Uniform and Appearance at Work/ Dress Code Policy
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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out the Uniform and appearance at work/dress code principles for Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust. This policy is to protect the safety of patients and employees by ensuring the uniform and appearance at work/dress code of employees complies with infection, prevention and control requirements, Health and Safety legislation and to ensure that all employees present a clean, smart professional image. All employees are expected to portray a professional image to patients/carers and members of the public.

The policy acknowledges personal and cultural diversity where this does not compromise the safety of patients or employees, or damage the professional standing of the individual or the organisation. Employees are advised that any proposed deviation from this policy because of cultural, ethnic, religious and physical considerations wherever possible should be agreed in consultation with the employee’s Line Manager, Infection Prevention and Control team (ICPT), the Human Resources department and Health and Safety.

Repeated failure to adhere to the policy may result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with the Trust’s Disciplinary Policy.

The use of personal protective equipment is dealt with under the Trusts Policy for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) policy and the Infection Prevention & Control Manual.

The policy describes standards for all employees and specific standards for employees directly involved in the delivery of care. As well as the general standards, there are additional, more stringent requirements for employees providing direct care, who may or may not be required to wear uniform. In order to comply with this policy, all direct care employees must have enough (i.e. sufficient for daily changes) sets of uniform to facilitate good practice in the areas of infection, prevention and control and health and safety.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Uniform and Dress Code at Work policy is to ensure that all employees are clear on the standard of appearance/dress expected while at work, whether uniform or non-uniform. The appearance at work/dress code details the standards and image which the Trust wishes to convey to all patients/carers, partners and members of the public. This policy outlines the legislation relating to dress codes and uniforms within the workplace. This policy will be implemented to ensure that safe practice and a positive corporate identity is adhered to.

In all cases, the following principles should be supported and promoted, in order to adhere to the recognised legal framework.
• Health, safety and well-being of patients (See definitions 5.1)
• Health, safety and well-being of employees
• Infection prevention and control
• Public confidence and professional image
• Professional accountability, as defined by professional bodies/councils

The objectives of this policy are:

• To ensure employees maintain a positive professional image
• To ensure employees wear clothing in line with the principles of this policy
• To ensure that infection prevention and control and health and safety issues are addressed

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to those members of staff that are directly employed by the organisation and for whom the Trust has legal responsibility. For those staff covered by a letter of authority or honorary contract a volunteer or apprentice agreement or work experience this policy is also applicable whilst undertaking duties on behalf of the Trust or working on the organisation’s premises and forms part of their arrangements with the organisation. As part of good employment practice, agency workers are also required to abide by the organisation’s policies and procedures, as appropriate, to ensure their health, safety and welfare whilst undertaking work for the organisation.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES, ACCOUNTABILITIES AND DUTIES

4.1. Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility and accountability for the health, safety and welfare of the workforce. Through delegated responsibility to the Director of Workforce and Organisational Development the Chief Executive will ensure there is a system in place for establishing and maintaining this policy and for meeting all statutory requirements and adhering to guidance issued in respect of the procedural document.

4.2 Directors

All Directors have a responsibility to ensure that the policy is consistently applied across their directorate/Care Groups.

4.3 Managers

Managers must ensure that the Uniform and Appearance at Work/Dress Code Policy and Procedure is implemented within his/her area of responsibility and that employees in their area are aware of the policy and any other departmental guidance relevant to their area.
Managers must also ensure that:

- A safe and healthy working environment is maintained where dress code, appearance or uniform is appropriate to the duties being undertaken, including the use of personal protective equipment/ Health and Safety Equipment.

- Any concerns raised by an employee where he/she believes that his/her personal requirements or circumstances are not being met in relation to this policy are addressed, thereby avoiding any discriminatory practices. The manager should meet with the employee, where relevant, supported by a HR Representative, to discuss their personal requirements. The employee should be offered the right to a companion at the meeting. The definition of a companion is contained in the Disciplinary Policy. Any deviation from the policy, where possible should be agreed with the employees Line Manager, IPCT, the Human Resources department and Health and Safety.

