Notice to staff using a paper copy of this guidance

The policies and procedures page of the intranet holds the most recent version of this guidance. Staff must ensure they are using the most recent guidance.

Author: South and West Locality Manager

Asset Number: 128
To ensure employees and those on honorary contracts, volunteers, agency workers and students clearly understand the standard of dress required.

Lori Ashton, South & West Locality Manager

10th May 2016, JCCN

25th May 2016

Three years after publication, or earlier if there is a change in evidence.

The Policy Ratification Group will retain an e-signed copy for the archive in accordance with the Retention and Disposal Schedule, all copies must be destroyed when replaced by a new version or withdrawn from circulation.

South & West Locality Manager

All Livewell Southwest staff including students on placements

Electronic: Plymouth Intranet and Livewell Southwest website

Written: Upon request to the Policy Ratification Secretary on ☎ 01752 435104.

Please note if this document is needed in other formats or languages please ask the document author to arrange this.

Updated in conjunction with JTUF representatives

Yes

Department of Health ‘Uniforms and Workwear’
Royal College of Nursing ‘Wipe It Out’ – Guidance on Uniforms and clothing worn in the delivery of patient care.


Perry, C etal (2001) Bacterial Contamination of
uniforms. *Journal of Hospital Infection.* 48. 238-241


**Associated documentation**
- Infection Prevention and Control Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy

**Supercedes document**
Replaces the Uniform Policy v 1.6 & the Dress Code policy v 1.6

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### Document review history

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Uniform and Dress Code Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Livewell Southwest provides services to many diverse people in a number of different settings. The professional image presented by staff is an important component in the way we are perceived by colleagues, users of the service and the public. Uniforms make a profession recognisable, which in turn promotes trust and confidence. A professional image is one that is smart and simplified with limited personal adaption, a professional appearance and manner is important to maintain patient and public confidence and therefore a consistent approach is required for all staff within the organisation whether this be wearing our uniform or adhering to the dress code.

1.2 Livewell Southwest respects the right for staff to adhere to religious and cultural observances. However, consideration should be given to infection control, the operation of machinery, clear identification of staff and clear communication with patients. Staff who wish to make modifications to their uniforms or work attire to reflect their beliefs must agree them in writing with their line manager with support and guidance from HR where appropriate.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that all Livewell Southwest staff clearly understands the standard of dress expected of them whilst at work whether this be in uniform or not. The policy applies to employees, seconded employees from other organisations and those with honorary contracts, volunteers, agency workers and students who are undertaking placements with Livewell Southwest. The latter two will be provided with appropriate uniform by the agency or educational provider; however the principles of this policy will still apply.

2.2 Standards of dress should support and promote the following principles:

   a) The health, safety and wellbeing of people using our services, carers and visitors.
   b) The health, safety and wellbeing of staff.
   c) The need to maintain public confidence and respect.
   d) The professional accountability of staff as defined by professional bodies/ councils.
   e) The diversity, rights and beliefs of staff.

3. Duties

The Chief Executive is ultimately responsible for the content of all policies, implementation and review.

3.1 This policy applies to all staff within Livewell Southwest and there will be no local policies or arrangements as consideration has been made for all clinical and non-clinical areas.
3.2 Livewell Southwest will provide safety equipment as necessary to maintain the health and safety of employees and others. If staff are required to wear protective clothing they must do so. If they are unsure about such requirements they should discuss this with their line manager.

3.3 Staff must ensure that clothing; footwear and standard of dress are appropriate to their role and must fit within this policy guidance.

3.4 When on duty, staff must only wear the designated type and style of uniform approved for their workplace and grade.

3.5 **Directors and Locality Managers will be responsible for:**

- Implementing and monitoring this policy within their service areas, which includes ensuring that all staff and managers adhere to this policy, and taking appropriate action if this is not the case.

3.6 **The Director of Professional Practice, Quality & Safety, Head of Corporate Risk and Compliance and Infection Control Lead will be responsible for:**

- Supporting the implementation of the policy.
- Supporting the reviewing and updating of the Dress Code and Uniform Policy.

