

## DRESS POLICY

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## **STAFF SUMMARY**

This policy has been developed to advise what the expectation is within Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust in relation to employee's dress and applies to all staff and volunteers working within the Trust, those on secondment or placement from other organisations, students on student placements within the Trust and official visitors to the Trust. Students, along with workers for Leeds Staff bank and all agency workers will obtain their uniforms from outside of the trust but are otherwise required to comply with the standards in this policy without exception.

This document describes what we expect from staff members described in the following categories: all staff, staff in clinical areas, all staff who wear uniforms and theatre staff.

### **General Information**

A clinical area is defined as where patients are examined or undergo clinical procedures, including ward rounds and or any interaction with patients, their notes or the clinical environment. All staff must be bare below the elbows when working in or entering clinical environments to facilitate effective hand hygiene. For the purposes of this policy this means that sleeves must be either rolled up or of a length that leaves the forearms completely uncovered, no wrist watch or any other wrist coverings are worn and no jewellery is worn below elbow level other than a single plain wedding band. New information has been added in regards to staff members who object to having their forearms completely uncovered on religious grounds.

All staff, volunteers, students or trainees working in the Trust are expected to present a smart and professional image. They must wear the correct approved uniform and protective clothing where this is required. Where uniforms are not required staff and students must dress appropriately for their role in accordance with the principles and practice set out in this policy.

## 1 PURPOSE

The policy recognises that employers have reasonable expectations that their employee's appearance will support and promote the values and aims of the organisation. At the same time it takes into account employees' expectations that they will be valued as individuals.

There are many different staff groups working in a range of settings in the Trust and not all staff have contact with patients or visitors. This means that local dress codes may differ dependent on the nature of the work and job roles. However, no members of staff work in complete isolation. **All** staff are in contact with colleagues and their ID badges identify them as Trust staff when they move around the hospital sites.

The objectives of this dress policy are to promote patient health and safety, increase public confidence and to ensure members of staff feel comfortable in what they are wearing.

## 2 BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

As an NHS Trust our main purpose is to provide excellent patient care, education and research. Staff appearance inspires confidence, reflects standards of care and reassures public expectation. We expect a smart professional image to be portrayed by everyone who is employed by the Trust who may or may not be required to wear a uniform. Further details are included in General Principles section.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust policies which are available on Leeds Health Pathways

- Infection Prevention & Control policies, particularly Hand Hygiene and Infection Prevention & Control Policy.
- Health and Safety Management Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Smoking Control Policy
- Food Safety Policy

This policy reflects best practice and available evidence with regard to the wearing of suitable dress and uniforms. Recommendations have been made in the light of recent advances in legislation i.e. Infection Control, Health and Safety and the Human Rights Act (1998), Equality Act (2010), Guidance on Uniforms and Work wear Policies for NHS employers (DH 2010).

It is recognised that supplementary dress codes maybe required, however these must still comply with the principles laid down within this policy. Any supplementary policies must be approved through the relevant CSUs governance procedures.

All staff, volunteers, students or trainees working in the Trust are expected to present a smart and professional image. They must wear the correct approved uniform and protective clothing where this is required. Where uniforms are not required staff and

students must dress appropriately for their role in accordance with the principles and practice set out in this policy.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working within the Trust, those on secondment or placement from other organisations, students on student placements within the Trust and official visitors to the Trust.

Within Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust a policy is considered to be a statement, binding on all employees that specifies, in whatever detail is appropriate, what the Trust requires employees to do and how they are expected to act.

### **3 DEFINITIONS**

LTHT Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust

CSU Clinical Service Unit

### **4 POLICY EFFECT**

The policy identifies staff as belonging to one of four categories, namely:

- 4.1 All staff
- 4.2 Staff in Clinical Areas - additional requirements
- 4.3 All staff who wear uniform
- 4.4 Theatre staff

#### **4.1 All Staff**

##### **4.1.1 General**

All staff must make sure the forearm is completely uncovered when working in or entering clinical environments to facilitate effective hand hygiene. For the purpose of this policy this means that sleeves must be either rolled up or of a length that leaves the forearms completely uncovered. No wrist watch, jewellery or any other wrist coverings can be worn below the forearm level other than a single plain wedding band.

