**Uniform Policy and Dress Code for Nurses, Midwives & Specialist Community Public Health Nurses**

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<th>Policy Number:</th>
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**Brief Summary of Document:**
To ensure personal appearance is compliant with requirements of this Policy.

**To be read in conjunction with:**
The All Wales NHS Dress Code (WAG awaited 3/2010)

**Classification:** Clinical
**Category:** Policy

**Authorised by:** Mrs C. Oakley
**Job Title:** Director of Nursing and Midwifery
### Uniform Policy and Dress Code for Nurses, Midwives & Health Visitors

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### Scope

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### Circulation List

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<td>Committee(s)</td>
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### RATIFYING AUTHORITY

- **KEY**
  - A = Approval Required
  - FR = Final Ratification
  - Date Approval Obtained

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### Date Submitted for Equality Impact Assessment

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Please enter any keywords to be used in the policy search system to enable staff to locate this policy: Uniform Policy / Dress Code
# Uniform Policy and Dress Code for Nurses, Midwives & Health Visitors

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1. INTRODUCTION

This local policy is written to support the All Wales NHS Dress Code (WAG awaited, 2010) which has been developed to encompass the principles of inspiring confidence, preventing infection and for the control and safety of the workforce while also projecting a professional image.

The All Wales nurses uniform has been launched by the Welsh Assembly Government with the full support of the Chief Nursing Officer for Wales. The uniforms have been designed by a working group led by WAG in conjunction with Partnership Forum members. The uniforms were designed for nursing and midwifery team staff who currently wear uniforms so that patients can easily identify them.

The All Wales Uniform is due to be phased in from the April 2010. The members of staff affected by this specific change are:-
- Ward Sister/Charge Nurse
- Ward Staff Nurses
- Ward Healthcare Support Workers
- Clinical Nurse Specialists.
- Midwives
- Nursery Nurses

Pending any further phases to this work, all other nurses will be expected to remain wearing their current uniforms.

All nursing staff who undertake direct patient care duties, will be required to wear the appropriate uniform as specified in this policy. Clothing/uniforms should be determined by clinical need, reflecting dignity and practicality.

Uniforms are provided by the Hywel Dda Health Board for use on duty and remain the property of the Health Board at all times.

It is recognised that in some areas, outlined below, nursing uniforms, even in an inpatient care setting, can be a barrier to effective nursing. These areas are exempt from wearing the All Wales NHS nursing and midwifery uniform but will be expected to adhere to the All Wales NHS Dress Code (WAG 2009).

Exempt areas are:
- Learning Disabilities
- Mental Health (other than older adult inpatient units)
- Clinical Nurse Specialist/Nurse Practitioner/other Specialist nursing roles when agreed with line manager

Standard theatre ‘scrub clothing’ must only be worn in the designated clinical area. Staff must change when leaving the department to undertake other clinical duties unless they are responding to an emergency situation.

Any other exceptions to the above re the wearing of the All Wales uniform must first be agreed with the lead for the Health Board lead for the All Wales Uniform roll out.
and approval granted before an alternative dress policy for a specific nursing or midwifery service is implemented.

2. PURPOSE

For the purpose of this policy the term nursing applies to all permanent and bank registered nurses, midwives, specialist community public health nurses and non registered nursing support staff, working in clinical or non clinical areas.

The purpose of this policy is to provide local detail around the 6 principles identified in the All Wales NHS Dress Code:

PRINCIPLE 1
All staff will be expected to dress in smart, clean attire in their workplace.

PRINCIPLE 2
All staff will present a professional image in the workplace.

PRINCIPLE 3
Clinical staff should not socialise outside the workplace or undertake social activities while wearing an NHS uniform.

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

PRINCIPLE 5
All staff must wear clear identification at all times.

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

3. SCOPE

Standards outlined in the policy relate to all nursing staff groups whether or not they are required to wear a uniform during their work.

- To comply with The All Wales NHS Dress Code (WAG awaited, 2010).

Only uniforms as specified in this policy must be worn. Failure to comply with the standard could result in disciplinary action being taken.