3.7 **Line Managers will be responsible for:**

- Local implementation and monitoring of the staff adherence of the Dress Code and Uniform Policy they are responsible for within their service areas, and taking appropriate action if this is not the case.

3.8 Staff are responsible for adhering to the policy and raising concerns through their line manager where there are concerns that their needs fall outside of this policy. HR guidance may be sought as required.

4. **Dress Code Policy**

4.1 Staff are expected to maintain the clothing they wear to work in a good state of repair. It must be clean and well presented at all times. If staff appear unkempt this can be interpreted as a lack of professional pride and poor personal standards.

4.2 Identification badges should only be worn when on duty.

4.3 All Livewell Southwest staff should dress according to the principles of public confidence, professional image and health and safety. Dress should not cause embarrassment to colleagues, patients or visitors. Please see box 1 below for guidance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptable dress code:</th>
<th>Unacceptable dress code:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Smart skirts</td>
<td>• Skirts or shorts that are above knee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dresses and trousers</td>
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4.4 With regard to ties and scarves, it is recognised that these are rarely laundered and worn daily and have been shown to be colonised by pathogens. For this reason, wherever possible, ties should not be worn in patient care areas. Likewise if there is a health and safety risk e.g. in Mental Health Services – risk of strangulation - they should not be worn.

4.5 Senior manager (band 8a and above) will be required to adhere to all aspect of this policy. In addition, they will be required to wear smart or formal work wear.

4.6 **Dress down days**: The dress code will apply to all staff on all days. Dress down days are not appropriate given that the organisation operates seven days a week and the professional image should be upheld at all times.

4.7 When attending training events, it is expected that the dress code is adhered to. The only exception will be during Physical Intervention training when Professional Training and Development will issue separate and appropriate dress guidance.

4.8 Footwear: For all staff to whom the dress code policy applies but accesses clinical areas, footwear should comply with the requirements set out in section 9.3. All staff wearing dress code should still consider safe and appropriate footwear with heels no higher than 3 inches.

5. **Uniform Policy**

5.1 When on duty, staff must only wear the designated type and style of uniform approved for their workplace and grade, *(please see appendix A, to be added later)* for the agreed colour and style. The uniform should enable people receiving the care and support, relatives and other health and care staff to easily recognise their profession.

5.2 Managers should ensure sufficient lockers and changing facilities are available to staff and where these are present staff should travel to and from duty in their
own clothes. Staff should be encouraged to change out of uniform promptly at the end of the shift.

5.3 Uniforms should not be worn outside of the clinical area, unless travelling to and from duty and between patients/clients or collecting drugs from a pharmacy. In these latter cases, the uniform should be covered to reduce the risk of infection and protect staff from being identified out of work. Uniforms need not be covered where travel is by car.

5.4 Uniforms must not be worn in any retail or recreational premises whilst not at work.

5.6 Staff wearing dresses or skirts as part of their uniform should wear black hosiery to maintain professional image.

5.7 Dresses, skirts or shorts should be knee length or just below the knee.

5.8 Staff wearing trousers as part of their uniform should wear black socks to maintain professional image.

5.9 Where polo shirts have been agreed, they must be in good repair, not discoloured and well pressed. They must be ordered from the codes supplied for individual practice areas only. Failure to do so will result in a wider review of polo shirts.

5.10 Staff wearing uniform should adhere to this policy for the duration of their shift and not just during clinical activity.

6. **Infection Control**

6.1 Protective aprons are a preventative measure against cross infection and must be worn for food handling, when undertaking personal care, aseptic procedures or dealing with people who have infections. Aprons must be changed between contacts and then safely disposed of in accordance with infection control procedures. In the event of visible soiling or contamination, which may cause an infection risk, and at the very least affect peoples' confidence, spare clothing must be available for staff to change into immediately.