For individuals who have concerns with this requirement, a risk assessment on a case by case basis of the job role should be undertaken with the line manager (refer to [Hand Hygiene Policy - LTHT](#)). This risk assessment may require the support of Infection Prevention and Control and a Human Resources representative. This decision will be made on an individual basis and should not be offered routinely to all staff members. In all cases there needs to be exposure of the forearm to allow compliance with the hand hygiene policy.

The only exception to the requirement for staff to cover the forearm in clinical areas is when they have to pass through such an area to access an office, changing room, teaching room or other non-clinical area. In this situation staff should pass through the

clinical area as quickly as possible. If they need to stop in the clinical area for any reason they must make sure that sleeves be either rolled up or of a length that leaves the forearms completely uncovered.

*A clinical area is defined as where patients are examined or undergo clinical procedures, including ward rounds and or any interaction with patients, their notes or the clinical environment.*

- All visible own clothing must be of smart appearance and modest. Low cut skirts or trousers, short cut or cropped tops which reveal midriffs or underwear, plunging necklines, see through garments, mini-skirts or denim jeans are not acceptable. Underwear should not be visible.
- Slogans or images on clothes, badges or tattoos that might cause offence or make an individual believe they have been discriminated against or that are the subject of harassment are not allowed and should reflect a professional image.
- Ties must be removed or tucked in prior to entering clinical areas. Bow ties may be worn.
- All staff must have the forearm uncovered when entering or working in clinical areas. Long sleeved garments must not be worn when entering or working in clinical or ward areas.
- Outer garments must be removed as soon as practicable after entering a clinical area and not be put on again until leaving the area e.g. fleeces, coats.
- Generally, hats must not be worn unless they are part of a uniform. In order to meet religious requirements head coverings may be worn (Examples include turbans, head scarves and skullcaps). When worn these must be plain and black / navy in colour.
- To ensure effective communication, clothing and veils which cover the face are not permitted in clinical areas. For security checks these must be removed on request for identification purposes.
- Modifications will be made if a disability or medical condition makes it difficult or impossible for a staff member to comply e.g. allergies to specific fabrics, the need for specialist footwear etc. This must be authorised in writing at Head of Nursing (or Profession) level with supporting advice from a doctor, other relevant healthcare professional or the Occupational Health department.
- 'Theatre Blues' are a required uniform for theatre staff and for staff undertaking surgical procedures in an operating theatre environment.
- Where clinical areas other than theatres have adopted theatre wear as practical clothing for their own work areas this should be subject to a local dress code. **Alternative colours must be purchased to enable differentiation from theatre staff.**

#### **4.1.2 Staff Identification and Badges**

- Trust photo Identification (ID) badge or, where relevant, ID badges of the employing organisation or educational institution, **must** be worn by **all** staff at **all** times. This must show a current recognisable image of the member of staff with full name and designation clearly displayed, worn in the correct orientation.

- Staff not working in patient areas may wear neck lanyards (neck tape). These must have a safety breakaway clip and should be plain in colour with no text except NHS, LTHT or trade union approved. **All clinical staff must attach ID badges to their uniform using a clip. Neck lanyards are not permitted when working in clinical areas.**
- A Trust approved name badge with full name and designation must be worn by **all** staff in public and patient facing roles in addition to the ID badge at **all** times.
- The badge of a professional organisation or trade union may be worn.
- Approved national campaign badges may be worn at the time of a campaign.
- All badges must be removed in situations where they are likely to cause injury to patients, staff or visitors.

#### 4.1.3 Professional Appearance

It is important that all staff portray a professional image when at work. Staff should consider their appearance before undertaking an unconventional hairstyle. In addition, offensive tattoos, scarification or branding are inappropriate for professional environments. Staff must consider their professional appearance before undertaking to have such a procedure.

