DRESS CODE POLICY

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.

Equality Impact Assessment:

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Version history

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Document Imprint

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Dress Code Policy
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). Local dress codes must be subject to relevant assessments which would include an equality impact assessment and a risk and health safety assessment (see STHFT’s Risk Assessment Form), 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.

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 clinical staff must be kept to a minimum; a plain/wedding ring and one pair of discreet stud earrings are permitted. Wrist watches must not be worn when providing clinical care, which includes examining patients.

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. Headscarves worn for religious purposes are permitted in most areas, however they are excluded in areas such as theatre, 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. Beards should be covered with a hood when undertaking aseptic procedures.

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

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 fully covered by a coat. 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 a Trust uniform which denotes their role when giving clinical care or administrative duties in a clinical setting (ward and departments).

4.1.3 Black /navy cardigans or jumpers may be worn off wards and when on breaks but must be removed before giving clinical care.

4.1.4 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 In addition, medical and dental staff (including students) should ensure that when examining patients:

- Sleeves are rolled up above the elbow or short sleeves are worn;
- Wrist watches are removed
- Ties, scarves and other items of clothing must not be allowed to hang down, they must be secured
- Long hair is tied back.

5.2.3 When dealing with patients at risk, plastic aprons and gloves should be worn to 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)

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

Should areas seek to become designated areas, the Nurse Director/ General Manger 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.

5.3.2 When leaving these areas, the member of staff should change into their own clothes. If requested, the Trust will supply 1 uniform for a nurse/midwife.

5.3.3 Unless attending a clinical emergency, it is not acceptable to wear scrubs outside the theatre environment.

5.3.4 When attending a clinical emergency, scrubs should be covered with a clean white coat and theatre headgear and masks removed.

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. 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 Scrubs are not to be worn outside the designated area; the only exception being:

• When attending a clinical emergency where a white coat should be worn;
• When accompanying a patient to another clinical area, a plastic apron should cover scrubs
• When undertaking duties to support clinical care e.g. pharmacy, kitchen, wards etc.

5.4.4 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 should be covered with a hood.

5.4.5 It is recommended by the Infection Control Department that all 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 immuno-compromised. 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.

5.4.6 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.

5.4.7 The routine use of agreed theatre gowns is recommended to protect both the patient and individual staff member. Staff in scrubs who attend emergencies outside the theatre complex, must change into a clean pair of scrubs on returning to theatre.

5.4.8 Headscarves must not be worn in the operating theatre.

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
- 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 plain band/wedding ring, and a pair of plain small stud earrings (i.e. no inserts or stones).

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.