6.2 Livewell Southwest supports the Department of Health’s ‘Bare Below the Elbow’ dress code. Several studies have shown that clinical uniforms/clothing may become contaminated by disease causing bacteria which includes Staphylococcus Aureus, Clostridium Difficile which could result in cross infection within a clinical setting (Speers, 1969; Babb, 1983; Perry, 2001). Maximum contamination occurs in areas of greatest hand contact e.g. cuffs, pockets (Babb 1983; Wong, 1991; Loh, 2000) allowing the re-contamination of washed hands. NHS Plymouth has adopted the 'Bare Below the Elbows' policy for all clinical staff in inpatient areas and whenever a clinical activity is being performed. Within this dress code, clinical activity is defined as any work activity either in a ward, Livewell Southwest department or a client’s home, during which the member of staff is in direct contact with the person using the services, their medical equipment or their immediate environment (to include anywhere clinical activity is taking place). When in direct contact with a patient, staff must be bare
below the elbows and conform to the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short sleeves</td>
<td>Ties lanyards or necklaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain wedding bands</td>
<td>Wrist watches or bracelets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short clean finger nails</td>
<td>Rings with stones inlaid</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Long or artificial fingernails</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Any nail polish</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No canvas shoes worn in clinical areas</td>
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NB. Full sleeves are allowed for religious/cultural reasons except during clinical procedures with a patient and during hand washing, where sleeves must be rolled up.

6.3 Clinical staff must keep jewellery to a minimum. They should only wear a plain wedding ring and must give extra vigilance with hand washing around rings when they are worn. Wrist watches must not be worn when providing clinical care; this is for both infection control and patient safety reasons. If a belt is worn these must be cleaned regularly, with particular attention paid to the buckle area. All visible body piercing must be in the form of simple gold or silver studs (not hoops or rings). Decisions about the appropriateness of facial piercings should be based on infection control and health and safety and not individual perceptions. Earrings in patient areas should be plain studs. The wearing of hoop type earrings in clinical areas is not appropriate as these can easily be intentionally pulled or grabbed by patient, or accidentally by a confused patient. Any jewellery worn outside of that agreed within this policy must be agreed by HR and the Locality Manager/Manager for your area.

6.4 Clothing should be washed at the hottest temperature recommended for the fabric. You should also note:

- Overloading of machines will also reduce wash efficiency.

- It is not necessary to use a biological powder but it is important to use the quantity of detergent advised by the manufacturer.

- Although there is no published evidence to suggest an infection control risk, staff should ensure that washing machines and tumble driers are maintained according to manufacturer’s instructions as dirty or under-performing machines can result in contamination with micro-organisms.

- Follow tumble drying instructions carefully as per the symbol on the care label.

- Keep garments with different fibre content separate when washing.

6.5 Staff will be provided with the following quantity of uniforms:

- 5 shifts – 3 uniforms
- 4 shifts – 3 uniforms
- 3 shifts – 2 uniforms
- 2 shifts – 2 uniforms

Staff will have the opportunity to purchase additional uniforms via Livewell Southwest at a discounted price. (Process to be agreed and will be added later)

6.6 Staff can claim tax relief in respect of laundry costs. The form for claiming this is available from your local Inland Revenue office (for Nurses it can be obtained from RCN Direct on 0345 772 6100).

6.7 Contamination: Should staff on duty have an incident in which there is contamination to their uniform and local alternatives are not available, staff can access the shower facilities available in PCH and will be able to obtain a temporary uniform which will be kept in 2 locations within Livewell Southwest. (Locations to be identified following final review)

7. Name Badges/identification

Dress code wearers and non-clinical uniform wearers will have their name and job role on a magnetic or pinned name badge; a risk assessment will be undertaken by the manager to decide which to have in each area. Clinical uniform wearers to have embroidered name and job role instead of pinned or magnetic name badge. Both first and last names will need to be applied to badge or uniform

Name badges will not be a substitute for identification badges which all staff must carry with them as proof of identification.

8. Personal Hygiene

8.1 Staff are expected to maintain high standards of personal hygiene. Hands must be clean at all times, nails must be kept clean and to a length which will not damage examination gloves or risk injury to a patient. It is not appropriate to wear nail varnish, false, acrylic or gel nails if delivering patient care.

