Uniform and Dress Code Policy
For All Health Board Staff

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Brief Summary of Document:
This policy provides guidance on the uniform and appearance requirements for substantive and temporary staff employed by the Health Board. The aim of the policy is to ensure that public confidence as well as health and safety of staff and patients is maintained at all times.

Scope:
This policy will cover all staff groups, those who are required to wear a uniform as part of their employment and those that are exempt.

To be read in conjunction with:
The All Wales NHS Dress Code (WAG)
354 Standard Infection Prevention and Precautions Policy
201 - Disciplinary Policy
Name badge I.D. policy
100 - Organisational Induction Policy
154 - Safe management of linen

Owning Committee/Group: W&OD Committee

Executive Director: Lisa Gostling
Job Title: Director of W&OD
# Uniform and Dress Code Policy For All Health Board Staff

## Reviews and updates

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## Glossary of terms

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## Keywords

- Uniform, dress code,
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1. INTRODUCTION
Though not all Health Board wide staff may be required to wear a uniform, the requirement to present a smart, professional image whilst in work applies to all employees.

The NHS Wales Dress Code (WAG 2010) was developed to encompass the principles of inspiring confidence, preventing infection and for the safety of the workforce. It specifies the principles that all NHS staff must adhere to and highlights specific expectations for staff directly involved in the delivery of clinical services. However, the dress code applies equally across clinical and non-clinical staff working for NHS Wales.


2. SCOPE
This policy will cover all staff groups, those who are required to wear a uniform as part of their employment and those that are exempt.

3. AIM
The aim of this policy is to remind staff of the All Wales Dress Code principles.

4. OBJECTIVES
The aim of this policy will be met by the following objectives:
- Setting out the principles taken from the All Wales Dress Code
- Detailing the staff uniform and footwear
- Detailing general appearance of staff.

5. PRINCIPLES & EXPECTATIONS
Staff are reminded of the following principles which are taken directly from the All Wales Dress Code:

5.1. Principle 1
All staff will be expected to dress in smart (that is, neat and tidy) clean attire in their workplace.

5.1.1. Expectation:
All staff
- Staff must adhere to the NHS Wales Dress Code principles on the wearing and launderering of uniforms/work attire
- Staff must wear their uniforms/work clothes in a manner that will inspire public confidence
- The special needs of pregnant staff must be assessed and advice obtained from their occupational health departments
- The special needs of disabled staff must be assessed and advice obtained from their occupational health departments

Staff working in the clinical environment
- Clean uniform/work attire must be worn for each shift/work day
- Clinical staff must have access to a change of uniform should their uniform be contaminated during their shift/work day
- Where staff launder their own uniforms, written instructions must be adhered to which reflect current best practice guidelines
5.2 Principle 2
All staff will present a professional image in the workplace.

5.2.1 Expectation:
Staff working in the clinical environment
- Staff will wear their hair neatly; medium length/long hair must be tied up off the shoulder and secured
- Staff must not wear jewellery except for plain wedding ring/kara/ear studs
- No wrist watches are to be worn under any circumstances in the clinical environment
- Staff with pierced ears may wear one set of stud earrings only
- Staff with new piercing (where the piercing cannot be removed for a specific time period) must cover them with a ‘Blue’ plaster
- Staff with established body piercing, other than earrings, (one set of studs) should cover them when in the workplace
- Staff with beards must keep the beard neatly trimmed
- Staff must not wear false nails and/or nail varnish
- Staff must keep their finger nails clean and short
- Staff must wear footwear that complies with the relevant health and safety requirements, for example, soft soled for reduced noise, low heeled for manual handling and ease of Movement, and closed toes for protection

5.3 Principle 3
Staff should not socialise outside the workplace or undertake social activities while wearing an identifiable NHS uniform.