- Employees are aware of this policy and local requirements and have access to the correct uniform for their area of work from their start date and throughout their employment.

- An initial full set of uniforms is ordered, dependant on job role, hours worked etc.

- Replacement uniforms are provided as required and in agreement with the line manager and the employee.

- Take immediate action where an employee does not comply with the dress code, appearance or uniform requirements set out in this policy.

4.4 Employees

It is an employee’s responsibility to:

- Adhere to the standards of dress and personal appearance appropriate to their staff group and job role at all times.

- Inform their manager in a timely manner should their uniforms need replacing.

- Inform their manager of any discretionary reason which may mean they need adjustments to be accommodated under this policy.

- Comply with this and any other associated policies and procedures.

- Check with their manager if unsure how this policy may apply / not apply.
4.5 Human Resources

The Human Resources department will provide guidance to Managers and employees on the Policy and Procedure.

Human Resources will also offer support and advice to both managers and employees who wish to discuss a deviation from the policy due to cultural/religious/medical or personal reasons.

4.6 Sewing Room

This section is only applicable to Section 5.5 - Uniforms.

Uniforms should be supplied in quantities sufficient to ensure compliance with this policy and to allow for a clean (washed) uniform to be worn each day.

Maternity wear will be loaned for the duration of the pregnancy and the quantity will be dependent on the working pattern of the employee. Following the maternity leave, the maternity wear should be returned to the Sewing Room.

For new employees their uniform will be issued in accordance with the principles outlined above within four weeks of the uniform request being received.

Replacement uniforms will normally be issued within four weeks of receipt of the appropriately authorised documentation.

5. PROCEDURE/IMPLEMENTATION:

5.1 Definitions

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:

Patient – this term is used when referring to the NHS population as a whole. Also for the purpose of this policy it is used to mean, service user, resident, client etc.

Direct care – this term refers to employees in both clinical and non-clinical settings who give direct hands-on patient care e.g. assisting with personal hygiene, giving injections or have face to face engagement with the patient.

Non-direct care – this term refers to employees that do not provide direct patient care, but may refer to employees who have access to/ work with patient equipment/patient environment.

Infection prevention and control - is the prevention and management of infection through the application of research based knowledge to practices.
that include standard precautions, decontamination, waste management, surveillance and audit.

**PPE – Personal Protective Equipment**

5.2 **All Staff – General Principles**

5.2.1 **Personal Hygiene**

All employees should maintain a high level of personal hygiene.

5.2.2 **Identification Badges**

All employees must wear their Trust identification badges (ID) at all times in all areas of the organisation for security and identity purposes. Whilst not on duty, when away from Trust premises, taking a lunch break, or at the end of the day, the ID badge should be covered or removed for personal safety reasons.

Employees can either wear safety lanyards or a clip-on badge, as appropriate to the area of work.

Employees who are out in the community with patients should ensure that they have their ID badge with them in the event they are required to formally identify themselves.

5.2.3 **Compensation for damage to Personal Clothing**

Employees are required to adopt a common-sense approach with regard to the clothing, jewellery, glasses etc. that they wear to work in terms of expense. Employees must ensure that articles are appropriate to the type of work that they carry out and must also be mindful of any potential for damage to/loss of personal property, which may arise as a result of carrying out their duties.

The organisation discourages employees from coming to work in overly expensive or “designer” items and where employees choose to do so and subsequently make a claim for damage to/loss of such items the organisation reserves the right to impose an upper limit of the amount of compensation it will reimburse.

All claims for compensation for damage to/loss of personal clothing will be reviewed by the Director of Finance and will be considered in line with this Policy. Employees will therefore only be compensated for damage to personal clothing/property that was worn in line with the requirements of this Policy.

