

Dress Code Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The East London NHS Foundation Trust (The Trust) is committed to ensuring its employees convey a professional appearance and attitude to their work at all times and should not place themselves or service users at unnecessary risk. To function safely and effectively, the Trust needs to ensure that employees comply with a dress code.
- 1.2. The Trust recognises and celebrates the diversity of its employees and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and uniform requirements. However, priority will be given to clinical, health and safety, security and infection control considerations.
- 1.3. The purpose of the dress code is to ensure that employees protect themselves and patients for work in a manner that complies with a number of Trust policies including but not limited to infection control, health and safety and professional boundaries policies.

2. AIM

- 2.1. The dress code policy is designed to guide managers and employees on the application of Trust standards of dress and appearance. This policy is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of dress and appearance and staff should use common sense in adhering to the principle underpinning the policy.
- 2.2. The aim of the dress code policy is:
 - To provide a practical dress code with a professional style that promotes patient, employee and public confidence.
 - To comply with Infection Control and Health & Safety Legislation.
 - To ensure that all Staff are familiar with current evidence available on wearing of suitable dress or uniforms.
 - To ensure staff project a professional image.
 - To promote mobility and comfort of the wearer.
 - To allow identification for security and communication purposes.

3. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

- 3.1. This policy applies to all employees of the Trust, including but not limited to staff on substantive/fixed term contracts, bank staff, agency staff, medical staffing, staff on honorary contracts, students and volunteers when working on Trust premises or in patient homes.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

- 4.1. Responsibility for complying with the dress code policy lies with the individual employee. The Trust expects employees to demonstrate good judgement and professional taste. If the employee has cultural and/or religious beliefs that make it challenging for them to comply with this policy they must discuss this issue with their line manager immediately to resolve the issue.
- 4.2. Line managers must take advice from specialist advisers (e.g. Prevention and Management of Violence and Aggression instructors, Infection Control Nurse, Occupational Health, Human Resources) if they are unsure whether safe practice is being adopted.

5. GENERAL PRINCIPLES TO BE ADOPTED BY ALL STAFF

5.1. CLOTHES

- 5.1.1. Employees must ensure that their garments are presentable, clean, of good fit and are suitable for their roles and responsibilities.
- 5.1.2. The clothes worn should be appropriate for attendance at work i.e. business type dress, uniform, smart casual, in good condition. Staff should not dress to draw undue attention to themselves.
- 5.1.3. The dress code does not permit the following:
- Very casual or high fashion trousers, such as ripped jeans or tracksuits,
 - Low waistband trousers showing the abdomen/lower back allowing underwear to be visible,
 - Cropped tops, showing the abdomen/lower back,
 - Strapless or revealing tops,
 - Overly tight clothes,

- Very high heels,
- Very short skirts/shorts,
- Flip Flops or other very casual shoes (in line with local health and safety standards),
- Excessive jewellery other than jewellery stated in the policy,
- Outfits which have slogans which may be offensive,
- Other items which do not project a professional image.

6. NAME BADGES

- 6.1. All staff must wear a name badge at all times which should show a current recognisable image. The name badge should only be removed for safety reasons. Employees working in the community must carry their ID badges with them at all times and this must be visible when on duty or acting in an official capacity representing the Trust.
- 6.2. If worn, neck lanyards must have a quick safety clip and should be plain with no text unless NHS or Trade Union approved. If the lanyard becomes visibly soiled it must be changed as soon as practicable.
- 6.3. Students must wear their educational establishment's badges at all times.
- 6.4. Managers and employees can access new name badges and lanyards from the Recruitment Department.

7. HAIR, HAIR ATTIRE AND BEARD

- 7.1. Hair and beards should be neat and clean. Long hair should be tied back when handling food or when undertaking physical or clinical interventions with service users. Hair slides, clips ribbons and other fastenings must be discreet.
- 7.2. Hats and caps for example baseball cap should be removed when inside a Trust building and when interacting with patients either in a clinical setting or in their home.
- 7.3. Due to cultural/religious beliefs there are some staff who wear head attire for example head scarves/turbans – these must be maintained in a clean, tidy condition.