5.3.1 Expectation:
Staff working in the clinical environment
- Where changing facilities are available, staff must change out of their uniform at the end of a shift before leaving their place of work
- Where changing facilities are NOT available staff should ensure their uniform is covered up before leaving their place of work
- Staff must not wear their uniforms in public places, for example, shops (if staff need to enter public places in the course of their duties they must make every effort to cover their uniforms)
- Staff who are permitted to wear a uniform to and from work, or work in the community setting, must cover their uniform when travelling

5.4 Principle 4
All clinical staff must wear short sleeves or elbow-length sleeves in the workplace to enable effective hand washing techniques.

5.4.1 Expectation:
Staff working in the clinical environment
- Staff will comply with the above in order to ensure that correct hand hygiene can be performed before contact with patients
5.5. **Principle 5**
All staff must wear clear identification at all times.

5.5.1. **Expectation:**
All staff
- Staff must wear identification (for example, a security coded name badge) that includes their title, name and profession at all times, in line with local policies, for example, a Lone Worker Policy
- Staff identification must be clearly visible

5.6. **Principle 6**
Staff who wear their own clothing for work should not wear any clothing that is likely to cause a safety hazard.

5.6.1. **Expectation:**
All staff
- Staff should not wear any loose clothing that may compromise their health and safety in the workplace
- Footwear should be comfortable and practical for the role undertaken

6. **ALL WALES UNIFORM**
The following groups of staff have been designated to wear the approved All Wales uniform and the colour code is as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESIGNATION</th>
<th>COLOUR</th>
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<tr>
<td>Head of Nursing and Senior Nurse</td>
<td>Navy Blue with Red Trim</td>
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<td>Sister/Charge Nurse</td>
<td>Navy Blue</td>
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<td>Staff Nurses</td>
<td>Hospital Blue</td>
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<td>Clinical Nurse Specialists</td>
<td>Royal Blue</td>
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<td>Midwives – Acute &amp; Community</td>
<td>Postman Blue</td>
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<td>Nursery Nurse</td>
<td>Aqua</td>
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<td>Healthcare Support Worker</td>
<td>Bottle Green</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Nurse</td>
<td>Purple</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Midwife</td>
<td>Lilac</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel Services Staff</td>
<td>Maroon</td>
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These groups of staff will be required to wear the **entire** uniform issued by the Health Board at all times whilst on duty and comply with the principles outlined. No substitutes may be purchased as an alternative to the ones issued. This applies equally to the top and trousers.

Nurses working in paediatric units may also wear Health Board issued 'child friendly’ tabards over their designated uniform.

It is recognised that in some areas uniforms, even in an in-patient care setting, can be a barrier to establishing therapeutic relationships.

Identified exemption areas are:
- Learning Disabilities
- Some Mental Health areas (other than older adult inpatient units)
- Paediatric therapists
In these areas where a uniform is not worn, staff will still be expected to adhere to the principles of the All Wales NHS Dress Code.

Community staff with the exception of midwives will continue to be issued with the current Health Board designated uniform and outer garments and they will also be expected to adhere to the principles outlined.

7. TEMPORARY STAFF
- All bank staff are issued with the All Wales Uniform commensurate with their role. Bank staff are expected to comply with the principles of the Uniform and Dress Code Policy for All Health Board Staff
- Agency staff are provided with a uniform from their employing agency. Whilst working within the Health Board, they must conform to the principles of the Uniform and Dress Code Policy. Agency Staff must wear personal identification. The Uniform and Dress Code Policy for Health Board Staff is issued to the On Contract Agencies to ensure agency staff compliance to the principles of this policy.

8. THEATRE SCRUBS
Standard ‘scrub clothing’ must only be worn in the designated clinical areas. Scrub clothing and footwear **must not be worn** outside theatres or clinical areas unless in an emergency situation or where specifically issued as an alternative e.g. when uniform soiled or during infection outbreaks.

9. CATERING STAFF
- Tabards must be worn for food service duties and white plastic aprons for all kitchen cleaning/washing up duties.
- Safety shoes will be provided and must be worn at all times. Trainers, clogs or mules are not permitted.
- Long hair ie longer than collar length, must be worn tied back from the face or kept pinned up. Hair must be kept covered by a hair net and hat at all times.
- No jewellery other than a wedding ring, and 1 small stud earring per ear may be worn in order to minimise the risk of injury and to avoid cross contamination when handling food, and physical contamination of items falling in to food. [Nose studs are permitted providing that the wearer follows strict guidelines in respect of personal hygiene and handwashing].