All incidents where personal clothing/property is damaged or lost whilst at work must be reported on an Incident reporting form (IR1). Wherever possible, if a request for reimbursement is to be made this must be clearly
documented on the incident reporting form and receipt(s) for the damaged items attached, where available.

5.3 Non-Uniform Staff – Dress for Work

RDaSH is a multi-professional, multi-disciplinary multi-cultural health care provider. Certain services of the Trust employ patient facing staff who are not required to wear a uniform. All staff groups who are non-uniform wearers must dress in a manner which is presentable and smart in appearance to inspire patient and public confidence.

Employees who wear their own clothes should ensure that they are suitable for work purposes; are clean and in a good state of repair, and should look professional at all times. The following should not be worn:

- Staff should maintain a degree of modesty by not wearing clothes that are revealing and may cause embarrassment or offence, (e.g. above mid-thigh length; tops that are low cut, backless; show the midriff or underwear or transparent clothing)

- Clothes portraying large advertisements; sports clothing; etc.

- Clothing that could be interpreted as intimidating or threatening, (e.g. combat fatigues).

- Ripped or torn clothing.

- Denim clothing in office/inpatient and community areas.

- Clothing which poses a health and safety risk due to the length of the garment, e.g. maxi dresses

Appropriate footwear should be worn for the environment.

Dependent on the job role clothing which covers the face may not be permitted. Where an employee or applicant requests a change to their uniform the Manager will adhere to the guidance detailed in section 4.3 – Managers Responsibilities. For example, employees who are in contact with patients, carers or visitors, nor for employees in other roles where clear face to face communication is essential. In these circumstances, employees in these areas who wish to wear a veil for religious reasons can do so when they are not working.

5.4 Non-Uniform staff in direct patient contact.

Employees who wear their own clothes rather than a uniform (e.g. some Community staff and medical staff) when working in a care/clinical environment should adhere to the general principles of the standards set out above. In particular, they should ensure that their clothes, shoes and
permitted jewellery (where appropriate) do not pose a potential hazard to
themselves, patients and other employees from both an infection
prevention and control and a health and safety perspective. Employees
who wear their own clothes rather than a uniform when working in a
clinical environment (which includes the patient's home) should also
ensure that they portray a professional image at all times. Employees
must ensure that they follow the principles outlined in Appendix 1.

5.5 Uniforms

All employees who are ‘uniformed’ are required to wear the uniform
provided and agreed by the Trust this includes some form of PPE. Most
localities in the Trust do not have facilities for uniform laundering.
Therefore, employees are required to wash their own uniform as detailed
in 5.11.

The Trust has agreed uniform designs for designated grades of staff and
these are detailed in Appendix Three.

For those employees who wear a uniform when working the following
must be observed:

- Employees who are required to wear a uniform will be provided with an
  adequate number of uniforms complete by the Trust. The Trust will,
  within resources available, purchase quality clothing that meets
  infection prevention and control and Health and Safety requirements,
  and reduces replacement costs.

- All uniforms must be clean, ironed and presentable and employees
  should have access to a spare uniform in case of accidental
  contamination by bodily fluids or any other noxious/toxic substance.

- Employees must presume some degree of contamination following a
  shift, even if uniform or clothing is not visibly soiled. Employees
  wherever possible should change out of their uniform promptly at the
  end of each shift ideally before leaving the premises (for further clarity
  refer to section 5.6). A clean and freshly laundered uniform must be
  worn daily.

- Trust uniforms should not be altered in any way without permission
  from an appropriate manager.

5.6 Additional Requirements for Uniformed and Non Uniformed
Employees working in Clinical Areas

All direct care/face to face providing employees, when they are on duty,
should wear their regulation uniform, in compliance with this policy. This
will also project a professional image and encourage public trust and
confidence, as well as contribute to the corporate image that all
employees and the Trust wish to present. The uniform provided must be worn and maintained in a clean condition and in good repair.

