

## Directorate of the Chief Nurse

# DRESS POLICY FOR ALL STAFF

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Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust actively seeks to promote equality of opportunity. The Trust seeks to ensure that no employee, service user, or member of the public is unlawfully discriminated against for any reason, including the "protected characteristics" as defined in the Equality Act 2010. These principles will be expected to be upheld by all who act on behalf of the Trust, with respect to all aspects of Equality.

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## 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the expectations of the Trust in relation to the standards and principles for dress for ALL staff. **Additional** dress requirements for clinical staff are detailed within the 'Dress Policy for Staff Working in the Clinical Environment'.
- 1.2 The aim is to ensure that dress complies with Health and Safety, security and Infection Control requirements as well as the Trust's requirements for presenting a smart and professional corporate image. The policy also aims to promote a dress style that is acceptable to the majority of patients.
- 1.3 The Trust considers that the way staff dress and their appearance is of significant importance in portraying a professional image to those who access our service. The introduction of 'Choice' will allow patients to choose their health care provider. The implementation of this policy is intended to offer confidence and reassurance that we operate and maintain the highest professional standards at all levels.
- 1.4 This policy is designed to guide managers and employees on the Trust standards of dress and appearance. The policy is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of dress and appearance and staff should use common sense in adhering to the principles underpinning the policy. A sensible approach should be taken to ensure the spirit of the policy is applied.

## 2.0 Area

This policy covers staff working in any Trust setting and when off Trust premises on Trust business and coming to and from work.

## 3.0 Duties

All staff employed by or working on behalf of Northern Lincolnshire & Goole NHS Foundation Trust (This includes those with honorary contracts, bank and agency workers, volunteers, contractors and students). Additional dress requirements for clinical staff are detailed within the 'Dress Policy for Staff working in the clinical environment'. The duties and responsibilities are detailed in section 4.0.

## 4.0 Actions

### 4.1 Duties and Responsibilities of All Staff

- 4.1.1 Consideration for patients affects how individuals choose to dress. Dress and appearance should not interfere with the ability to communicate with patients and their carers. Fashion changes but patients have the right to expect that all health care workers and students appear professional (BMA 2005). Patients may be more comfortable with conservative dress (Lill & Wilkinson 2005) therefore dress that is too informal, e.g. jeans, leather trousers, leggings or is at the extremes of fashion may offend some patients and should not be worn. Clothes should be avoided that are revealing or may cause embarrassment or offence to others, e.g. above mid-thigh length, showing midriff or underwear, low cut tops. Good personal hygiene and grooming is essential (BMA 2005).

- 4.1.2** On training days a more informal dress is acceptable however consideration should be given as to the activities likely to be undertaken on the day.
- 4.1.3** The staff who smoke should ensure their uniform/work clothes are fully covered before they leave the site on smoking breaks.
- 4.1.4** The Trust recognises the diversity of cultures, religions and disabilities of its staff and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress requirements. However priority will be given to health and safety and infection control considerations. Any member of staff wishing to deviate from the dress policy for religious, creed or cultural reasons will be asked to discuss this with their line manager who will conduct a thorough risk assessment taking into account Infection Control and Health and Safety.

Action	Rationale
<p>General appearance must be clean and smart. Good personal hygiene (but not excessive use of fragrances) and grooming is essential. Clothing should be free from odours, including cigarette smoke. Dress should enable the staff member to undertake any moving and handling required without restricting movement or compromising dignity of staff or causing embarrassment to the patient.</p> <p>During interactions with patients/clients the face should not be covered and excessive make-up or false eyelashes should not be worn.</p> <p>Chewing gum or sweets while in direct patient contact is not permitted.</p>	<p>To promote a positive patient experience and positive perceptions of staff.</p> <p>General appearance, facial expression and other non-verbal signals are important components of good communication in the wider UK community. Any form of dress that interferes with this (such as covering the face or wearing excessive jewellery and make-up) should be avoided.</p> <p>Chewing gum may appear unprofessional and may impair verbal communication.</p>
<p>In non-clinical areas, jewellery may be worn but should be discreet and appropriate and not cause a health and safety hazard.</p> <p>Any staff member with a visible facial/body piercing must remove them during working hours. (The term facial piercing includes tongue studs but excludes earrings). Managers should assess individuals in line with duties to be undertaken.</p>	<p>Certain jewellery may present a health and safety hazard.</p> <p>This is also in line with the Bare Below the Elbows principles (Hand Decontamination Policy)</p> <p>Patients are more comfortable with conservative clothing (Lill 2005)</p>