#### 4.1.4 Hair

- Hair should be clean, neat and tidy.
- Long hair must be tied back and off the collar when working in a clinical area. When hair is tied back it must not hang down the staff members back.
- Hair fastenings must be discreet and plain in colour
- All male staff must be either clean shaven or beards and moustaches kept clean, neatly trimmed or rolled and tucked. In some circumstances beard nets or snoods will be necessary. For example during food handling or in theatres. Local decisions will be made regarding the necessity for nets / snoods - this is not an exhaustive list.

#### 4.1.5 Jewellery

- In clinical environments jewellery (including watches, wristbands, necklaces, bracelets, ankle chains and all rings), other than one plain wedding band, must be removed.
- Visible body piercing for instance on ears tongues, eyebrows, lips and noses are permitted with small discreet studs (Certain local dress codes may exclude the wearing of any facial jewellery including earrings, e.g. Staff involved in food preparation).
- Staff with existing ear stretching must wear flesh coloured plugs whilst at work.
- All staff **must** make sure the forearm is completely uncovered when entering or working in clinical areas. This means any jewellery, watches, piercings or implantations must be removed before entering any clinical area.
- The security of jewellery that an employee has been asked to remove remains the responsibility of the wearer.
- Religious symbols e.g. Kara (steel bangle) and bracelets worn for therapeutic purposes may be worn discreetly, provided they comply with health and safety and

infection prevention and control guidelines. In clinical areas these must be pushed up the arm and taped to enable effective clinical hand washing and decontamination.

- Where jewellery is permitted it must be unobtrusive and not represent a health and safety risk to the employee and others.
- No member of staff is permitted to have dermal piercings/implants of the wrists as this prevents effective hand hygiene.
- Dermal piercing/implants of face, neck and arms are inappropriate for professional environments. Staff must consider their professional appearance before undertaking to have such a piercing. Where a staff member has such a piercing, this must be kept covered.

#### **4.1.6 Footwear**

- All shoes must be clean, in good repair and safe. In clinical environments, shoes must be plain, non-slip, low heeled, wipeable and soft soled.
- Open backed footwear or open toed shoes are not conducive to safe moving and handling and are not recommended. Members of staff that choose to wear this type of footwear do so at their own risk.
- Specialist footwear may be necessary in some areas e.g. theatres and estate management staff and must be worn according to the local uniform policy or dress code.
- The wearing of open backed and vented clog style “cros” or other similar footwear is not permitted.

#### **4.1.7 Hosiery**

- Staff working in clinical areas or who wear uniform, tights, stockings or socks must be black or neutral in colour and present a professional image.
- Socks or hosiery can be omitted in hot weather conditions.

#### **4.1.8 Fingernails**

- All staff should keep fingernails short, clean and neat.
- Staff working in clinical environments, or wearing uniform, are not permitted to wear nail varnish including shellac, false nails, nail extensions or nail jewellery.

#### **4.1.9 Tattoos, Scarification and Branding**

- These must be kept covered until fully healed. Where this may contravene effective hand hygiene procedures, staff must remain off work until their tattoo, scarification or branding is fully healed. Staff must therefore only undertake to have the above when they have sufficient annual leave available to allow them to take time off for full healing.

#### **4.1.10 Make up**

Make up must be natural looking and discreet. False eyelashes are not permitted in clinical areas.

#### 4.1.11 Personal hygiene

- Staff are expected to maintain a high level of personal hygiene and avoid wearing strong perfume or aftershave.
- For staff with food handling responsibilities it is recommended that blue plasters are used if required to cover an open wound.

#### 4.2 Staff in Clinical Areas - additional requirements

- Single use plastic aprons and gloves must be worn where there is a possibility of contact with blood or body fluids or where there is a risk of transmissible infection. These must not be worn outside the ward or department unless required during patient transfer.
- Own clothing and uniforms must be changed daily and freshly laundered on a machine cycle that maintains a temperature of 71°C for at least 3 minutes or 60°C for at least 10 minutes.
- Head coverings worn for religious reasons must be in plain, neutral colours to reflect a professional image and must be worn tucked in to prevent accidental contact with the patient or their immediate environment.

#### 4.3 All Staff Wearing Uniform

Staff wearing uniform must maintain a professional image at all times. To achieve this aim, uniform must be of an appropriate fit and in good repair. The uniform must be clean, odour free, crease free and not damaged.