Employees should ideally change into non-uniform clothing before leaving work. Where there are no changing facilities the uniform, wherever possible must be covered discreetly for the journey to and from work or between patients.

Clothing should allow sufficient hip and shoulder movement for the safe moving and handling requirements of the job.

Stockings, tights and socks (blue, black or neutral etc.) should not detract from the overall appearance of the uniform.

Employees should not wear neck ties during any care activity which involves patient contact. This includes all clinical settings, such as wards/community settings, outpatient clinics and ward rounds.

Washable cardigans may be worn but not when in care/clinical areas/patient areas and/or attending to patients.

Clean and dirty/contaminated uniforms must not be stored or transported together because of the risk of cross-contamination.

Where a headscarf or a veil is worn, as part of religious observance employees must ensure that the flow of the garment does not interfere with work practice. This must be changed on a daily basis to reduce the risk of cross infection.

Similarly, any employee who has a need for special consideration to be given to their appropriate clothing due to religious observance or having a disability should bring this to the attention of their line manager, seeking support and guidance from Occupational Health, IPCT and Human Resources as necessary.

Pens/scissors or any other sharp instrument should not be carried in outside breast pockets as this may cause injury when moving patients. Such items should be carried in hip pockets or inside breast pockets, and should be removed whilst carrying out clinical duties.

5.6.1 Infection Prevention and Control

All employees working in a direct/face to face clinical role (regardless of whether they wear uniform or not) MUST apply the ‘bare below the elbow’ principles when providing direct care to patients or touching the immediate patient environment. Please refer to the hand hygiene procedure in Infection Control Manual.

- All wrist and hand jewellery must be removed – except one PLAIN ring with no stones
• No false nails, nail varnish clear or coloured or nail adornments should be worn

• No long sleeves below the elbow

• False eyelashes must not be worn.

When undertaking clinical procedures, long sleeved garments (i.e. cardigans) must be removed. Where long sleeved garments cannot be removed (i.e. blouses and shirts), it must be possible for the sleeves to be rolled up to above elbow height, and for them to remain up independently throughout the duration of the procedure.

Good hand hygiene is well recognised as the single most effective way to reduce the risk of cross infection (please refer to the Trust’s Infection Control Policy – Hand Hygiene), however contact transfer of bacteria from uniforms leading to transmission of infection has also been recognised.

Studies have shown that maximum contamination occurs in areas of greatest hand contact, like pockets, cuffs and apron areas, allowing the re-contamination of washed hands. Higher numbers of organisms have also been found on the hands of staff wearing rings and the presence of rings has also shown to decrease the effectiveness of hand washing.

The organisation provides uniforms and personal protective clothing to all members of clinical staff. Employees must ensure that they use appropriate PPE as required to reduce the risk of cross infection. Disposable aprons must be changed in-between patients, between episodes of care on one patient, or before leaving the clinical area or patient’s home in order to adhere to Infection Prevention and Control principles.

5.6.1.1 Nails

Finger nails must be kept short and clean. Care/clinical staff must not wear nail varnish, clear or coloured or nail art whilst on duty. The wearing of false/acrylic/gel nails, nail varnish and nail adornments is strictly forbidden for staff engaging with patients as they pose an infection prevention and control risk. Please refer to the Trust’s Hand Hygiene Policy.

5.6.1.2 Hair

Hair must be clean, well-groomed and off the collar (for clinical uniformed staff). Keeping hair off the collar reduces the incidence of bacterial growth around the collar area. Uniformed staff must have their hair tied back if longer than shoulder length. Where hair clips are worn, they must be plain and not have the potential to injure employees or patients, and must comply with health and safety and infection control standards. Extreme hair styles and colours are not acceptable.
5.6.1.3 Jewellery

Employees should ensure that their permitted jewellery is discreet and appropriate in clinical areas, following the bare below the elbows principle, so that it does not pose a risk to themselves or others and promotes a professional image. Facial piercings should remain discreet and should be plain and flat. This is to avoid potential harm and also to present a professional image.