10. FOOTWEAR
Footwear must comply with Manual Handling Operations Regulations and provide the member of staff with adequate support. In clinical areas footwear must be appropriate, well fitting with enclosed body and toes and have a stable, non-slip sole. Trainers, sandals, mules, sling backs or shoes with holes in the body of the shoe (allowing ingress of fluids or sharps) are not acceptable.

For staff who are required to wear specific theatre footwear these will be supplied with this as part of their uniform. These must be regularly decontaminated in line with guidelines.

Trainers are acceptable only in rehabilitation areas due to the physical nature of work in these settings. If trainers are worn they must be clean and in good condition. No brightly coloured trainers are to be worn.
Where a specific medical condition requires a deviation from this guidance a work place and individual risk assessment must be undertaken jointly by the Occupational Health Department and line manager and a suitable alternative agreed. Alternatives must be recommended in exceptional circumstances only.

11. ADVERSE REACTIONS
If staff develop a reaction to the fabric used in any uniform issued by the Health Board must be referred to the Occupational Health Department. A 100% cotton uniform is available is available following an assessment with Occupational Health. Those staff who still suffer a reaction to this fabric must report back to Occupational Health for further assessment and agreement to wear an alternative health Board uniform as agreed with the line manager. The situation must be monitored on a regular basis and an assessment made to reintroduce the correct uniform for that role following specific laundering instructions and medical assessment.

12. GENERAL APPEARANCE OF ALL HEALTH BOARD STAFF
In addition to the principles outlined:
1. All staff issued with a Health Board uniform who wish to wear cardigans/sweatshirts must ensure that only black or navy are worn and that they are never worn when delivering direct clinical care to patients.
2. Although the use of hair colorants is an individual choice members of staff hair colour must be kept to natural hair colours that will maintain their professional image whilst at work.
3. When on duty make up must be kept to a minimum.
4. Skirt and dress length should be no shorter than just above the knee.
5. Deodorant, perfume or after shave must be discreet.
6. The wearing of all coloured denim jeans, shorts or sports wear is not allowed (physiotherapists uniform does include tailored shorts)
7. Staff must not wear tops which are revealing of torso or chest.
8. Garments with logos that could cause offence or may be open to varying interpretation are not to be worn.
9. Staff may be expected to cover up tattoo designs. Advice should be sought from their manager and/or local Workforce Team.
10. Any pens/scissors/torches must be carried in a pocket in such a way as not to risk causing harm to patients.
11. When a uniform is worn socks must be plain navy, grey, blue or black.

13. PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION
All staff must always wear a form of corporate personal identification whilst on duty. Only identity/name badges issued by the Health Board should be worn and must be bilingual.

14. RESPONSIBILITIES
14.1. CHIEF EXECUTIVE
The Chief Executive holds overall responsibility for the effective management of organisational policies

14.2. DIRECTOR OF WORKFORCE & OD
The Director of Workforce & OD has responsibility for ensuring that all employment polices are developed in line with employment legislation and practice and are reviewed and updated as appropriate.
14.3. **LINE MANAGERS**
The uniform policy will be brought to the attention of all new staff at induction and will be available on the Health Board intranet as referred to in the Health Board’s 100 - Organisational Induction Policy.

It will be the role of the line manager to monitor ongoing compliance with the policy and address any shortfalls with individual members of staff.

They will have direct responsibility to ensure that:
- Staff for whom they are responsible for, are issued with the correct uniform.
- Staff who are not issued with a uniform maintain a professional appearance in line with the All Wales Dress Code and this policy.
- Regular monitoring of the policy and dress code via spot checks and/or audit activities are undertaken.
- Issues of non compliance need are to be raised with the individual directly at the time and recorded in their personal file.
- Compliance with appearance and uniform must be standard form part of annual individual performance review.

