dental Nurses

- 4.1.1 The Chief Nurse, in consultation with the relevant Nurse Director and the Medical Director, can authorise the non-wearing of uniform in specific specialist roles where:
 - The client: clinician relationship has the potential to be compromised by the wearing of a uniform
 - The non wearing of a uniform will not create unacceptable risk to safety and infection control
 - Where agreement is reached on appropriate standards of dress to be applied by the individuals in place of the uniform
- 4.1.2 All nurses and midwives will be expected to wear an appropriately fitting Trust uniform which denotes their role when giving clinical care or administrative duties in a clinical setting (ward and departments).
- 4.1.3 All nurses and midwives should change into uniform immediately before commencing duty and change out of uniform before going off duty. If this is not possible, staff are permitted to travel between home and work in their uniform as long as it is covered appropriately. This should be discussed with the appropriate manager to seek agreement for the staff member.
- 4.1.4 Black / navy cardigans or jumpers may be worn off wards and when on breaks but must be removed before giving clinical care.
- 4.1.5 All nurses and midwives are required to wear footwear that is smart, fully enclosed soft soled and in black or navy blue only. Trainers are not acceptable except where a locally negotiated time limited health adjustment is required.
- 4.1.6 Tights should be neutral, barely black or grey with no greater than a 30 denier. Socks should be black or navy in keeping with choice of shoe colour.

- 4.1.7 Hair must be clean, neatly presented and worn off the collar, using plain hair accessories where necessary.
- 4.1.8 Nail varnish, false nails and false eyelashes are not permitted. Nails should be sufficiently short to ensure safe patient contact and good hand hygiene.

Wrist watches must not be worn. Jewellery for staff who work in clinical areas must be kept to a minimum; a single 'wedding ring' or equivalent and one pair of metal, gold or silver simple discreet stud earrings are permitted. Earrings with stones are not permitted. Neck chains must not be worn. Rings should not have protruding jewels or metal work or indentations where dirt and fluids may accumulate. The ring must be mobile enough to allow the wearer to wash underneath the ring.

N.B Staff who need to wear an alert bracelet should wear their alert pinned to their uniform and ensure that the Ward Manager is aware of their medical alert situation.

- 4.1.9 Dental nurses will wear tunics and trousers. They can wear designated "Charles Clifford Dental Hospital" scrub type tops (in the hospital only) in summer months, at the discretion of departmental managers.

4.2 Radiology, Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists

- 4.2.1 Radiographers, Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists will be issued uniforms, with a choice of tunic/trousers, polo shirts or dresses, or a combination.

5.0 Protective Clothing

- 5.1 A number of clinical and non clinical staff groups are required to wear protective clothing as part of their individual role. The principles are based upon the need for:

- Patient safety
- Personal safety
- Statutory regulatory requirements
- Work environment
- Health and safety requirements
- Infection control requirements

Principal staff groups affected:

5.2 Medical and Dental Staff

- 5.2.1 All medical staff should follow the policy set out in section 2 (clothing, footwear, jewellery and hair).

- 5.2.2 All clinical staff will need to comply with 'bare below the elbows' (BBTE) when providing direct care to patients or touching the immediate patient environment. Although staff do not need to be BBTE for the entire time they are in a clinical area, in practice rolling up sleeves, taking off wrist watches etc. between patients is impractical in most contexts, especially in areas where emergencies may occur e.g. wards, theatres etc. Therefore, staff should be BBTE whenever they are in a clinical area where they can reasonably expect to come into contact with patients or the immediate patient environment. This will include in-patient wards (particularly when undertaking ward rounds), theatres and out-patient departments".

A clinical area is any location in STH premises or off site at an outreach facility in which a clinical colleague undertakes physical examination or direct hands on care.

If staff fail to comply with BBTE, this will result in a failure in their hand hygiene audits carried out by both the IPCT and by trained ward staff.

All staff should be prepared to approach their colleagues if they are not complying with BBTE. Line managers will be informed by the IPCT if staff are persistently not adhering to the policy.

Sheffield Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust supports BBTE and therefore requires that;

- All clinical staff remove wrist watches/bracelets, including alert bracelets, when attending to a patient or when likely to touch the immediate patient environment
- Jewellery for staff who work in clinical areas must be kept to a minimum; a single 'wedding ring' or equivalent and one pair of metal, gold or silver simple discreet stud earrings are permitted. Earrings with stones are not permitted. Neck chains must not be worn. Rings should not have protruding jewels or metal work or indentations where dirt and fluids may accumulate. The ring must be mobile enough to allow the wearer to wash underneath the ring.
- Sleeves should be rolled up and above the elbow.

"Hands cannot be thoroughly and effectively washed if restricted by the wearing of a wrist watch or long sleeves, thus increasing the risk of cross infection for patients. Cuffs can become heavily contaminated and are likely to come into contact with patients"

- Ties be removed or secured.

"This will reduce the risk of cross contamination. Ties are rarely laundered but worn daily. They perform no beneficial function in patient care and have been shown to be colonised by pathogens."

- Long hair should be tied back and off the collar.

"Patients generally prefer to be treated by clinical staff with neat and tidy hair. Hair which is tied back off the collar is less likely to shed skin cells onto the patient/environment/wounds/medical devices, thus reducing the risk of cross contamination."

- Staff with direct patient contact must not wear false nails.

"False nails encourage the growth of bacteria and fungi around the nail bed, mainly because they severely limit the effectiveness of hand washing, but also because the nail bed is abraded to facilitate attachment of the false nail, and the fixative can sometimes give rise to nail bed damage. These issues may result in infection, particularly fungal infection, for the wearer and will certainly present a risk of cross infection for the patient."