Any piercings or jewellery which may cause an infection prevention and control hazard must therefore be covered or removed; this also includes dermal piercing jewellery, which is not permitted to be worn below the elbow. Employees who are required to wear jewellery for religious reason e.g. a Kara (steel bangle) may do so provided that it is pushed up the arm and taped to enable effective hand hygiene. Alternatively, disposable over sleeves may be worn for single episodes of care. Strict adherence to washing hands and wrists must be observed before and after use of these. If Medic Alert jewellery needs to be worn, this should be worn off the wrist by securing it to the high/mid forearm area or worn as a necklace, anklet or attached to the uniform.

Employees whose religion requires them to wear a religious symbol may do so provided that they are discrete and comply with infection prevention control and health and safety policies. Care/clinical staff may wear a **plain** ring with no stones and one small pair of plain stud earrings. Wrist watches must be removed at the start of the working day/shift when giving direct patient care. No necklaces, bracelets, anklets, or fitness bands are to be worn.

Employees can wear their ID and one other appropriate badge.

5.6.1.4 Tattoos

Visible tattoos are discouraged and where present must not be offensive to others. Employees who have tattoos should ensure that they are not visible where possible. New tattoos must be covered with a waterproof dressing until they are healed. While working in an area where bare below the elbows are required the covering of the tattoo must not contravene this principle.

5.6.1.5 Footwear

Shoes must be suitable for the work task and in keeping with any requirement of PPE. For clinical staff they must be made of a material that can be cleaned in the event of body fluid contamination.

5.6.1.6 Badges, Belts and Buckles

RDaSH identification badges **must** be worn at all times, which must be sticker free.
Nurse belt and buckles may be worn by staff wearing dresses but should be removed prior to manual handling of patients and cleaned regularly as per the instructions.

5.7 Health and Safety

Employees must fully co-operate with the Trust in meeting their legal responsibilities in relation to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Clothing and footwear should be appropriate for the type of work individuals carry out, and not expose oneself or others to unnecessary risk.

Potential hazards relating to clothing worn should be considered as part of the risk assessment process. Employees issued with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or clothing for their safety must ensure they are worn, stored, used, cleaned, maintained, serviced and disinfected as appropriate and in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations (the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations, 2002)

5.8 Laundry Guidance

Employees who are required to wear a uniform will be provided with an adequate number of uniforms and managers will ensure that uniforms are requested correctly.

Employees should presume some degree of contamination even on uniform or clothing which is not visibly soiled. A clean (washed) uniform should be worn daily.

Wash uniforms separately from any other items in a washing machine at the hottest temperature suitable for the fabric. A wash for ten minutes at 60°C removes/destroys most micro-organisms (DOH 2007).

Non uniformed direct/indirect care staff should ensure that items of clothing are able to be washed at a temperature of 60°C in order for thermal disinfection to be achieved. Alternatively, clothing must be washed at the hottest possible temperature the fabric will withstand.

The following guidance must also be followed;

- Hand washing uniforms is ineffective and therefore not acceptable
- Dry quickly, or tumble dry and iron

5.9 Wearing of uniform whilst not at work

Where locker room and changing facilities are available employees are encouraged to travel to and from work in their own clothes. For areas where changing facilities are not provided the uniform must be covered discreetly for the journey to and from the workplace, between patients or
on an allocated break when the employee is off site. (The Trust acknowledges that community staff may not be able to effectively cover their uniforms whilst travelling between patients in hot weather).

Uniforms must not be worn in any retail or recreational premises while not at work. Although there is no evidence of an infection risk from such activities, this ensures a professional image is maintained at all times.

5.10 Changes to Uniform in Extreme Weather Conditions

There may be circumstances where the wearing of all, or part of, the uniform may cause difficulties to employees, for example in extremely hot or cold weather. Changes may be allowed at local level following discussion between employees and managers and ensuring that no infection prevention and control requirements are breached.