15. **NON COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY**
Only uniforms issued by the Health Board must be worn and all staff must adhere to the NHS Wales Dress Code and this policy. If a member of staff persistently contravenes this policy they will be subject to the Health Board’s 201 - Disciplinary procedure.

Managers must consult with the Workforce & Organisational Development department to seek advice when dealing with such circumstances.

16. **HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**
The wearing of an NHS uniform and/or workplace clothing must address key Health and Safety recommendations:
- Adhere to infection prevention and control protocols especially in relation to hand washing techniques
- Provide the wearer with mobility and comfort and promote safe manual handling practices.
- Be resilient to withstand rigorous laundering
- Take into account staff safety in relation to situations involving violence and aggression

17. **INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL**
The Health Board Infection Prevention and Control Policies relating to the use of disposable aprons and other personal protective clothing where there is a risk of transmissible infection from clothing must be applied.

Staff are responsible for ensuring their uniform/clothing is clean and in good order and should launder their uniforms as directed in Appendix 1.

18. **UNIFORM ALLOWANCE**
Uniforms are provided by the Hywel Dda University Health Board for use on duty and remain the property of the Health Board at all times. All line managers are to ensure new employees are fitted for uniforms prior to employment commencing. Staff will be issued with sufficient
uniforms to enable them to wear a clean uniform for each shift worked (up to a maximum of 5 for full time staff).

Clear instruction in terms of laundering new garments must be given by the sewing room when the uniforms are issued (Appendix 1) to minimise the risk of developing adverse reactions when initially worn. Further laundering instructions are available in the above guidance for the prevention of cross infection and contamination thereafter.

19. RETURN / RENEWAL OF UNIFORMS
Staff will be responsible for simple repairs to their own uniforms. Renewal of uniforms will be at the discretion of the line manager who will make an assessment of the state of the uniform. Requests for new uniforms will only be accepted if authorised by the line manager and all old uniforms must be returned when the new uniform is issued. Staff making unauthorised alterations to the standard issue will be required to replace them at their own expense. Any alterations required as a result of occupational health assessment and advice will be undertaken by the Health Board sewing room services.

All staff are required to return their uniform at termination of their employment. This is the responsibility of the designated line manager to ensure that this occurs.

20. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY
Hywel Dda Health Board recognises the diversity of the local community and those in its employment. Our aim is, therefore, to provide a safe environment free from discrimination and a place where all individuals are treated fairly, with dignity and appropriately to their need. Hywel Dda University Health Board recognises that equality impacts on all aspects of its day to day operations and has produced an equality policy statement to reflect this. All policies and procedures are assessed in accordance with the equality initial screening toolkit, the results for which are monitored centrally.

The Health Board recognises that individuals belonging to differing cultural and religious groups may need to observe specific requirements around dress/uniform that constitute an important part of their religious or cultural beliefs. The Health Board will therefore endeavour to ensure that these particular needs are met in addition to ensuring the health and safety and well being of staff and patients. This will be agreed with the relevant manager following a risk assessment and advice from Workforce Team.

21. REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY


Uniform and Dress Code Policy For All Health Board Staff


Royal College of Nursing (2009) Guidance on uniforms and work wear


22. **APPENDIX 1 – GUIDANCE FOR HEALTHCARE STAFF LAUNDERING UNIFORMS/WORKWEAR IN THE HOME**

- All uniforms when first issued should be washed a minimum of five cycles prior to the garments being worn for the first time to minimise adverse skin reactions to new fabric.
- Where on-site changing facilities exist staff should remove their uniform on site.
- For transportation, uniforms should be placed in a plastic bag or a water soluble bag suitable for use in domestic washing machines.
- For clinical based staff uniforms should be washed separately to personal clothing.
- Uniforms should be washed at the hottest temperature suitable for the fabric. A wash for 10 minutes at 60°C should remove most micro-organisms.
- Ensure that the machine is not overloaded to allow for optimum wash efficiency and dilution factor.
- Staff should wash their hands after loading the machine.
- Use of a biological washing agent is preferable.
- Tumble dry on the hottest temperature as recommended by the manufacturer or air dry thoroughly before ironing on the hottest setting as advised by the manufacturer.