N.B Staff who need to wear an alert bracelet should wear their alert pinned to their uniform and ensure that the Ward Manager is aware of their medical alert situation.

5.2.3 When dealing with patients, use of plastic aprons and gloves should comply with standard precautions and isolation precautions guidelines.

5.2.4 White coats may be worn if this is the preference of the individual. They must be regularly laundered.

5.3 Staff Wearing Scrubs (Theatre Blues/Greens)

In certain areas Scrubs (Theatre Blues/Greens) may be appropriate to the clinical work undertaken. However it is essential that the Trust Dress Code is maintained and scrubs should only be worn in designated areas.

Should areas seek to become designated areas, the Nurse Director / General Manager will be required to confirm their support for this, having undertaken appropriate checks and balances. This is likely to include risk assessment, health and safety, patient perception and value for money.

5.3.1 Scrubs must be clean at the beginning of every shift and changed each time they become stained with blood or body fluids.

5.4 Theatre Staff

In addition to the guiding principles in 5.3 the following will apply:

5.4.1 Staff should wear well fitted dedicated operating theatre footwear. This footwear should be 'full topped' (no holes) and with a back strap. These must be cleaned/decontaminated on a regular basis, particularly when visibly dirty or when contaminated with blood or body fluids. Each theatre suite manager should ensure that local procedures are in place for these procedures to take place.

5.4.2 The use of overshoes should be adhered to as recommended locally. The use of overshoes is not routinely recommended (research has demonstrated that there are problems with movement of bacteria from a bellows effect created when walking). If overshoes are used, staff must wash their hands following removal (ICNA 2002).

5.4.3 Consideration should be given when leaving the theatre area in regard to changing out of theatre scrubs. Examples of acceptable practice are:

- When attending a clinical emergency
- When accompanying a patient to another clinical area
- When undertaking duties to support clinical care

5.4.4 It is good practice NOT to wear theatre scrubs in public and non-clinical areas including the Dining Room. Staff should avoid wearing theatre scrubs in these areas.

When attending a clinical emergency, theatre headgear and masks should be removed.

5.4.5 It is NOT acceptable to wear theatre scrubs outside of the hospital, for example, on the shuttle bus, on public transport or in personal cars.

5.4.6 Within the operating theatre, hair must be entirely covered with a clean, disposable hat which should be changed at least daily or on leaving the theatre suite. Hats should be changed if they become contaminated with blood or body fluids. It is recommended that beards that cannot be controlled with a mask should be covered with a beard net with a mask on top. In the theatre suite when hats are not worn, hair should be tidy and off the collar.

- 5.4.7 It is recommended by the Infection Control Department that all immediate scrub teams should wear masks, but the wearing of masks by other operating theatre personnel should be at the discretion of the individual consultant surgeon involved. Every individual in the operating theatre should wear a mask when prostheses/implantation surgery is being performed, or if the patient is immunocompromised. Masks should be removed and disposed of at the end of each case, as they are single use items. Masks should not be worn hanging around the neck.
- 5.4.8 Protective eyewear with visors, appropriate aprons and gloves must be readily available in every theatre suite and their use enforced as per Standard Precautions and Infection Control Policy.
- 5.4.9 The routine use of agreed theatre gowns is recommended to protect both the patient and individual staff member.
- 5.4.10 Headscarves must not be worn if the individual is scrubbed to perform or assist in surgery. A disposable full theatre hood is available if requested.
- 5.4.11 Jewellery should be restricted to a plain wedding band and one pair of plain studded earrings. Wrist watches should not be worn.

5.5 Visitors to the Operating Theatre Complex

Theatre staff provide guidance to all visitors to the operating theatres on what to wear. Any visitor entering an operating theatre must change into scrubs and suitable footwear.

5.6 Other Health Professional Groups

This group includes:

- Pharmacists / Pharmacy Technicians
- Clinical Scientists
- Medical Physics
- Laboratory staff

5.6.1 Staff are expected to comply with the Trust Dress Code Policy and also comply with local regulatory and good practice requirements. This reflects the individual environment and materials handled (please refer to 1.6).

5.7 Capital, Estates Facilities and Hotel Services Staff

5.7.1 Some staff within this directorate have specific clothing requirements based upon the need for:

- Personal safety
- Hygiene
- Statutory regulatory requirement
- Work environment (including outside working)
- Infection control
- Catering

5.7.2 All catering staff involved in the preparation and service of food must wear the appropriate uniform, headwear and, where required, protective shoes.

5.7.3 For hygiene and health and safety reasons, no jewellery can be worn other than a single 'wedding ring' or equivalent and one pair of discreet stud earrings (i.e. no

inserts or stones). Jewellery for any of these staff who are working in clinical areas must be kept to a minimum. Rings should not have protruding jewels or metal work or indentations where dirt and fluids may accumulate. The ring must be mobile enough to allow the wearer to wash underneath the ring (see section 5.2.2).

5.7.4 Staff working in a kitchen environment must ensure that their hair is kept covered at all times, and beards must be covered with an appropriate facial mask/hood when preparing food.

5.8 CSSD

5.8.1 The guidelines relating to uniform in a clean room environment must be adhered to at all times and the CSSD Manager will ensure staff are trained and aware of their responsibilities. In general, the guidelines relating to theatre staff in 5.6 also apply to CSSD staff.

6.0 Policy Review

6.1 The policy will be reviewed in one year from the date of ratification and every three years thereafter.