



Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise (PDSE)

Uniform for Clinical Staff Policy Version 5.0

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Uniform Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Uniforms should be compatible with safe moving and handling practices, breakaway, control and restraint, minimising cross infection and be appropriate to the area in which they are worn.
- 1.2 For the purpose of this policy students are included in the term 'staff' unless referred to separately.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff clearly understand the standards of dress, when in uniform, expected of them whilst at work.
- 2.2 Standards should support and promote the following principles:
 - The health, safety and wellbeing of patients, clients, carers and visitors.
 - The health, safety and wellbeing of staff.
 - The need to maintain public confidence and respect.
 - The professional accountability of staff as defined by professional bodies/councils.
 - The diversity, rights and beliefs of staff.See also Appendix A

3. Duties

- 3.1 PDSE will provide appropriate uniform(s) in sufficient quantity and quality for all staff, where this is necessary or otherwise deemed appropriate for their role. It is important also that the work area has sufficient spare uniforms in stock in case of contamination. All personal allocated uniforms remain the property of PDSE and must be returned upon termination of individual's contract. Maternity tunics and dresses can be provided and should be returned by the expected date of delivery. See Appendix D for details of uniform provision.
- 3.2 PDSE will also provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as necessary to maintain the health and safety of employees and others. If staff are required to wear protective clothing they must do so in accordance with Infection Control policies. Hands must always be decontaminated after removal of PPE. If they are unsure about such requirements they should discuss this with their line manager.

- 3.3 Staff must ensure that uniform, footwear and standard of dress are appropriate to their role. Standards of uniform must ensure that infection control, clinical care, treatment, communication and respect for patients/clients/carers/visitors are not compromised and that professional standards, support of colleagues and the reputation of PDSE is upheld. Appendix C gives details of footwear requirements.

4. Uniform Policy

- 4.1 Uniforms will be purchased from suppliers approved by PDSE.
- 4.2 Uniform styles will be decided by PDSE Senior Management Team (SMT) in consultation with staff.
- 4.3 Uniform colours will be decided by PDSE SMT in consultation with staff. Appendix B lists colours for each staff group.
- 4.4 Staff are not to make any changes to the agreed uniform for any individual or group of staff without SMT permission.
- 4.5 Staff are expected to maintain their uniforms in a good state of repair. Uniforms 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. Uniforms for staff (not students) requiring replacement will only be condemned by the individual's line manager and is not expected to occur more frequently than every 3 years. Staff may be charged for replacement of uniform where poor care or misuse is suspected. Replacement uniforms will be issued on receipt of the old uniform. Students' uniforms will be replaced at the intervals shown in Appendix D. Replacement uniforms for students will be issued on receipt of the old uniforms and charges may be imposed for missing articles. Students may purchase replacement uniform before the stated occasions in the case of loss or damage to their uniform, or to accommodate weight gain or loss.
- 4.6 When on duty, staff must only wear the designated type and style of uniform approved for their workplace and grade. This will denote their role within the organisation/work area and will help the patient identify who is caring for them.
- 4.7 Garments worn as part of a uniform but not provided by PDSE must be of professional appearance and in a good state of repair. This applies to all students and Clinical Supervisors who are provided with a clinical tunic and wear their own lower garment. Appendix C details suitable garments.
- 4.8 Garments worn under the tunic top must be black, white or as close in colour to the tunic as possible.

- 4.9 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.
- 4.10 Clinical uniforms must not be worn outside of the Dental Education Facility.
- 4.11 Uniforms must not be worn in any retail or recreational premises whilst not at work.
- 4.12 Staff who smoke should ensure their uniform and ID badge is totally covered.
- 4.13 PDSE does not provide a laundry service for uniforms. Staff are responsible for the laundering of their own uniform.

