# DRESS CODE AND UNIFORM PROCEDURE
## STAFF WORKING IN CLINICAL AREAS

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<th>PROCEDURE NUMBER:</th>
<th>CPG41a</th>
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<td>VERSION NUMBER:</td>
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**KEY CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS VERSION**
- Guidance on polo shirts for CMH and StaRS / MVA staff; amendments regarding uniform provision (4.9); changing uniforms before / after shifts (4.11); 4.16 – reference to CHS removed;
- 7.2 – amendment regarding lanyard provision;
- 7.3 – guidance regarding Lone Worker Devices removed due to change in device; 15.2d – guidance on scrub usage by visiting senior staff or those otherwise not based on ward
- Extension applied Sept 2020; further extension March 2021

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**CONSULTATION:**
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- Facility & Catering Leads
- Pharmacy leads
- Admin leads
- Allied leads
- Workforce Education & Training Leads
- Clinical Governance & Quality Sub-Committee

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**
September 2017

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**LAST REVIEW DATE:**
N/A

**NEXT REVIEW DATE:**
September 2020 March June 2021

**APPROVAL BY CLINICAL GOVERNANCE & QUALITY SUB-COMMITTEE:**
20th September 2017

**RATIFICATION BY QUALITY COMMITTEE:**
14th December 2017

**POLICY SUMMARY**

The Dress Code and Uniform Policy and associated Procedure provide clarity as to the minimum standards of dress and personal presentation expected of all staff both directly employed and contracted workers participating in duties within the Trust. The aim is to ensure that all staff present themselves in a manner that offer clear and consistent identification of staff, allowing both service users and visitors to approach staff with confidence. This promotes the image of the Trust in a positive and professional manner.

The Trust monitors the implementation of and compliance with this policy in the following ways:

Managers will ensure staff are aware and understand this policy and standards required. Line Managers will ensure that this uniform and dress code policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed in their areas.

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The Director responsible for monitoring and reviewing this procedure is the
Executive Nurse
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Dress Code and Uniform policy and procedure for clinical staff outlines the standards expected by Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) in relation to its clinical employees’ dress and presentation, whilst at work or when representing the Trust.

1.2 This policy sets out the minimum standard of dress and applies to all clinical staff in uniform and non-uniform employed by or seconded to the Trust. It also applies to individuals who are on placement within the Trust (students etc.) and those subcontracted into the Trust, i.e. agency staff, locums and volunteers etc.

1.3 The aim is to ensure that all clinical staff in uniform and non-uniform presents themselves in a manner that complies, where necessary, with risk management and infection control policies and promotes the image of the Trust in a positive and professional manner so all staff are treated equally.

1.4 The uniform will provide a professional corporate image and offer clear and consistent identification of staff, allowing both patients and visitors to identify Trust personnel and also able to approach staff with confidence.

1.5 The professional image presented by clinical and frontline staff is an important component in the way it is regarded by colleagues, patients and the general public.

2.0 SCOPE

2.1 This dress code and uniform procedure is applicable to clinical staff in direct or indirect contact with service users and the public.

2.2 For those staff not required to wear a Trust uniform the dress code principles outlined in this policy and procedure must be followed. This includes both clinical and non-clinical staff including those on placement (students, etc.), locum and volunteers.
2.3 The Trust approved uniform will be worn by the following group of staff:

a) MENTAL HEALTH, LEARNING DISABILITY INPATIENT and SPECIALITY SERVICES:
- All inpatient nursing and inpatient support staff including bank staff.
- Housekeepers
- Physiotherapists.
- All pharmacy technicians and support workers.
- Also those subcontracted into the Trust i.e. agency staff and locum.
- Activity co-ordinator / Extended Hours Technicians.
- Occupational Therapists (OT) (Specific teams only i.e. physical rehabilitation and orientation where it has been specifically identified by the head(s) of service that the use of uniform is essential for the activities required. All OTs and all Speech and Language Therapy staff in Mental Health and Learning Disabilities will not be wearing a uniform).
- Community Mental Health staff including STARs and MVA teams can wear Trust approved polo shirts with NHS logo.

b) COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES i.e. District nurses, etc.:
- All inpatient nursing and support staff.
- Housekeepers
- All community health nursing and support staff.
- Podiatry.
- Specialist Services (Children Nursing and Palliative Care).
- Dental service as agreed by their managers.
- Physiotherapists.
- Occupational Therapists (OT).
- All Pharmacy technicians and support workers.
- Also those subcontracted into the Trust i.e. agency staff and locum.

c) HOUSEKEEPING STAFF

Housekeepers will be issued with purple polo shirts/purple tunics with purple trim pipes and black trousers. In exceptional circumstance where a member of staff doesn't like wearing trousers at all, a special order of a purple dress with white pipe can be made via purchasing department.

