



UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE POLICY

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1 Introduction

- 1.1** West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) considers the way employees dress and their appearance is of significant importance in portraying a professional image to all users of its services, whether patients, visitors, clients or colleagues.

2 Scope

- 2.1** This policy applies to all employed staff in the Trust on substantive, fixed term, secondment contracts; interim appointments and individuals on the bank register.

3 Statement of Intent

- 3.1** The Trust is committed to providing an adequate and appropriate uniform to all staff required to wear it. The uniform should be of a suitable type that conforms to current legislation and regulations, pertaining to Ambulance Services.
- 3.2** This Policy will embrace other corporate image issues such as non wearing of jewellery and the use of personal equipment and will supersede existing policies and procedures regarding dress/uniform, in line with current Health and Safety Legislation and Infection Prevention and Control Guidance.

4 Equality & Human Rights Impact Statement

- 4.1** This policy embraces Diversity, Dignity and Inclusion in line with emerging Human Rights guidance. We recognise, acknowledge and value difference across all people and their backgrounds. We will treat everyone with courtesy and consideration and ensure that no-one is belittled, excluded or disadvantaged.
- 4.2** The Trust will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and uniform requirements. However, priority will be given to health and safety, security and infection control considerations. Risk assessments will take place as appropriate.

5 Aims

- 5.1** The aim of the uniform policy is to protect staff and where appropriate display the crest so that the public and other organisations may readily identify Trust staff by their skills or rank.

6 Legal Requirements and Relevant Guidance

The main legislation that affects an organisation's response to the transmission of infections via uniforms or work wear is outlined below:

- 6.1 **The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 sections 2 and 3.** Section 2 covers risks to employees and Section 3 to others affected by their work e.g. patients.
- 6.2 **The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) (COSHH).** Further information about COSHH and its applicability to infection control can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/healthcare.htm>
- 6.3 **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** requires the trust to apply an effective risk management process to the selection, procurement and provision of uniform to ensure any associated risks are controlled and reduced effectively. This extends the cover to patients and others affected by microbiological infections, and include control of infection measures.
- 6.4 **'Securing Health Together'**, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) long term strategy for occupational health, that commits HSE/Health and Safety Commission
- 6.5 The Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of Practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance.
- 6.6 ***Winning Ways: Working together to reduce Healthcare Associated Infection in England*** Report from the Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health Publications, December 2003.
- 6.7 Department of Health Uniforms and workwear: Guidance on uniform and workwear policies for NHS employers
- 6.8 **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), (EC Directive) Regulations 1992** as amended by *SI 2002*, requires the trust to make formal assessment of the personal protective equipment needs of their employees and supply suitable and sufficient PPE.

7 Trust Accountabilities and Responsibilities

- 7.1 The **Executive Management Board** is responsible for the effectiveness of this policy and procedures and for ensuring sufficient resources are available to support the implementation

- 7.2** The Operational Managers Team is responsible for:
- Monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and procedures and for ensuring the Executive Management Board is kept informed.
- 7.3** The **Uniform Working Group** will
- Perform a Biennial review of this policy and guidance in accordance with latest research and guidance
 - Monitor compliance with the policy
 - Review all associated risks with Uniform and PPE and ensure they are appropriately registered
- 7.4** The **Resilience & Support Service Director:**
The Emergency Services Director is the delegate Lead with responsibility for provision of safe, high quality uniform, suitable PPE and setting policy for the Trusts dress code.
- 7.5** **All Managers/Supervisors:**
All Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that:
- All staff under their responsibility are aware of the requirements to apply and maintain PPE and understand the Trust Policy on Uniform and Dress code
 - This policy and procedure is fully applied within their area of responsibility.
 - All new employees are aware of the required standards of this policy during the induction process.
 - Staff are aware that failure to adhere to the Trusts procedures for the application of PPE and the Trusts standards of dress and appearance may constitute misconduct and result in initiation of the Trusts Disciplinary policy.
 - Uniformed staff leaving the Trust return all issued uniform and PPE in accordance with:- Policy for Employees Leaving the Trust.
 - All uniform is to be stored securely prior to the issue to new members of staff and prior to the return of old uniform to the Uniform Officer.
- 7.6** **Staff Responsibility:**
All staff are responsible for
- 7.7** Ensuring uniform is kept clean, ironed (if appropriate) and fit for use at all times. Loss of uniform must be reported to the line manager immediately.
- 7.8** Making themselves familiar with the requirements of this policy and ensuring compliance with it.