8. JEWELLERY

- 8.1. In order to maintain a professional image in non-clinical areas jewellery should be kept to a minimum.
- 8.2. Rings with stones must not be worn in clinical areas as they compromise hand hygiene. This includes non-clinical staff who are working in clinical area i.e Reception Staff. In addition jewellery, including watches, necklaces and all rings, other than plain bands, must be removed when entering a clinical area and if dealing directly with patients, in situations likely to cause injury to patients, staff or visitors.
- 8.3. The Trust will not be liable for any injury sustained by an employee caused by the wearing of any jewellery.
- 8.4. The security of jewellery that an employee has been asked to remove remains the responsibility of the wearer. The Trust is not liable for any loss.

9. NAILS

- 9.1. Nails should be kept short and particular attention paid to them when washing hands as most microbes on the hands come from beneath the finger nails.
- 9.2. Particular attention should be paid to nails for those undertaking clinical procedures and handling food.
- 9.3. Artificial nails or nail polish must not be worn when delivering clinical care.

10. TATTOOS

- 10.1. Tattoos are to be covered as much as possible and where present, the individual with the tattoo, should be mindful of the potential offence to others. Where tattoos could be deemed to be offensive to patients or colleagues, they should be appropriately covered where possible. If in doubt, staff should seek advice from their line manager.

11. FOOTWEAR

- 11.1. Sensible footwear must be worn and should be viewed as protection to feet. Employees must be able to respond to any emergency situation without placing themselves at risk, therefore, the wearing of opened toed or open backed types of footwear, high heeled shoes and flip flops should be avoided in clinical areas.
- 11.2. Staff are not permitted to wear flip flops, crocs or stilettos (no more than 2.5 inches). Open toed shoes or sandals worn in non-clinical areas are worn at the individuals own risk. Open toe shoes must not be worn in clinical areas.

12. OUTER GARMENTS

- 12.1. No outer garments for example fleeces, jackets should be worn in clinical areas or when interacting with a patient for example on the ward or in a patients home. If an employee has to move from an outer area into a clinical setting or into a Trust building, employees must leave their outer wear in a designated area i.e Ward Office. Staff on community visits can wear appropriate coat or jackets in patients' homes; this must however be removed prior to undertaking any clinical care.

13. UNIFORM

- 13.1. Uniform is provided by the Trust as protective clothing for use on duty and remains the property of the Trust at all times. When wearing uniform members of staff should remember that the image of their professional group as well as the Trust is influenced by their appearance and behaviour.
- 13.2. Staff who smoke must not smoke in uniform or be identifiable as a health care worker. For further details refer to the smoking policy.

14. PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

- 14.1. The primary uses of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is to protect staff and reduce opportunities for transmission of micro-organisms in hospitals. The principles for protective clothing is:

- Patient Safety

- Personal Safety
 - Statutory regulatory requirements
 - Work environment
 - Health and safety requirements
 - Infection Control requirements
- 14.2. Selection of protective equipment must be based on an assessment of the risk of transmission of micro-organisms to the patient or to the carer, and the risk of contamination of the healthcare practitioners' clothing and skin by patients' blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions.
- 14.3. Protective clothing should always be available and should, in addition to other control measures, be worn when carrying out hazardous duties or infectious procedures under Health and Safety Regulations. This includes when in a clinical setting and when in a patients home. Protective aprons are a preventive measure against cross infection and must be worn over clothes when:
- Food Handling
 - Undertaking personal care
 - Aseptic procedures or dealing with patients who have infections
 - Changing bed linen
 - Gloves and aprons should be changed between each task and each patient.

15. GUIDANCE WHEN CARRYING OUT CLINICAL DUTIES

- 15.1. Staff carrying out clinical procedures including but not limited to Drug Rounds, Physical Examinations, Aseptic Techniques and Food Handling should follow the related Trust Policies i.e. Aseptic Technique, Selection of Personal Protective Equipment; Hand Hygiene Policy and Standard Precautions. However the following universal precautions should be followed
- Sleeves should be worn above the elbow and neckties removed
 - Staff must take care when carrying items in pockets (particularly breast pockets), as these are liable to fall out and cause injury.

16. DISAGREEMENT

- 16.1. Managers are responsible for ensuring this policy is followed consistently and appropriately. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of rules rather to give a general indication of the expected standards.
- 16.2. Where the staff member and line manager disagree on the application of this policy, the matter should be referred to the next in-line manager.

17. FAILURE TO COMPLY

- 17.1. Employees who do not adhere to the dress code policy will be asked to return home to change into more suitable clothing and to pay back the time. Continued failure by a member of staff to adhere to this policy will be managed under the Trust's Disciplinary Policy.

18. POLICY REVIEW

- 18.1. The dress code policy will normally be reviewed every three years.