3.0 INFECTION CONTROL

3.1 All staff entering clinical area or providing clinical care must comply with the 'bare below the elbows' (DOH 2007) code. Staff in direct clinical contact with patients must follow universal infection control principles, and take care to protect themselves and patients by wearing appropriate protective clothing items e.g. gloves and plastic aprons and other personal protective equipment.

3.2 All non-catering department food handlers will wear suitable clean protective clothing (white disposable aprons) when involved in serving food. This must be changed for each meal service and will only be worn for food handling duties.
3.3 Catering staff and catering support staff, are required to adhere to CP41d (Catering Staff Uniform) regarding the correct wearing of uniform and the dress code.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

**Clinical Staff/staff working in clinical areas where wearing uniform is required:**

4.1 Nursing/clinical staff (including those in training) and associated support workers are required to adhere to this procedure and associated policy regarding the correct wearing of uniform and the dress code.

4.2 Uniforms must be complete and worn correctly whilst staffs are on duty. Appearance of staff and the way in which the uniform is worn may affect the patient and their relative's perception of efficiency and professionalism.

4.3 Members of staff must not wear their uniform for any purpose other than their employment with the Trust.

4.4 When working bank shifts, staff should wear a uniform appropriate to the setting and the role in which they are employed to work. If a uniform is not provided they should wear an outfit that blends in with the uniform guidelines relevant to their discipline.

4.5 Students will be expected to abide by this procedure and wear their university name badge.

4.6 Nurses awaiting NMC registration, who have been appointed to a clinical preceptorship post and pharmacy staff awaiting their professional registration will wear the inpatient corporate uniform. A Trust preregistration name badge must be worn.

4.7 Nurses who are required to re-submit their final assignment will continue to wear their student uniform.

4.8 A fresh clean uniform must be worn each day and washed at a temperature of 60° for Infection Control purposes.

4.9 All inpatient clinical staff working full time will be issued with five sets of uniforms each (part-time staff will be issued with a reduced number of uniforms in line with their work patterns) and will be expected to wear a fresh clean uniform every day. Community mental health staff will be issued with three sets each if working full time; one set if working one day, two sets if two days and three sets for anyone working three or more days a week. (CPG41a Appendix 1)

4.10 On commencement of training or employment within the Trust, all clinical staff and non-clinical staff required to wear uniform will be provided with a full uniform. While waiting for the uniform to be supplied staff should wear an outfit that blends in with the clinical and non-clinical uniform.
guidelines relevant to their discipline.

4.11 Staff must presume some degree of contamination, even on clothing which does not appear soiled. Therefore it is recommended that the uniform is changed before leaving the ward and worn when at work. Further information on wearing own clothes when travelling to and from work is on paragraph 13.2 below.

4.12 Pregnant – A list of maternity garments can be found in CPG41a Appendix 1. These are the only garments that are currently available for pregnant staff. For other garments that are not listed, it is suggested that pregnant staff order bigger size(s) of their regular uniform or wear an outfit that blends with colour of their uniform.

4.13 Any other staff who are subjected to a change in dress code as a result of injury / risk assessment under Health & Safety legislation will wear an outfit to blend in with their uniform.

4.14 Staffs who are required to cover their arms for religious reasons must discuss this with their relevant assistant director of service and Infection Control Nurse.

4.15 Clothes that become contaminated with body fluids must be changed at the first opportunity as they pose a risk of the spread of infection.

4.16 In hot weather uniform must continue to be worn with exception to inpatient settings where scrubs could be worn in temperatures above 25 degrees Celsius. Staff should note that scrubs will not be worn outside the wards and this will be monitored by service managers.

4.17 Any one that has allergies should discuss with their manager and decide whether they should wear an outfit that blends in with the uniform guidelines relevant to their discipline.

5.0 SHOES/ SOCKS/ STOCKINGS/ TIGHTS/ BUCKLES

5.1 All staff will wear plain fully closed shoes with flat heels no higher than inch and a half. Footwear should be safe, sensible and in good order.

5.2 Within some disciplines trainers are permitted to be worn if required for the role. These should be plain in colour.

5.3 Unless alternative trainer colour has been approved by senior manager.

5.4 Flip-flops are not permitted Trust- wide as staff can incur accidents, broken toes, trips and falls in any area.

5.5 Permission may be given temporarily for other footwear to be worn where medical reasons prevail, always remembering health and safety regulations.

5.6 Stocking or tights when worn must be barely black/ black or of natural colour.
5.7 Socks must be plain black.

5.8 Belts & buckles for nurses’ dresses are not permitted.

5.9 Shoes / boots must be durable enough to withstand decontamination to minimise cross infection, i.e. must be a wipeable, smooth outer textile / leather

### 6.0 FLEECES / CARDIGANS

6.1 Fleeces/Cardigans may be worn outside of clinical areas. These must be plain navy or black (see Appendix 1) and laundered frequently.