Where changing facilities exist for hospital based staff, uniforms must not be worn outside the place of work. For staff who work only in the hospital environment and if no changing facilities exist, hospital uniforms should only be worn outside the hospital premises when travelling to and from work and tops should be fully covered. Staff who work in the community setting, or who move between the hospital and community setting during the course of their work, should also ensure their uniform tops are covered when travelling.
4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 All nursing staff that have direct patient/client contact will wear a uniform issued by the Health Board and comply with the standards, as outlined in the policy and The All Wales NHS Dress Code (WAG 2010 awaited), at all times whilst on duty. Those nursing staff working in areas where a uniform has been agreed to be inappropriate will adhere to the same dress codes.

4.2 If a member of staff persistently contravenes this policy they will be subject to the Health Board’s Disciplinary procedure.

5. REVIEW AND MONITORING

This policy will be reviewed as and when legislation may impact upon it or when work processes change.

6. MANAGERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers will ensure that staff comply with the requirements of this policy by taking the following actions:-

- Ensure that staff for whom they are responsible for are issued with the correct uniform.
- Ensure that staff who are not issued with a uniform maintain a professional appearance.
- Ensure that any clothing that is provided to protect the Health & Safety of staff is fit for purpose and utilised in accordance with its designated purpose.
- Ensure that staff are issued with the same number of uniforms as the number of shifts they are contracted to work each week. Also, that, in emergencies, there are facilities to enable staff to change the uniform they are currently wearing.
- Undertake regular monitoring of the policy via spot checks and/or audit activities.
- Ensure that specific reference to adherence to the policy is made within the employee’s contract.
- Ensure all new nursing staff are supplied with a copy of this policy during their Health Board induction and have local access to it during work time.

7. UNIFORM STANDARD

The All Wales Uniform will be available for staff from April 2010. All staff will be expected to adhere to the All Wales NHS Dress Code (WAG 2010 awaited) as well as this supporting policy.

7.1 Overarching Principles and Expectations

Please refer directly to the All Wales NHS Dress Code (WAG 2010 awaited)

Additionally:
7.1.1 Staff are responsible for ensuring their uniform is clean and in good order. If an employee accidentally damages or permanently stains any item of uniform they must inform their manager as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made for a replacement.

7.1.2 Staff will be responsible for simple repairs to their own uniforms.

7.2 **All Wales Colour code for uniforms:**

- Sister/Charge Nurse* ...........Navy Blue
- Staff Nurses ......................Hospital Blue
- Healthcare Support Workers ......Bottle Green
- Clinical Nurse Specialists ..........Royal Blue
- Nursery Nurse ......................Aqua
- Community Midwives ...............Postman Blue

* Very occasionally, and only until standardisation of role titles across the Health Board is achieved, Senior Staff Nurses may also be issued with a Navy uniform if their role includes undertake a deputising function for the Sister/Charge Nurse. All such exceptions will be agreed in line with All Wales uniform principles and with the Health Board lead for the All Wales Uniform roll out

All other nursing staff will remain in their current uniforms at this stage.

7.3 **General appearance of nursing staff**

Please refer directly to the All Wales NHS Dress Code (WAG 2010 awaited)

In Addition:

7.3.1 Staff who wish to wear cardigans/sweatshirts: Only black or navy may be worn. They must never be worn in the immediate clinical area when delivering direct clinical care to patients (see Section 2 Principle 4).

7.3.2 Staff should be aware of the risks of wearing ponytails if they are caring for violent/aggressive patients.

7.3.3 The use of hair colorants is an individual choice but members of nursing staff should remember patients expectations of the professional image of the nurse. Male staff must ensure beards and/or moustaches are also well groomed.

7.3.4 When on duty make up should be kept to a minimum.

7.3.5 In consideration for the comfort of both patients and colleagues staff who choose to use them, should use a light perfumed deodorant, perfume or after
7.3.6 Staff who wear spectacles should ensure that they are worn in a way that does not constitute a risk (from breakages) to patients or staff.

7.3.7 Shoes must be black plain low heeled walking shoes and should be of a material that causes as little noise as possible. They should provide adequate support (low heels, enclosed heels and toes, preferably lace ups) and have a stable, non-slip sole. Trainers, crocs and sandals (with open toe fronts) are not acceptable.