- Tunic and trousers may be worn instead of dresses. Longer length dresses are available if required. Uniforms should be provided which match the gender that the individual identifies with at the staff members request.
- Vests or T-shirts must not be visible unless of matching colour to uniform. Uniforms must be correctly fastened.
- Uniform cardigans or jumpers may only be worn outside clinical areas and must be navy. However, night staff are allowed to wear a cardigan or jumper but it must be removed before attending to patients.
- The wearing of open backed and vented clog style “cros” or other similar footwear is not permitted.
- Trainers may be worn but must be plain black and adhere to section 4.1.6 including being of a wipe clean material.
- Staff performing outside duties may wear jackets if their work takes them out of the Trust.
- Staff who work outside may wear a plain sunhat or a plain woollen or fleece hat.
- Staff wearing a **clinical** uniform must change into and out of their uniform on work premises only.

- The wearing of **clinical** uniform outside Trust property is not permitted unless a specific requirement of the role. e.g. community midwives or conducting home visits.
- Clinical staff may travel directly between hospital sites in uniform (not theatre attire - this applies regardless of whether the staff member actually works in a theatre environment or not) by car or the Trust shuttle service providing the route is direct from site to site. Under **no** circumstances should the uniform be worn on public transport, motorbikes or bicycles.
- It is **not** acceptable for staff to be seen smoking in uniform either close to or away from hospital premises. Staff wishing to smoke during working hours **must** change out of their uniform before doing so. This also applies to e cigarettes and vaping pens

## 4.4 THEATRE

All staff entering restricted areas must wear designated clinical uniform (restricted areas include anaesthetic rooms, preparation rooms and operating rooms).

When leaving the theatre department on official or unofficial duties, staff should adhere closely to the recommendations within the policy and the local theatre dress code.

### 4.4.1 Dress

- All staff within the operating department must wear a freshly laundered set of theatre blues (trouser suit) of an appropriate and comfortable fit.
- Theatre blues must be replaced at least daily. Following contamination by blood, body fluids, excessive perspiration or returning to the department staff must select fresh theatre blues to reduce the potential risk of cross infection.
- No theatre blues, used or clean, are to be stored in personal lockers.
- Following use, theatre clothing must be laundered using the Trust laundering contractors.

### 4.4.2 Hair and Headwear

- All head and facial hair must be covered, preferably by a single use disposable theatre hat or hood.
- All headwear **MUST** be replaced at least daily. However, following contamination it must be replaced as soon as practicable. This applies to all headwear whether single use disposable or not.
- If headwear is not single use disposable it **MUST** be washed according to IPC guidelines and a clean one used daily. This applies to any headwear including cloth hats or any headwear worn for religious reasons.
- Single use disposable hoods are recommended for those with beards. All male staff must be clean shaven or beards must be clean, neatly trimmed or rolled and tucked. In some circumstances beard nets or snoods will be necessary. This will be decided locally based on risk assessments.
- Hats must not be worn outside designated areas.

### 4.4.3 Footwear

- Specific theatre footwear will be provided by the Trust.
- Theatre footwear must be well fitting, supportive and protective with enclosed toes and uppers. They must provide protection from spillages, accidentally dropped sharps, allow rapid response in an emergency (heel grips), facilitate safe moving and handling, and support reduced noise levels (soft soled). In addition the footwear will have antistatic properties.
- Footwear must be regularly cleaned and decontaminated. Cleaning is the responsibility of the wearer. It must not be left in a contaminated state and must be left clean and ready for use.

#### **4.4.4 Facemasks**

- Masks must be worn by the surgical scrub team when sterile items are being opened (or already open), when surgery is already underway or during surgical intervention.
- Masks must be worn by the full theatre team when implants are being inserted as part of the surgical procedure
- All masks must completely obscure the mouth and nose.
- All masks must be single use and disposed of immediately after use. When removing the mask, it should be handled by the tapes.
- Hands should be washed following removal of mask.
- They must not hang around the neck or under the chin.
- A fresh mask must be worn following a rest break.
- Masks must not be worn outside of designated areas (e.g. theatre).