6.2 Fleeces/Cardigans are not to be worn during clinical interventions as staff needs to be mindful of the cross-infection guidelines when direct care/contact or clinical intervention is being carried out with the patient i.e. the requirement for sleeves above the elbow.

6.3 Jumpers with long sleeves may not be worn at any time under or over tunics.

6.4 Unisex waterproof fleece lined coat will be provided for community health staff wearing uniforms only (Appendix 1).

### 7.0 IDENTIFICATION CARDS AND LANYARDS

7.1 Trust issued photo identification (ID) card indicating the name and job title of the individual member of staff must be worn and be clearly visible at all times while on duty. This can be removed when outside NHS property but must be accessible if required.

7.2 If worn, neck lanyards should have a maximum length between breakaways of 8.5” / 21cm therefore providing 4 or 5 breakaway points depending on the desired length of drop and must be Trust approved, images available at Appendix 2. NHS lanyards can be obtained from the Trust Recruitment department.

7.3 If the lanyard becomes visibly soiled it must be changed as soon as practicable.

7.4 Name badged must not be defaced or used to display emblems or stickers.

7.5 Agency staff must wear an agency identification badge with a photograph

7.6 When staff are escorting patients outside of hospital premises or when visiting secure services they are required to carry a photo-identification badge.
8.0 HAIR

8.1 Hair must be worn neat and tidy at all times. Long hair/hair extensions should be tied back and kept above the collar line in a style that does not require frequent re-adjustments e.g. in a bun or plait so it does not interfere with clinical duties and/or pose any health and safety risk.

8.2 Elaborate hair accessories should not be worn. Scrunches, slides or Alice bands must be plain black or a plain dark colour.

8.3 Hair colour should not be of an extreme shade (e.g. bright blue, bright pink or green); hair glitter, etc. must not be used.

8.4 Head covers can be worn for religious reasons. However this must be fully risk assessed to ensure no potential risk to the staff member e.g. when using equipment etc.

9.0 TATTOOS

9.1 It is recognised that in today’s society many individuals now have tattoos. The issue here is patient attitude and confidence in their care team. For many, particularly older patients, facial piercings and tattoos can be unsettling and distracting.

9.2 Therefore where tattoos are likely to cause offense they should be appropriately covered. However, tattoos on the forearms and hands must be left uncovered for hand hygiene during direct patient care activity. Any possible offensive tattoos on forearms and hands should have been identified by the line manager and an agreement on how to cover these should be in place.

10.0 JEWELLERY AND FACIAL PIERCINGS

10.1 The wearing of jewellery is discouraged and generally not permitted therefore pierced facial jewellery is not permitted. This includes piercings such as eyebrow, nose, lip and tongue - this list is not exhaustive. These should be removed / covered.

10.2 Only ONE pair of small discreet studs in the ears may be worn.

10.3 A plain wedding band on the ring finger can be worn with no stones.

10.4 Any new piercing(s) must be completely covered with waterproof plaster for 6 weeks or until completely healed.

10.5 No other visible jewellery is permitted; this includes wristwatches, charity bands and religious pendants and bangles.

10.6 Fob watches may be worn with uniform.
11.0 MAKE-UP AND NAIL VANISH

11.1 Make up should be discreet and appropriate to the business environment.

11.2 Nail vanish, nail art and false or gel nails of any kind must not be worn in clinical areas including community settings.

11.3 Fingernails must be kept short and clean to prevent harm to patients and in adherence to Infection Prevention and Control.

12.0 OUTDOOR UNIFORM

12.1 Staff who are required to escort patients in the community must ensure that they change out of their uniform or their uniform is covered whilst travelling, thereby maintaining professional standing and not putting the individual or public at any unnecessary risk. This will also ensure patient confidentiality.

12.2 If staff changes out of uniform to escort a patient in the community then they must follow the dress code policy.

12.3 Escort duties undertaken by staff that accompany patients to clinical areas such as Accident and Emergency department, should stay in uniform.

13.0 OFF SITE

13.1 All staff must project a professional image to contribute to the corporate image that the Trust wishes to present.

13.2 Where locker room and changing facilities is available staff should 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.

13.3 Entering commercial premises for example, supermarkets in uniform/clothing worn by staff delivering clinical care in any setting is unacceptable. However there is no evidence that this is an infection risk if staff members follow universal precaution and standards, but nationally members of the public have expressed concern over staff wearing uniforms in public places (DOH 2010). The Trust acknowledges that members of staff may need to visit retail premises whilst at work i.e. petrol stations, supermarket, etc. to purchase lunch, however individuals are urged to cover their uniform with a suitable outer garment i.e. coat or cardigan at these times.
14.0 OCCASIONS WHEN WEARING OF UNIFORM IS NOT REQUIRED

14.1 Inpatient staff may attend work not wearing a uniform (in mufti) when their role, or activities for that day do not require them to have direct involvement or contact with patients.