8.2 Hair should be clean and tidy. In patient or clinical areas, long hair must be tied back and secured off the collar. Long fringe should be clipped/gripped off the face. Hairstyles, hair bands and decorations must maintain safety and an appropriate professional image, e.g. hairstyles that require frequent re-adjustment should be avoided.

8.3 Staff who smoke – staff in uniform where possible should change their uniform if smoking or ensure that their uniform is completely covered up. This will also apply to those wearing non clinical uniform supplied by Livewell Southwest. All name badges or identification badges should be covered or removed. Staff are only permitted to smoke during officially designated breaks and away from Livewell premises. Please refer to Livewell Southwest Tobacco Policy.

8.4 Use of cosmetics, aftershave and perfume should be kept to a minimum and should reflect the need to maintain public confidence and respect.
9. Safety Issues

9.1 Clothing must be appropriate in style and fit, to allow staff to move easily and safely when handling patients.

9.2 It is advisable that pens/scissors are either carried in hip pockets or inside breast pockets. They should not be carried in outside breast pockets where they could cause injury when providing clinical care. In Mental Health areas, scissors should not be carried in pockets.

9.3 Shoes worn must support and protect the foot during everyday duties, especially for manual handling procedures, and using equipment. Open toe or open back footwear is not acceptable for those delivering patient care. Shoes worn with uniforms must be black. Smart wipeable trainer style shoes can be worn for more physical activity but these should also be black to maintain professional image in line with others. The ideal shoe is something that is soft soled (reduces noise) and closed toed (offers protection against spills and sharps – canvas shoes are not permitted). For those not delivering patient care open toe shoes can only be worn if they provide adequate support e.g. back strap. Flip flop type shoes are not permitted e.g. if shoes are open toed there must be a back strap. For staff wearing a dress style uniform, boots are not permitted.

9.4 When attending training events, it is expected that the dress code is adhered to. The only exception will be during Physical Intervention training when Professional Training and Development will issue separate and appropriate dress guidance.

10. Communication

10.1 Staff who do not work in the community must wear identity badges at all times whilst at work so that they can be clearly identified by patients and the public. Staff who work in the community should carry their identity badge at all times and always present it when visiting patients/carers/relatives or when asked to do so. Badges however should not be a substitute for personal communication with patients/relatives.

11. Individual Considerations

11.1 Tattoos – It is essential for staff who have tattoos to be able to maintain a professional appearance. If a tattoo is felt to be offensive, the member of staff may be asked to keep it covered whilst at work.

12. Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness

12.1 Where an employee feels for any reason that they cannot comply with the policy for any reason, which may include religious and cultural reasons, values and beliefs, or to take account of adjustments required as a result of a disability, their concerns will be taken seriously and wherever possible and consistent with the purpose set out in Section 2 an accommodation or compromise will be sought.
Priority will at all times be given to health and safety requirements and, where necessary, advice will be taken from (the Health and Safety Officer/Other position).

12.2 Where an employee does not meet the expectations of the policy, the line manager will counsel the employee recording this within their management file and discuss/support the staff on how to rectify the problem. If non-compliance continues the disciplinary procedure will be invoked.

12.3 The approach should be sensitive and pragmatic. Where difficulties are unresolved the advice of the relevant HR Manager, Corporate Risk Management and/or Trade Union representative should be sought.

12.4 For the purpose of this Policy the Policy Ratification Group is charged with ensuring that this document follows the agreed Policy Framework.

12.5 The HR Policy Group will conduct a full review of the policy in line with the review date.

References and Bibliography


All policies are required to be electronically signed by the Lead Director. Proof of the electronic signature is stored in the policies database.

The Lead Director approves this document and any attached appendices. For operational policies this will be the Locality Manager.

The Executive signature is subject to the understanding that the policy owner has followed the organisation process for policy Ratification.

Signed: Director of Operations

Date: 24th May 2016