#### **4.4.5 Outer Garments**

- Outside clothes, coats or fleeces etc. must not be worn over theatre attire at any time.

#### **4.4.6 Appropriate Dress When Leaving Theatre**

- If there is a requirement to leave the theatre for official duties or during rest breaks, masks and headwear must be removed and replaced upon return to theatre with a fresh hat and mask.
- Staff must not stay in public refreshment areas in their theatre blues. Staff wishing to do so must change into their own clothing.
- Footwear must be changed into normal shoes.
- Under no circumstances must staff leave the building in theatre attire and theatre shoes. This includes hospital grounds, car parks, public transport (including hospital shuttle) and own cars. The public are very aware of infection issues. It is generally their understanding that this type of clothing is worn for invasive procedures and in high risk areas.

### **4.5 LAUNDERING OF CLINICAL UNIFORMS**

- Uniforms must be changed whenever soiled and at least daily.

- Uniforms must be laundered by the Trust laundry service or laundered at home in accordance with the guidance detailed below or in accordance with the temperature stated on the garment care label. They must be transported to and from work in a clean plastic bag.
- Where the Trust laundry service is unavailable or inappropriate (e.g. where own clothes are worn) and items are laundered at home they must be washed at the hottest temperature for the fabric.
- Domestic washing machines only achieve social cleanliness and are rarely capable of achieving thermal disinfection. It is important that clothing of clinical staff is washed appropriately in order to achieve thermal disinfection. They must be washed on a machine cycle that maintains a temperature of 71°C for at least 3 minutes or 60°C for at least 10 minutes.
- Uniforms must be washed separately from other items to avoid cross contamination. Tumble drying will help to reduce the risk of microbial survival.
- When dry, they need to be ironed with a hot iron paying particular attention to the seams as this is where bacteria may harbour.
- Staff wearing head coverings of any kind for religious reasons must ensure that they have sufficient to wear one that is freshly laundered each day.

#### **4.6 SUPPLY OF UNIFORMS**

- Where it is a requirement for a uniform to be worn this will be provided by the Trust.
- Staff working in a clinical setting will be supplied with sufficient uniforms according to their pattern of work. Additional uniforms will not be issued for weekend working but staff must still comply with the need to wear a clean uniform each working day.

<b>Working Frequency</b>	<b>Number sets of Uniform</b>
5 days a week	4 sets of uniform
4 days a week	3 sets of uniform
3 days a week	2 sets of uniform
2 days a week	2 sets of uniform
1 day a week	2 sets of uniform

- Trust uniforms must be purchased from a recognised Trust supplier in accordance with relevant local dress code.

#### **4.7 ADVICE**

Any staff needing advice should pursue it through their management structure and local Human Resources specialists. The Infection Prevention and Control department, Human Resources, Head of Chaplaincy, Head of Patient Experience and the Head of Health and Safety can also provide advice if necessary.

### **5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **5.1 Role of the Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive is has overall accountability for ensuring that the Trust meets its obligations in respect of maintaining appropriate standards as per the dress code policy

The Chief Executive devolves the responsibility for monitoring and compliance to the Chief Nurse and Chief Medical Officer.

## **5.2. Role of the Chief Nurse/Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Medical Officer**

The Chief Nurse/Deputy Chief Executive and Medical Director are responsible for ensuring that Trust staff uphold the principles of the dress policy and that appropriate policies and procedures are developed maintained and communicated throughout the organisation in co-ordination with other relevant organisations and stakeholders.

## **5.3 Medical Director and Nurse Director (Operations)**

The Medical Director and Nurse Director (Operations) are responsible for ensuring implementation of this policy in Clinical Service Units (CSUs).

## **5.4 Clinical Director, Head of Nursing (or Head of Profession) and General Manager**

The Clinical Director, Head of Nursing (or Profession) and General Manager are responsible for ensuring that the requirements of this dress policy are managed within their CSU and that staff are aware of, and implement, those requirements.

## **5.5 Lead Clinician, Matron and Business Manager**

The Lead Clinician, Matron and Business Manager are responsible for ensuring that the dress policy is communicated and implemented within their areas of responsibility.

Lead Clinicians and Matrons will take a leading role in the implementation of this policy within their clinical areas. Lead Clinicians and Matrons will also take a leading role in the investigation of incidents or complaints in regard to the dress policy.

## **5.6 Role of Senior Sister, Charge Nurse, Departmental Manager, Lead AHP**

It is the role of the Senior Sister, Charge Nurse, Departmental Manager or the Lead for Allied Healthcare Professions to locally implement this policy. They should make provision for mechanisms to be in place to ensure that their staff have read, understood and enforce this policy and any additional local dress codes.

They must ensure that any local uniform or dress codes for which they are responsible for, are reviewed and amended if necessary to comply with the Trust Dress Policy.

They must take the necessary steps to resolve any problems raised by staff about changing facilities, the auto valet, laundry quality and the availability of soap, paper towels and hand gel.

They must resolve or report up through the appropriate management structure any circumstances which make compliance difficult.

## **5.7 All Staff Members**

It is the responsibility of every staff member to ensure their personal compliance with the dress policy.

All staff must recognise that if on-call, that they may be required to attend an emergency situation and should be prepared to respond rapidly in appropriate attire.

All staff must report any circumstances which make compliance with the requirements of this policy difficult to their line managers in a timely manner including availability of auto valet and laundry facilities.

## **6 EQUALITY ANALYSIS**

This Policy has been assessed for its impact upon equality. The Equality Analysis can be seen in annex 1.

The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is committed to ensuring that the way that we provide services and the way we recruit and treat staff reflects individual needs, promotes equality and does not discriminate unfairly against any particular individual or group.

## **7 CONSULTATION AND REVIEW PROCESS**

This policy was circulated for review to:

- Clinical Directors and Clinical Service Unit (CSU) teams.
- Chief Nurse Team.
- Staff Side.
- Religious groups including Sikh, Muslim, Jewish, Christian.
- LTHT Chaplaincy Service.
- Infection Prevention and Control Team.
- Consultation group incorporating specific staff groups including, Allied Health Professionals, pharmacy, hotel services, logistics, physiotherapy, nursing, medical, radiography representatives.
- Theatres and Anaesthesia

## **8 STANDARDS/KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Dress code is one of the elements audited in the Health check Metrics within Inpatient wards, Outpatients, Maternity and the Emergency Department. These results will enable us to establish the effectiveness of the policy. Any incidents arising in relation to the dress policy will be reported via Datix.

## 9. MONITORING COMPLIANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS

### Appendix A

<b>Policy element to be monitored</b>	<b>Standards/ Performance indicators</b>	<b>Process for monitoring</b>	<b>Individual or group responsible for monitoring</b>	<b>Frequency or monitoring</b>	<b>Responsible individual or group for development of action plan</b>	<b>Responsible group for review of assurance reports and oversight of action plan</b>
Publication	The policy is published on Share point	Corporate Nursing to check this is published	Head of Nursing Professional Practice, Clinical Standards & Patient Safety.	2 Yearly - to be revised in the interim if required	Professional Practice, Clinical Standards & Patient Safety team	Professional Practice, Clinical Standards & Patient Safety team
Use of the policy	The policy is in use in all clinical areas of the Trust.	Health check metrics audit in clinical areas	Ward Manager, Matron, Head of Nursing  Professional Practice, Clinical Standards & Patient Safety team	Monthly - bi monthly	Head of Nursing for the CSU	Clinical Director & Head of Nursing for the CSU
Use of the policy	The policy is in use in all areas of the Trust.	Local governance	Departmental Managers	As specified per department	Departmental Managers	Departmental Managers
Incidents	That there are no incidents relating to the dress policy	Incidents are reviewed at CSU Governance Meetings	CSUs	Quarterly	CSU Governance Meetings	CSU Governance Meetings

## **10. REFERENCES/ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION**

In addition to local Trust policies the following document has been taken into consideration:

- DH (2010) Uniforms and work wear: Guidance on uniform and work wear policies for NHS employers.