7.3.8 For theatre staff, footwear for use in the department is supplied as part of uniform issue.

7.3.9 Theatre clothing and theatre footwear must not be worn outside theatres unless in an emergency situation.

7.3.10 Theatre footwear must be regularly decontaminated in line with theatre guidelines.

7.3.11 The wearing of denim jeans, shorts or training suits is not allowed. Non uniform staff must wear dark, plain coloured smart trousers which should be worn with a plain shirt and clip tie if appropriate depending on the area.

7.3.12 Suits and/or Jackets worn by non uniform staff should be plain and of a conservative colour. They must be regularly laundered as appropriate.

7.3.13 Non-uniformed female staff must not wear tops which are low cut or revealing.

7.3.14 T-Shirts with logos that may be open to interpretation may not be worn.

7.3.15 Wearing of ear studs must be excluded when Theatre Nurses are scrubbed.

7.3.16 It is recognised that tattoos and other body decoration have become prevalent in society. However, staff will be asked to cover up excessive/potentially offensive tattoo designs that it is judged are not in line with the spirit of this policy.

7.3.17 In accordance with relevant legislation (including those relating to Race Relations) and in order to promote cultural diversity, the Health Board recognises that individuals belonging to differing cultural and religious groups may need to observe specific requirements around dress 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 service Senior Nurse after taking advice from HR.

7.3.18 Staff must wear a corporate identity badge and a name badge. If required they may also wear a Hospital Registration badge and a Professional organisation/union badge. These badges should be displayed on the
uniform/clothing whilst on Health Board premises /conducting Health Board business. Any other badges must have been issued by the Trust e.g Welsh Speaker.

7.3.19 Any pens/scissors/torches must be carried in a pocket in such a way as not to case harm to patients.

7.3.20 Socks should be plain navy blue or black. Tights/stockings should always be worn by female staff when wearing a dress and should be black/barely black in colour and no greater than 40 denier. Local, hospital wide decisions to allow tights/stockings not to be worn may be taken in extreme heat conditions and decisions issued through Nursing Management structures.

7.4.21 Plastic aprons must be worn when in direct contact with the patient.

8. NON COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY

It is recognised that the application of this policy may require some judgement in relation to interpreting the standard and principles described. Consistency in interpretation will be achieved by managers liaising with the Human Resource Department if any areas of disagreement arise between staff and managers.

Any breach of the policy will be discussed and any actions required will be agreed on an individual basis. Issues will be dealt with under the Health Board Disciplinary Procedure.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

All clothing worn by staff during their working activities should comply with the relevant Health and Safety requirements.

9.1 Personal Protective Equipment

According to Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 “It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees”.

According to Section 3 of the Act, “Ordinary working clothes and work uniforms that do not specifically protect the health and safety of the wearer, are not covered in these regulations”.

Regulation 3 intends for the employer to undertake assessments to determine what hazards there are within the workplace and what is needed to reduce the likelihood of exposure to those hazards. Therefore, as an example, if an item of clothing has a potential to cause injury during a task or activity, this would be addressed.

Each employer shall take appropriate steps to reduce the risk of injury to those employees arising out of their undertaking any such manual handling operations to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

For staff to which this regulation applies, all work clothing must be well fitted and must not limit or restrict movement. Fasteners, pockets and other features on which loads might snag should be concealed. Gloves should be close fitting and supple, in order to limit interference with manual dexterity. Footwear should provide adequate support (low heels, enclosed heels and toes, preferably lace ups) and a stable, non-slip sole. Whilst not essential the wearing of trousers should be encouraged in preference to dresses.

9.3 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. Employee uniforms and footwear must be in accordance with this policy. However, it should be recognised that uniform is not itself protective clothing but rather a means of identifying staff.

Staff should launder their uniforms as directed in the All Wales NHS Dress Code, Appendix 2 (WAG 2010 awaited).

10. UNIFORM ALLOWANCE

10.1 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).

10.2 All managers are to ensure new employees are fitted for uniforms prior to employment commencing. New employees will be issued with a uniform prior to their commencement of duties.

11. RETURN / RENEWAL OF UNIFORMS

11.1 All staff are required to return their uniform at termination of their employment as uniforms are the property of the Health Board. Managers should ensure that staff leaving return their uniform.

11.2 Renewal of uniforms will be based on the length of time staff have had their uniforms and/or the state of disrepair of the uniform is in. Requests for new uniforms will not be accepted unless they are signed by a Senior Nurse/Directorate Nurse.

12. REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY


