



# Dress Code/Uniform Policy:

## Policy statement



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## 1.0 Introduction

An important aspect of providing health care is the confidence of the service users in our ability to deliver exemplar services in a professional manner. It is recognised that the appearance and standards of dress adopted by staff are an influencing factor on this confidence. There is a collective and individual responsibility to represent NHS Borders in a positive way to the community we serve and to instill confidence in the service we provide.

The Policy aims to outline standards through which the organisation and staff members may uphold the professional image of the service within the community.

Uniform and dress also forms an integral part of risk controls for health and safety purposes; moving & handling, infection control, controls for violence and aggression. This policy forms the good practice guidelines to ensure legal compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and all associated Regulations/Acts.

## 1.1 Purpose and scope

The Policy and dress codes incorporate the recognition that:

- ☞ While all staff groups in all disciplines may not have to wear a uniform the presentation of staff to project a professional image and to be safe applies to everyone.
- ☞ Staff may be required to wear a uniform as part of the protective equipment, which acts as a barrier to, and protection from, substances such as body fluids.
- ☞ Uniforms/dress codes must not hinder moving and handling requirements and may act as a barrier against the rigors of handling objects and patients.
- ☞ The Policy is supplemented by Dress Codes applicable within each discipline, these dress codes form part of the risk controls necessary to reduce identified risks to an acceptable level. Staff working in each area must comply with the applicable dress codes.
- ☞ In certain areas the wearing of uniform is to provide corporate identity.
- ☞ This policy and all associated dress codes will be applied on an equitable basis.
- ☞ Personal appearance is important.

## 1.2 Principals

These Policy principles apply to all staff members, those provided with uniform and those who wear their own clothing. Further to this policy staff should refer to their own local dress code for guidance on their presentation.

- ☞ Staff not issued with uniform must ensure their clothing is suitable for the type of environment and activities they are expected to undertake during the course of their work. They must ensure that their attire does not present difficulties in relation to health and safety: moving & handling, personal protective clothing, security.

- ☞ It is important that staff maintain a high level of personal hygiene presenting a clean, neat and tidy appearance at work. Hair tied back when appropriate, hands and nails clean, nail varnish only when undertaking administrative duties-clinical staff & food handlers must not wear nail varnish unless as an exception agreed with Infection Control Team.
- ☞ Jewellery, if worn, should be consistent with health and safety, infection control and professional standards for the local area. Jewellery type should reflect the potential risks associated with working in that area; no hoop earrings, long neck chains etc in areas where aggressive behaviours could be displayed. (Please also refer to the Infection Control Manual)
- ☞ It is important, so as not to offend or put oneself at personal risk, body piercings should be appropriate to your local area and duties.
- ☞ Tattoos should be covered where practicable
- ☞ Items of clothing should not be worn which would be reasonably considered to be revealing, offensive or provocative to service users, carers, colleagues or members of the public.
- ☞ Uniforms issued are worn in accordance to infection control guidelines (please refer to section 1.5 & The Infection Control Manual)
- ☞ Name badges should be worn in line with local dress codes and security arrangements.
- ☞ Pregnancy - NHS Borders will provide uniform users with the appropriate maternity wear for staff in that area.
- ☞ Footwear should be sensible and comply with local conditions for safety.

## 1.3 Organisation

### NHS Borders as an employer has responsibilities to:

- ☞ Ensure where appropriate that staff are provided with uniform and protective wear.
- ☞ That there is provision for the laundering of uniforms.
- ☞ A sufficient number of uniforms are issued to allow for efficient laundering to take place.
- ☞ Ensure that any clothing provided is fit for purpose and is replaced when required.
- ☞ Delegate to Line Managers the responsibility to ensure adherence with this Policy and the local dress codes.
- ☞ Provide when required changing facilities.

### Line Managers have a responsibility to:

- ☞ Where appropriate, develop a local dress code, in consultation with local staff, that reflects the principles of this policy and is available to local staff.
- ☞ Ensure Policy/dress codes are communicated at local induction and are readily accessible to all members of staff.
- ☞ Ensure staff comply with policy and local dress codes.
- ☞ Delegate responsibility appropriately to aide compliance to policy and dress code.

### Staff members have responsibility to:

- ☞ Ensure that where uniforms are provided, they are clean, in good condition and worn in full.
- ☞ Not wear uniforms off duty.
- ☞ Bring to the attention of the appropriate line manager any defect in a uniform in order that it may be changed/repaired.
- ☞ Wear appropriate clothing when a uniform is not provided. Bearing in mind the type of work undertaken and any health and safety requirements.
- ☞ Take reasonable care of uniforms provided.
- ☞ Follow the uniform policy and dress codes.
- ☞ Ensure their appearance is appropriate for the area of work.
- ☞ Act in a manner so as not to endanger themselves or others during the course of their work.

## 1.4 Dress codes

All local dress codes will be considered as policy for that area and will be implemented as such.

## 1.5 Infection control

The principles of infection control are core to the delivery of a professional and competent healthcare service.

- ☞ All staff should be issued with the correct amount of uniforms so that the uniforms can be laundered at the central Laundry Department, BGH. Uniforms must not be laundered at home. If staff have a reaction to the chemicals used within the laundry department, they must be seen by a member of Occupational Health Department and issued with a letter to allow alternative laundering arrangements.
- ☞ The official uniform ***must be*** worn at all times when on duty and should not be worn ***outside*** the hospital, unless the member of staff is on official duty such as escort duties.
- ☞ Community Staff are on duty when traveling within their work remit.
- ☞ From an infection control perspective uniforms ***must not*** be worn when traveling to and from work. Changing facilities are provided to enable staff to change before going home. Community staff must follow local policies regarding changing arrangements.
- ☞ Uniforms for designated areas, e.g. operating theatres, ***must not*** be worn out with these areas.
- ☞ Clinical staff must follow the policy for contamination with blood / body fluids including faeces.
- ☞ **Hair** - should be clean and tidy, and staff delivering direct patient care should wear their hair off the collar.
- ☞ **Nails** - should be short and well manicured. Nail varnish should not be worn unless as an agreed exception with the Infection Control Team.
- ☞ **Jewellery** - only a band ring, small stud or sleeper earring can be worn. Wristwatches ***must not*** be worn when undertaking clinical

procedures. Correct hand hygiene technique cannot be carried out when wearing a wristwatch.

☞ Footwear - correct footwear must be worn, as designated, for the particular area.

☞ Cardigans - may be worn except when undertaking clinical care or having direct physical contact with patient.

Please also refer to the Infection Control Manual.

## 1.6 Ordering of uniforms

All requests for uniforms, should be sent to the Sewing Room, Borders General Hospital, using a measurement form (Form No. B352). These forms are available from Area Stores.

Supplies Department will purchase uniforms from **approved Suppliers**. Uniform brochures can be obtained from Supplies Department if required.

## 1.7 Implementing & monitoring

The Policy and dress code will be implemented through the line management system. Monitoring of compliance will be at local level. The Policy will form part of the arrangements under HR Policies and Occupational Health and Safety Policy. The OHS Policy section 4 will govern part of the monitoring process when health and safety applies.

This policy is part of the terms and conditions of your employment and, therefore, forms part of your contract of employment with NHS Borders. Persistent non-compliance with the policy may be dealt with under the agreed Disciplinary Policy.