

Dress Code and Wearing of Uniforms Policy

The Equality Act 2010 requires all employers to ensure that their rules on dress and appearance are applied fairly and do not result in employees being disadvantaged or unfairly discriminated against because of their gender, ethnicity, religion, cultural traditions, disabilities and other characteristics that are protected by the Act.

Any employees with protected characteristics can expect their employer to make reasonable adjustments to their dress and appearance requirements so that they are not subject to any form of discrimination.

To comply with these equality requirements, this organisation will ensure that its policy on dress and appearance is applied consistently, flexibly and fairly and does not disadvantage or discriminate against any individual.

Policy Statement

This policy sets out the values, principles and procedures underpinning this care service's approach to dress codes and the wearing of uniforms. The policy is in line with national care standards and the Equality Act 2010.

In general, a care service has a dress code in order to meet:

- service users' safety needs
- personal safety needs
- statutory regulatory requirements
- requirements of the immediate work environment
- health and safety requirements
- infection control requirements
- standards of smartness and appearance expected by the service and its service users.

Thus this care service has a dress code/protective clothing and uniform policy in order to:

- enable staff to present a suitable, professional image, which should increase the confidence of service users and others involved in their care and of potential service users

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- support infection prevention and control and food hygiene measures taken in line with the relevant policies and procedures
- enable the health and safety of staff, which might be impaired by incorrect choosing of clothes or footwear and articles that present hazards in their wearing.

All staff are required to comply with the dress code/protective clothing and uniform policy set by the care service. Failure to comply will in the first instance lead to warnings and reminders by their managers. Further failure to comply will be regarded as misconduct and could result in formal disciplinary proceedings.

Acceptable Dress and Unacceptable Dress

Care staff must dress in ways that are acceptable and non-offensive to their service users, taking into account service users' gender, culture and religious customs into account. They should consider how they dress as part of the development of their working relationship with their service users. Where staff are not required to wear a company/professional uniform, they should use their common sense and discretion in choosing clothes and footwear that are suitable for the work being carried out and which meet health and safety requirements.

Specific guidance (examples)

Visible tattoos should not be offensive to others and where they might be deemed to be offensive should be appropriately covered.

The wearing of jewellery should be kept to a minimum, eg a plain/wedding ring and pair of discreet earrings and only worn if they do not represent a health and safety hazard or infection control risk.

Nails should be sufficiently short to ensure safe patient contact and good hand hygiene.

Hair should be neat and tidy at all times. Long hair should be tied back (particularly where food preparation is involved) so as not to present a health and safety hazard or infection control risk. It is permissible for staff to wear headscarves, where they do so for religious purposes. Otherwise caps and headscarves might be worn for protective purposes.

Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment

Care staff must wear all protective clothing, eg aprons and footwear, when and where this is required for health and safety and infection control reasons. If individuals are unsure about such requirements they should discuss this with their manager. (See also [Cleanliness and Infection Control Policy](#).)

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Uniforms (Where Applicable)

A company uniform, where it is company policy to require their wearing should be worn in a clean and presentable fashion. Staff should have access to a spare uniform in case one becomes unfit for immediate use. Uniforms should not be worn outside of working hours.

Training

All new staff are instructed in the dress code policy as part of their induction programme and the requirements are reinforced through supervision. Proposed changes to the dress code are discussed with staff in meetings and training to make sure that there is general agreement and compliance with the outcomes.



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