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**Code:** IC19  
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## Dress code policy

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<b>Type of document</b>	Policy
<b>Target audience</b>	All CWP staff including those employed via temporary staffing, agency staff, students, volunteers, staff on placement within CWP and anyone working with Trust clients on Trust premises.
<b>Document purpose</b>	Robust hygiene and infection prevention and control procedures are key to maintaining staff and patient safety in healthcare settings. Whilst there is no conclusive evidence that uniforms and workwear play a direct role in spreading infection, the clothes that staff wear must facilitate good care practices and minimise risk to patients. Uniforms and workwear must not impede effective hand hygiene and must not unintentionally come into contact with patients during direct patient care activities (NHS Employers, 2020).

<b>Approving meeting</b>	Infection Prevention and Control Sub-Committee	Date 27.04.21
<b>Implementation date</b>	April 2021	

CWP documents to be read in conjunction with	
<a href="#">HR3.3</a>	Trust disciplinary policy and procedure
<a href="#">HR6</a>	Mandatory Employee Learning (MEL) policy
<a href="#">IC2</a>	Hand decontamination policy
<a href="#">IC3</a>	Standard (universal) infection control precautions policy

Document change history	
What is different?	Updated with NHS Employers guidance issued in April 2020
Appendices / electronic forms	
What is the impact of change?	Nil identified

Training requirements	Yes - Training requirements for this policy are in accordance with the CWP Training Needs Analysis (TNA) with Education CWP.
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Document consultation	
Clinical Services	Modern Matrons Associate Directors Senior Health & Safety Advisor
Corporate services	Human Resources Director of Infection Prevention and Control (DIPC) Equality, diversity and inclusion coordinator
External agencies	

Financial resource implications	None
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<p>External references</p> <p>Uniform and workwear: guidance for NHS Employers April 2020 <a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Uniforms-and-Workwear-Guidance-2-April-2020.pdf">https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Uniforms-and-Workwear-Guidance-2-April-2020.pdf</a></p> <p>The health and social care act 2008, code of practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance July 2015 <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/449049/Code_of_practice_280715_acc.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/449049/Code_of_practice_280715_acc.pdf</a></p>
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Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) - Initial assessment	Yes/No	Comments
Does this document affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:		
- Race	No	
- Ethnic origins (including gypsies and travellers)	No	
- Nationality	No	
- Gender	No	
- Culture	No	
- Religion or belief	No	
- Sexual orientation including lesbian, gay and bisexual people	No	
- Gender Reassignment	No	
- Pregnancy / Maternity	No	
- Marriage / Civil Partnership	No	
- Age	No	
- Disability - learning disabilities, physical disability, sensory impairment and mental health problems	No	
Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	No	
If you have identified potential discrimination, are there any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable? N/A		
Is the impact of the document likely to be negative?	No	
- If so can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
- What alternatives are there to achieving the document without the impact?	N/A	
- Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	N/A	
Where an adverse or negative impact on equality group(s) has been identified during the initial screening process a full EIA assessment should be conducted.		
If you have identified a potential discriminatory impact of this procedural document, please refer it to the human resource department together with any suggestions as to the action required to avoid / reduce this impact. For advice in respect of answering the above questions, please contact the human resource department.		
Was a full impact assessment required?	No	
What is the level of impact?	Low	

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## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of a dress code policy is to ensure that all staff within the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (CWP) dress appropriately for their role and in a manner which will promote the professional image of the NHS and CWP, whilst maintaining patient and staff safety. It is a requirement of the Health Act (2008, revised 2015) Code of Practice for the prevention and control of infections that trusts have a robust uniform and dress code policy in place (Department of Health, 2015). The workwear and uniforms staff wear must also facilitate good care practices and minimise any risks to patients. (NHS Employers, 2020).

Regular washing and changing of clothes are effective methods for reducing the spread of infection and maintaining public and patient confidence in health care workers.

All staff and CWP colleagues and workers acting on behalf of CWP are required to adhere to this policy.

## **2. Principles**

This policy identifies standards of dress which are expected by CWP. It will ensure that all colleagues, regardless of role, meet the requirements of health and safety, infection prevention and control and external agencies.

## **3. Definition**

For the purpose of this policy colleagues working or entering clinical areas, irrespective of their role (nurses, doctors, wards clerks or staff visiting the area) will follow the standards set out in this document.

Clinical areas are defined as the following:

- Wards
- Outpatients clinics
- ECT suite
- Service user / patient homes where clinical activity takes place or there is the potential for clinical activity to take place.

It is accepted that there may be certain activities or occasions when the dress code may be relaxed, for example team away days, moving office, charitable events, or training. Agreement to such a relaxation must be sought from the clinical services manager or head of department in these circumstances.

This policy applies to CWP colleagues and workers acting on behalf of CWP, as follows:

- All staff employed by CWP
- Bank staff
- Temporary staff
- Agency staff
- Students
- Workers on placement or undertaking voluntary work;
- Contracted staff as per DH guidance (2011).

All employees have a responsibility for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues. The guidance set out below is aimed at ensuring that risk to self and others is minimised.