Frontline Emergency and Urgent (E&U) Staff must keep a spare pair of trousers and shirt as a minimum in their work locker at all times, which should be used to change into if the need arises during a shift.

8 Uniform Management

- 8.1 On entry into the Trust, operational staff will be issued with an initial issue of uniform, based on the requirements of the area in which they work and pro rota'd against whole time equivalent
- 8.2 A list of uniform and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) issued to staff is attached as Appendix 2.
- 8.3 Uniform is to be worn during working hours only, therefore all markings i.e. crests and logos should be covered up outside working hours.
- 8.4 Uniform must not be worn for any purpose other than that which is related to the Trust's business, unless the line manager has granted prior permission.
- 8.5 A database of all uniform issued to individual staff in each calendar year will be maintained by the Uniform department.
- 8.6 Where individuals require uniform to be specially made to fit their specific needs. They need to contact the Uniform Department to arrange for the Uniform Supplier to measure them. This includes all Operational Uniform.
- 8.7 Uniform must be covered when travelling to and from work and should not be worn outside of the guidance issued within this policy.
- 8.8 Staff should not wear numerous badges or other adornments. One or two badges (e.g. denoting professional qualifications or affiliations) may be acceptable; too many look unprofessional and may cause injury when moving patients.
- 8.9 Where a member of staff's religion calls for cloth head coverings, etc the principle is the Trust's corporate colours can be issued on request.

9 Bank Register

- 9.1 On joining the Trust, new employees registered on the operational, Patient Transport or communication centre bank will receive a uniform allocation equal to a new starters part time person-pack.
- 9.2 Bank workers previously employed by the Trust, will have replacement uniform on a fair, wear and tear basis.

10 Maternity Wear

- 10.1 A payment of up to £50 is available for uniformed pregnant staff to assist with purchase of maternity clothing to wear at work. This is appropriate when wearing issued uniform becomes too uncomfortable to wear. Reimbursement will be for purchase of maternity clothing.

11 Non – Uniformed Staff

- 11.1** It is important to maintain a professional appearance whilst adopting a dress code that is practical, functional and comfortable.
- 11.2** These staff will not be issued uniform other than PPE where their job requires it. Whilst carrying out duty for the trust, it will not be acceptable for staff to wear:
- 11.2.1** Denim of any description.
 - 11.2.2** Shorts (excluding Tailored).
 - 11.2.3** Sports wear (including trainers).
 - 11.2.4** Clothing which exposes the midriff, or any other inappropriate parts of the body.
 - 11.2.5** Clothing which does not adhere to principles of decency and appropriateness for the role, or which may cause offence.

12 Personal Protective Equipment

- 12.1** The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 as amended by *SI 2002*, requires that equipment must be supplied and used at work wherever risks to health and safety cannot be adequately controlled by other means. Such equipment, including safety helmets and boots. Should be worn at appropriate times, as per guidance provided with PPE and Trust policy.
- 12.2** All protective clothing should only be used for the purpose intended. It must be maintained in good condition and checked regularly.
- 12.3** Where it is a condition of employment that staff use safety equipment or clothing this must be complied with. Any issues arising or problems encountered in connection with disabilities, minority groups, where particular safety or infection prevention and control requirements may conflict with religious beliefs should be referred to the Resilience & Support Services Director.
The Emergency Services Director will ensure suitable risk assessment and subsequent actions are completed.
- 12.4** Where safety helmets are issued as part of PPE, they must be worn at all times where there is a risk of injury to staff. This is especially important for safety reasons e.g. at scene of the incident or in confined spaces, to help avoid staff sustaining injury in the course of their duty.
- 12.5** Where a member of staff has a disability or develops a specific condition which prevents the wearing of standard issue footwear, the Trust will consider funding the purchase and supply of alternative footwear. All alternative footwear is to be risked assessed to ensure that this footwear is suitable for the role of the wearer and Trust.