Action	Rationale
<p>Visible tattoos if offensive should be appropriately covered. Managers should assess individuals in line with duties to be undertaken.</p> <p>Tattoos on the forearms and hands must be left uncovered for hand hygiene during direct patient activity and when entering clinical areas as per the Bare Below the Elbows principles</p>	<p>To avoid causing offence</p> <p>For many patients, facial piercings and tattoos can be unsettling and distracting</p> <p>To facilitate an effective hand hygiene procedure</p>
<p>Sensible clothing and footwear that is fit for purpose should be worn.</p> <p>Footwear must be safe, sensible, in a good condition, smart and clean and in accordance with Health and Safety risk assessment (see appendix A). All footwear should have non-slip soles</p>	<p>Staff must ensure that their style of dress and footwear is such that they can undertake their duties without compromising the wellbeing of themselves and/or others. (Health &amp; Safety at Work Act 1974, Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992).</p>
<p>Personal Protective Equipment may be required depending on the environment/task.</p>	<p>Risk assessment to be undertaken based upon the need for: patient safety, personal safety, statutory regulatory requirements, work environment, Health and Safety requirements and Infection Control requirements (Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992).</p> <p>NLAG Policy for the wearing of PPE (2012).</p>
<p>A valid Trust identification badge must be clearly displayed. An additional Trust approved yellow name badge, displaying full name and job role, should be worn by staff who have regular contact with patients and visitors. It should be clearly visible, e.g. worn on the breast pocket area. A Trust approved lanyard may be worn by those who do not have direct contact with patients.</p> <p>Fabric should not bear advertising or unsuitable logos etc.</p>	<p>In accordance with the Trust Security Policy &amp; Strategy and to reinforce good communication. Patients like to know the name of the staff caring for them.</p> <p>Trust Hospitality &amp; Sponsorship Policy</p>

## 4.2 Duties and Responsibilities of Managers

- 4.2.1 It is the responsibility of the Ward/Department Manager to provide suitable and sufficient Personal Protective Equipment.
- 4.2.2 Managers are responsible for ensuring the Dress Policy is adhered to at all times in respect of the staff they manage and staff working in their area (e.g. students etc).
- 4.2.3 Managers may need to take appropriate action if staff fail to comply with the policy.
- 4.2.4 Managers will undertake an informal discussion with the staff member regarding any deviation from the policy. If a significant or persistent breach has occurred then the staff member must be made aware that this may then lead to the disciplinary process being commenced (NLAG General Disciplinary Policy 2013).

## 5.0 Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness

- 5.1 Operational Groups and Directorates will monitor compliance on an ongoing basis against the standards outlined in this policy.
- 5.2 Matrons will monitor compliance within the nursing teams monthly and via the annual Ward Review process.

## 6.0 Associated Documents

- 6.1 Department of Health (2003) Winning Ways. Working together to reduce healthcare associated infection in England. CMO.
- 6.2 Department of Health (2004) Standards for Better Health.
- 6.3 Department of Health (2005) Saving Lives. A delivery programme to reduce healthcare associated infection, including MRSA.
- 6.4 Department of Health (2010) Uniforms and work-wear: Guidance on uniform and work-wear policies for NHS employers.
- 6.5 Health and Social Care Act 2008 Code of Practice.
- 6.6 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- 6.7 NICE Clinical Guideline 2 (2003) Infection Control: Prevention of healthcare associated infection in primary and community care. [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)
- 6.8 Northern Lincolnshire & Goole NHS Foundation Trust Infection Control 'Uniform Guidelines' (Reviewed 19.7.06).
- 6.9 Northern Lincolnshire & Goole NHS Foundation Trust (2005) Risk Assessment Tool Procedure. Directorate of Governance and Quality Improvement.
- 6.10 Northern Lincolnshire & Goole NHS Foundation Trust (2013) Dress Policy for Staff Working in the Clinical Environment.
- 6.11 Race Relations Act (1976) and amendments 2000.

## 7.0 References

- 7.1 British Medical Association (BMA) (2005) Medical School Charter. Council of Heads of medical schools and BMA Medical Students Committee. September 2005. BMA.
- 7.2 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- 7.3 Lill M. M. & Wilkinson T. J. (2005) Judging a book by its cover: descriptive survey of patients' preferences for doctors' appearance and mode of address. British Medical Journal 2005; 331; 1524-1527 (24 December).
- 7.4 Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992.
- 7.5 Northern Lincolnshire & Goole NHS Foundation Trust (2012) Policy for the wearing of Personal Protective Equipment. Directorate of Clinical & Quality Assurance.
- 7.6 Northern Lincolnshire & Goole NHS Foundation Trust (2013) General Disciplinary Policy. Directorate of Organisational Development & Workforce.
- 7.7 Northern Lincolnshire & Goole NHS Foundation Trust (2013) Hand Decontamination Policy.
- 7.8 Northern Lincolnshire & Goole NHS Foundation Trust (2012) Security Policy & Strategy.
- 7.9 Northern Lincolnshire & Goole NHS Foundation Trust (2011) Hospitality & Sponsorship Policy.
- 7.10 Personal Protective Equipment Regulations (1992).

## 8.0 Definitions

- 8.1 **BBE** – Bare below the elbows.
- 8.2 **BMA** – British Medical Association.
- 8.3 **PPE** – Personal Protective Equipment.

## 9.0 Consultation

- 9.1 Nursing & Midwifery Advisory Forum.
- 9.2 Joint Negotiating Consultative Committee.

**10.0 Equality Act (2010)**

- 10.1** In accordance with the Equality Act (2010), the Trust will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace so that an employee with a disability, as covered under the Act, should not be at any substantial disadvantage. The Trust will endeavour to develop an environment within which individuals feel able to disclose any disability or condition which may have a long term and substantial effect on their ability to carry out their normal day to day activities.
- 10.2** The Trust will wherever practical make adjustments as deemed reasonable in light of an employee's specific circumstances and the Trust's available resources paying particular attention to the Disability Discrimination requirements and the Equality Act (2010).

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Appendix A

Risk Assessment of Footwear