It should be noted that this policy does not cover in detail the use of personal protective clothing (PPE). Where PPE is issued for reasons of health and safety or hygiene, it must be used with and disposed of in accordance with CWP Infection Prevention and Control guidance.

This policy applies to all colleagues. As far as possible, subject to the overriding requirements of patient safety and public confidence, colleagues should feel comfortable in their uniforms; including being able to dress in accordance with their cultural practices. However, exposure of the forearm (Bare Below the Elbow) is a prerequisite of hand hygiene when providing direct patient care. All colleagues must comply with CWP health and safety and infection prevention and control standards. Particular emphasis is laid on the importance of colleagues undertaking their roles effectively and safely. Political beliefs, patriotism and anything contrary to public morals are not covered by discrimination law and as such staff will not wear clothing or badges that may cause offence to others.

#### **4. Professional appearance**

Dress must be smart, clean, without logos or excessive graphics (except for the CWP logo) and appropriate for the duties of the post. Visible 'midriffs' and low-cut tops are not acceptable or any attire that may be misconstrued as being provocative, revealing or offensive to others.

Staff choosing to wear headwear such as a veil or turban may do so providing that patient care, health and safety and Infection prevention and control standards are not compromised. Staff members wearing veils will be required to uncover their face whilst engaged in client contact (NHS Employers, 2020).

#### **5. Uniforms and / or corporate dress**

In areas where colleagues are required to wear a uniform, these must be worn correctly whilst on duty. Uniforms should not be worn outside of work unless staff are on official CWP business and except for the purpose of travelling to and from work. Where changing facilities are provided, staff should change into and out of uniform at work.

A uniform is not classed as protective clothing and staff must ensure that personal protective equipment is worn additionally as set out in the [Universal Precautions Policy](#) under Section 6.

#### **5. Infection prevention and control in clinical areas as defined in section 3.**

##### **6.1 Hair**

Staff working in clinical areas or handling food are required to tie long hair back off the collar using a plain band and/or clip. Ornate hair clips not permissible as they may pose a safety risk.

##### **6.2 Clothing contamination**

All work wear including uniforms must be clean, pressed, in a good state of repair, and laundered as per manufacturing instructions (clothing that is dry clean only must not be worn in clinical areas). There is little difference between commercial and domestic laundering of workwear in terms of removing micro-organisms. Washing at 30 degrees centigrade will eradicate most gram negative organisms. A wash for 10 minutes at 60 degrees centigrade removes almost all micro-organisms (NHSE/I, 2020). Colleagues who do not wear a uniform at work must therefore ensure their workwear can be decontaminated as per the aforementioned guidance if they are likely to enter such environments and/or provide patient facing care.

### 6.3 Nails

Nails must be kept clean and short and nail varnish is not to be worn. Long and/or artificial nails are harder to keep clean as they harbour micro-organisms and are not permissible in clinical areas. Long nails are not permissible a potential safety hazard, for example they can rip or damage personal protective equipment rendering it ineffective.

### 6.4 Jewellery

Staff providing direct patient care and/or working in clinical areas:

Jewellery including body or facial piercing other than a pair of plain stud earrings should not be worn unless they are worn for cultural or religious reasons. Necklaces, long or hoop earrings and rings present possible hazards to both patients and staff. **Wrist watches are not to be worn when delivering patient care in accordance with the CWP hand decontamination policy and procedure.**

### 6.5 Tattoos / piercing

Any member of staff who is considering having a tattoo, body piercing or similar should be aware that this may result in an open wound. Therefore, staff who provide direct patient care and/or handle food must speak to their line manager for advice and guidance prior to proceeding.

### 6.6 Footwear

Staff working in clinical roles:

Footwear should cover the foot including the toe and all of the upper foot, i.e., open-backed shoes are not permitted. A heel strap, if secure, is acceptable. All footwear must be easily cleanable, should protect the foot from injury and should be able to tolerate spillages of, e.g., blood and body fluid. Soles should be non-slip and heels should be low to prevent falls. Footwear worn by staff in inpatient areas must be no higher than an ankle height (CWP Safety and Security Lead, 2013). Motor cycle boots or military type boots are not acceptable in any area (CWP Safety and Security Lead, 2013). Trainers that meet the above criteria are permitted.

Staff working in non-clinical roles:

Footwear must be suitable, be fit for purpose and reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls.

## 7. Food handling

The requirements vary according to role but in general protective clothing should be suitable for the work:

- No jewellery should be worn except for a plain wedding band;
- Heavy makeup and perfume which may taint food must not be worn;
- Clean aprons must be worn every day;
- Long hair must be tied back off the collar;
- If a uniform is supplied, it must be kept clean and in good repair and laundered in keeping with the manufacturer's instructions;
- Nails must be kept short and free of nail varnish, overlays / acrylic nails are not acceptable;
- Hats and safety shoes, if supplied, must be worn at all times.

## 9. Failure to comply with the dress code

Members of staff who do not comply with this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in line with the [trust disciplinary policy and procedure](#).