- 12.6** Where necessary a referral to occupational health will be offered to individuals to assist the Trust in supporting individuals effectively.
- 12.7** All alternative footwear selected for staff must meet the current standard footwear applied by the Trust and the technical specification of the footwear should be obtained to inform the risk assessment.
- 12.8** It is the responsibility of the Trust to provide suitable PPE in accordance with the outcomes identified in any relevant risk assessments completed by the Trust.
- 12.9** Out of hours emergency stores will be sited at each of the 5 Divisions' which will be stocked with PPE to an agreed stock list. These stores will be monitored by the Uniform Manager on a monthly basis to ensure that stock levels are maintained. Management at Divisional level will be the responsibility of the Area Manager, who will delegate authority to issue to nominated Officers within the Division. These stores will only hold and issue safety footwear, high visibility jackets and safety helmets.
- 12.10** Staff that require an emergency issue of PPE during either pre shift, during shift or after shift are to contact the Area Support Officer (ASO). They will direct the member of staff to the nearest emergency PPE store, where on completion of the correct paper work they will be issued with the requested uniform or footwear.
- 12.11** A full stock report of issues and stock levels is to be sent to the Uniform Officer on a monthly basis, by no later than the 5th of each month. The Uniform Manager will ensure that all stock levels are kept to the agreed levels for each Division and he will also conduct a quarterly stock check of each of the stores.

13 Cleaning and Infection Control

- 13.1** There is no conclusive evidence that uniforms and workwear play a direct role in spreading infection, however, the clothing worn by staff should facilitate good practice and minimize the risk to patients, therefore all uniform worn by Operational staff should be washed at 60 degrees, which is the recommended temperature to remove the majority of pathogens.
- 13.2** Staff dress influences patient perception of standards, so uniforms need to be clean at all times, with a clean uniform worn each shift. All staff should ensure they have a spare set of uniform available to change into should their uniform get soiled during a shift.
- 13.3** There is no evidence that wearing uniform outside work poses an infection risk, however, public perception is that it does, so it is suggested to be good practice for uniform to be changed into and out of at work, or for the uniform to be covered while travelling to or from work.

13.4 The DH Working Group on Uniforms and Laundry has put together an evidence base on the wearing and laundering of uniforms. *Uniforms and work wear, an evidence base for developing local policy* (DH, 2007)

13.5 Uniform shirt and trousers can be washed at a maximum temperature of 60c as per Infection Prevention & Control Policy and ironed as stated in the care label.
A wash for ten minutes at 60c, removes most micro-organisms

14 Minor Repairs

14.1 Minor repairs i.e. loose stitching; buttons etc will be the responsibility of the member of staff to rectify. For any other repairs to the uniform and damaged PPE the Uniform Manager must be contacted to discuss repairs/replacement options.

14.2 Managers will be required to sign off any PPE that is unserviceable and support requests for replacement

15 Lost Uniform

15.1 When uniform is lost or mislaid staff members are required to inform their Managers immediately.

15.2 An Incident Report Form (ER 54) must be completed and reported to the Uniform Manager.

16 Fair, Wear and Tear Replacement Uniform Procedure

16.1 Uniformed staff will be able to replace any uniform that is deemed not fit for purpose using the fair, wear and tear procedure. This procedure is outlined in Appendix 1 and must be adhered to at all times.

16.2 Although staff will not be limited to the number of uniform that can be replaced on an annual basis, all requests will be matched against the uniform data base to check any abuse of the system.

16.3 All requests for uniform replacements must be submitted using the correct documentation, copies of can be obtained from the Area Support Officer or on the Trust intranet.

17 Destroying Trust Uniforms

17.1 All non-re useable uniform with service insignia should be returned to the uniform store and destroyed by the Uniform Manager, as per procedure.

17.2 All other clothing can be recycled.

18 Termination of Employment

- 18.1** All uniform and personal protective equipment (PPE) issued must be returned, clean and in an appropriate condition to the line manager on leaving the Trust. All staff must complete a checklist for the return of uniform. For checklist please see 'Leavers Procedure' available on the Trust Intranet