5.11 Failure to Comply with the Policy

*Where there are instances of employees failing to comply with the policy, Managers will remind the employee of the contents of the policy and the expectation that they will comply with it. If an employee having failed to comply with the policy on a previous occasion fails to do so on a second occasion, then they may be sent home from that particular shift and not receive pay for the period of time that they did not work due to the failure to follow policy. Disciplinary action may also be considered and in cases of repeated failure to abide by the policy may result in an individual's dismissal from employment with the Trust.

5.12 Right of Redress

Should any individual object to expectations either set out in this policy or in any supplementary guidance issued at departmental level, this should be addressed in accordance with the Trust Grievance and Dispute Policy.

6. TRAINING IMPLICATIONS

<table>
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<th>Training delivered by whom</th>
<th>Where are the records of attendance held?</th>
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8. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed on this policy and is published on the Trust website.

8.1 **Privacy, Dignity and Respect**

The NHS Constitution states that all patients should feel that their privacy and dignity are respected while they are in hospital. High Quality Care for All (2008), Lord Darzi’s review of the NHS, identifies the need to organise care around the individual, ‘not just clinically but in terms of dignity and respect’.

As a consequence the Trust is required to articulate its intent to deliver care with privacy and dignity that treats all service users with respect. Therefore, all procedural documents will be considered, if relevant, to reflect the requirement to treat everyone with privacy, dignity and respect, (when appropriate this should also include how same sex accommodation is provided).

8.2 **Mental Capacity Act**

Central to any aspect of care delivered to adults and young people aged 16 years or over will be the consideration of the individuals capacity to participate in the decision making process. Consequently, no intervention should be carried out without either the individuals informed consent, or the powers included in a legal framework, or by order of the Court.

Therefore, the Trust is required to make sure that all staff working with individuals who use our service are familiar with the provisions within the Mental Capacity Act. For this reason all procedural documents will be considered, if relevant to reflect the provisions of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 to ensure that the interests of an individual whose capacity is in question can continue to make as many decisions for themselves as possible.
9. **LINKS TO ANY ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

- Infection Prevention and Control Procedure Manual
- Disciplinary Policy,
- Grievance and Dispute Procedure, During
- Hand Hygiene Policy,
- Trust Smoke Free Policy,
- Laundry Policy,
- Claims Handling Policy for the Management of Clinical Negligence Claims, Employer/Public Liability Claims and Property Expense Section Claims

10. **REFERENCES**

Department of Health Uniform and Work Wear (2007) An evidence base for developing local policy

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) Section 2 and 3

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (2002)

The Health and Social Care Act Department of Health (2012)

RCN Guidance on Uniforms and Work Wear (2009)


11. **APPENDICES**

Appendix One - Uniform and Appearance at Work/Dress Code Summary

Appendix Two - Pictorial uniform summary by Grade/Area
Uniform and Appearance at Work/Dress Code Summary

The expectation is that all staff will attend work suitably attired and in accordance with this policy. However, both the Trust and all its employers have specific responsibilities around:

- Infection Prevention and Control
- Health and Safety

Therefore whenever engaging in direct patient contact activities or in the patient’s home/environment all employees must adhere to the following:

- Hand hygiene to be performed before and after every patient and/or patient environment
- Bare Below the Elbows must be adhered to facilitate good hand hygiene
- No false/long or varnished nails
- Hair to be tied back if longer than collar length, especially when handling or serving meals/drinks or food for patients
- Protective clothing to be worn as appropriate when undertaking direct care activities
- No jewellery, adornments or fashion accessories to be worn except for:
  - 1 Plain ring.
  - 1 Pair metal ear studs.
  - 1 Fob watch.
- No visible body piercing. Any other body piercings are worn at individuals’ own risk.
- Appropriate footwear, low heels, flat shoes that protect and cover the foot of the wearer. No sandals or mules or similar open footwear.