14.2 A role that is considered not to require the wearing of a uniform at all (Or very occasionally) will be negotiated and agreed with the Assistant Director of the relevant service.

14.3 There are occasions when staff will work outside normal arrangements to provide for leisure activities for patients, i.e. sports, days out etc. In this case casual leisure clothing may be worn, i.e. polo shirts, Tracksuit bottoms, shorts sportswear, trainers, sports footwear, etc.

14.4 Pregnant or other staff (through injury) who is subjected to a change in dress code as a result of risk assessment under H&S Legislation will wear an outfit to blend in with the uniform relevant to their discipline.

14.5 When representing the trust – e.g. if staff are undertaking an external course at an academic institution, the Dress Code of the academic institution should apply. When attending court, such as a Coroner’s Court, male staff should wear a tie in addition to the normal attire.

14.6 Staff can wear personal clothes for charity events such as non-uniform day. This will be at the discretion of the Assistant Director of the relevant service. On such occasions suitable clothing for the job role must be worn and protective clothing must continue to be worn.

15.0 CORPORATE DRESS CODE FOR STAFF AND CONTRACTORS WHERE NO UNIFORM IS SET (NON-UNIFORM)

15.1 Clinical staff without uniform

For some clinical staff e.g. Rehab, CMHT etc. it is not always appropriate to wear a uniform in certain circumstances and the professional group in question should agree this. The rationale for clinical staff not wearing uniform may include:

- Where the patient/clinician relationship has the potential to be compromised by the wearing of uniform.

- Where the non-wearing of a uniform would not create unacceptable risk to safety and/or infection control.

Where a uniform is not required of the role it is essential that staff members dress in an appropriate and professional manner.

The principles outlined in Section 4.1 of the Dress code and Uniform policy will apply to this staff group.
CPG41 – Clinical Staff Dress Code & Uniform Procedure

Staff members who do not wear a formal uniform must dress in a manner that avoids provocative and suggestive messages or that may cause offence or embarrassment to patients or others with whom they come in contact.

15.2 Non Clinical staff without uniform

a) Where a uniform is not required of the role e.g. service managers and corporate staff, it is essential that staff members dress in an appropriate and professional manner.

b) The principles outlined in Section 4.1 of the Dress code and Uniform policy for EPUT staff will apply to this staff group.

c) Staff members who do not wear a formal uniform must dress in a manner that avoids provocative and suggestive messages or that may cause offence or embarrassment to patients or others with whom they come in contact. The way in which staffs dress must also be consistent with an appropriate corporate and professional image.

d) Senior nurses e.g. directors, service managers and corporate clinical staff can wear uniform or scrubs when visiting clinical areas.

16.0 LAUNDRY COSTS

16.1 There is no allowance for the cost of laundering/cleaning and repair of uniforms. Staff provided with a Trust uniform that they are required to launder and repair themselves, are eligible to make a claim against the cost through their local tax office.

17.0 RELIGION/BELIEF/DISABILITY

17.1 Where issues of uniform/dress code apply and may impact on Religious Belief or disability, the Executive Nurse will consult with representatives of that group to ensure no discrimination has been made. Sensitivity will apply at all times in conjunction with Health & Safety at Work Regulations. However, where any deviation from the policy and associated procedures is requested on these grounds, health and safety and/or cross infection control legislation would over-ride such requests.

17.2 Staff who are required to cover their arms for religious reasons must discuss this with the Assistant Director of the service and Infection Control Nurse.

17.3 Head covers can be worn for religious reasons. However this must be fully risk assessed to ensure no potential risk to the staff member e.g. when using equipment / Infection Control.
18.0 REPLACEMENT / LOSS / CHANGE OF UNIFORM

18.1 Uniform should be replaced once it becomes faded, torn or shabby. This will be the responsibility of each person to report this to their line manager. Replacement uniforms are ordered through the Trust’s Eproc system.

18.2 Should a uniform be lost / go missing this must be reported to the line manager and Risk Department via completion of an incident form. Replacements should be ordered as outlined above.

18.3 When employment with the Trust is terminated or if there is a change of uniform, it is the responsibility of each individual to first destroy the logo on the uniform and then dispose of the garment.

19.0 REFERENCES

- Royal College of Nursing, Guidance on uniforms and clothing worn in the delivery of patient care, 2005.
- Health & Social Care Act 2008
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992

Associated Documents
- Infection Prevention and Control Procedural Guidelines
- Corporate Health & Safety Procedure
- Conduct and Capability Policy / Disciplinary Procedure

END