19 Trust Identity Cards

- 19.1** Requests must be sent via admin staff, HR, PA's, operational Managers and line managers on your behalf. They cannot be requested by an individual from personal email address.
- 19.2** The application form must be completely filled out electronically, including personnel numbers and sent by email (id.cards@wmas.nhs.uk)
- 19.3** An up to date photo must be included for new requests and renewals. If a card has been issued recently and an amendment needs to be made, you need only send a new form advising of the change and mention in the email that it is an amendment.
- 19.4** Do not attach the photo to the form, it should be sent in the same email but as a separate attachment. The photo needs to a clear image of head and shoulders and taken with a plain background and sent in jpeg format.
- 19.5** ID cards cannot be processed immediately upon attendance at Millennium Point. The procedure must be followed. The new card will be sent out in the internal post by the Purchasing Department- they cannot be sent out in external post.
- 19.6** All staff are also reminded to ensure that they wear their Trust ID badge whilst at work or whilst on Trust premises. This includes when visiting ambulance stations, training facilities, EOC's and also Trust Headquarters. This is a security issue and helps ensure the safety of ambulance service sites.
- 19.7** All staff leaving the Trust must return their issued Identification card to their respective line manager, who will be responsible for returning all cards to the Purchasing Department.

20 Jewellery restrictions for staff involved in direct patient care

- 20.1** Should staff decide to wear jewellery etc. they must be aware that they do so at their own risk and the trust will not accept liability for personal injury caused as a result of wearing such items.
- 20.2** Wrist jewellery can harbour micro-organisms, these can hamper the effectiveness of hand hygiene procedures. Therefore it is recommended

that the only wrist jewellery worn is a wrist watch, that the strap of this is made of a washable, wipeable material, and that the watch is removed to perform effective hand washing.

The NHS cleaning manual 2009 - www.npsa.nhs.uk.

Before a shift of clinical work begins, cuts and abrasions must be covered with waterproof dressings. Fingernails should be kept short, clean and free from nail polish. False nails and nail extensions must not be worn by staff with patient treatment and/or handling responsibilities.

EPIC2G guidelines 2007 (**E**vidence based **P**ractice in **I**nfection **C**ontrol)

20.3 Long sleeved clothing also restricts effective hand hygiene, so long sleeves must be either removed or rolled up to perform adequate hand washing.

20.4 Only plain wedding bands should be worn at work, as stoned and etched rings can harbour micro-organisms and may cause skin damage to patients during manual handling.

If earrings are worn, these should be discreet studs. All other body piercings must be out of public view. There is an increased risk of infection and injury in any pierced area.

Necklaces, ties and lanyards should not be loose during direct patient care, if they are worn, they should be tucked underneath clothing during any care procedures.

21 Personal Hygiene

21.1 The Department of Health Uniform and Work wear guidance should be tied back. This is to prevent hair from falling forward into the face and to prevent it from becoming entangled whilst dealing with a patient.

22 Monitoring and Review of this Policy

22.1 The policy will be reviewed for compliance by the Uniform Manager throughout the year and any noncompliance will be reported to the relevant manager and /or the Uniform Working Group.

22.2 The Policy will be audited for effectiveness at least every two years. This will be done by the Uniform Manager when reviewing tender processes.

22.3 The Uniform Working Group will review the audit findings and make recommendations actions/change as required.

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Appendix 1

Designation	Operations Officer		EOC Officer		EOC Officer (Clinical)		Operations		PTS - HCRT		EOC		Support Staff		Remarks
	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	
Uniform Item															
Safety Helmet	1	1			1	1	1	1					1	1	Support Staff – (AFAs Only)
High Visibility Jacket	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	
Safety Boots or Shoes (per pair)	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	
Munro Waterproof Jacket	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1					
Shoes (Non Safety) (per pair)			1	1							1	1			
Soft Shell Jacket	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1					
Green Jumper			1	1	1	1					1	1			
Shirt Formal	1	1	5	3	3	1									
Shirt Operations	5	3			2	1	5	3	5	3	5	3			
T Shirts	5	3			2	1	5	3	5	3					
Trousers Formal (per pair)	1	1	3	2	2	1					3	2			Female EOC staff may have a mixture of skirts or trousers, equal to their entitlement
Trousers Operations (per pair)	3	2			1	1	3	2	3	2					
Woolen Hat	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	
Gloves (per pair)	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	
Belt	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Socks (per pair)	6	3	6	3	6	3	6	3	6	3	6	3	6	3	
Epaulettes (per pair)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3			As per designation
Tie or Cravat	2	1	2	1	2	1					2	1			
Navy Blue Fleece													3	2	
Navy Blue Body Warmer													1	1	
Navy Blue Polo Shirt													5	3	
Navy Blue Trousers (per pair)													3	2	