5. Infection Control

- 5.1 Uniforms must have short sleeved tops. PDSE has adopted the Bare Below the Elbows policy for all clinical staff in inpatient areas and whenever a clinical activity is being performed.
- 5.2 Within this dress code, clinical activity is defined as any work activity in a Dental Education Facility, during which the member of staff is in direct contact with the patient.
- 5.3 When in direct contact with a patient, staff must be bare below the elbows and conform to the following:

<p>Yes Short sleeves Plain wedding bands Short finger nails</p>	<p>No Ties, lanyards or necklaces Wrist watches or bracelets Rings with stones inlaid Long or artificial fingernails Any nail polish</p>
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NB. Full or three quarter length sleeves are allowed for religious/cultural reasons except during clinical procedures with a patient and during hand washing, where sleeves must be rolled up or pulled back and kept securely in place. (For advice from the Muslim Spiritual Care Provision please see Appendix A).

- 5.4 Protective aprons are a preventative measure against cross infection and must be worn during patient contact procedures. Aprons must be changed between patient contacts, and then 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 patient confidence, spare uniforms must be available for staff to change into immediately.
- 5.5 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 should 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. Earrings must be in the form of simple gold or silver studs. The wearing of hoop type earrings in clinical areas is not acceptable as these can easily be intentionally pulled or grabbed by patient, or accidentally by a confused patient. All other visible piercings should be removed to comply with infection control and health and safety. Registration badges can be worn appropriately where this does not affect patient safety.
- 5.6 Uniforms should be washed separately from other items and should be washed at the hottest temperature recommended for the fabric.
- 5.6.1 Overloading of machines will also reduce wash efficiency.
- 5.6.2 It is not necessary to use a biological powder but it is important to use the quantity of detergent advised by the manufacturer.
- 5.7 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.
- 5.8 Staff may be able to claim tax relief in respect of laundry costs. The form for claiming this is available from your local Inland Revenue office.
- 5.9 For religious reasons, if wearing head coverings (e.g. a turban or skull cap) these should be washed and changed daily and secured to avoid loose ends.

6. Personal Hygiene

- 6.1 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 acceptable to wear nail varnish, false, acrylic or gel nails if delivering patient care.

- 6.2 Hair should be clean and tidy. In patient areas long hair should be tied back and secured off the collar. Hairstyles, hair bands and decorations must maintain safety and an appropriate professional image, e.g. hairstyles that require frequent re-adjustment should be avoided. The appropriateness of a hairstyle should be based on infection control/health and safety, rather than perception. Facial hair should be kept neat and tidy.
- 6.3 Use of cosmetics and perfume or aftershave should be kept to a minimum and should reflect the need to maintain public confidence and respect.

7. Safety Issues

- 7.1 Uniforms and clothing must be appropriate in style and fit, to allow staff to move easily and safely when handling patients.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Shoes worn must support and protect the foot during everyday duties, especially for manual handling procedures, and using equipment. The ideal shoe is non-slip, soft-soled (reduces noise), and fully encloses the foot. They should also be low heeled, anti-static and easily cleaned or washed. They must be black in colour. Open-toe and open front or open-backed footwear is not acceptable for those delivering patient care and clog style shoes are not acceptable. Appendix C details the requirements for shoes for wearing in the clinical area. Shoes to be worn in non-clinical areas should be of a style which protects the foot against workplace hazards, allows the wearer to move easily around the workplace and maintains public confidence.

8. Communication

- 8.1 Staff must wear identity badges at all times whilst at work so that they can be clearly identified by patients and the public. Badges however should not be a substitute for personal communication with patients/relatives.
- 8.2 It is not appropriate for staff to wear uniform or wear their identification badge in public places when not on duty.

- 8.3 Changes to uniform policy in extreme weather conditions: There may be times when wearing all or part of a uniform will cause difficulties to staff, e.g. in times of very hot weather. Changes to uniform can be agreed at a local level. Any changes must maintain an appropriate professional image. ID badges should still be worn.

9. Individual Considerations

- 9.1 The wearing of a uniform is primarily to provide protection and safety to patients and staff and to promote a professional image. In circumstances where the uniform policy is seen by an employee to cause him/her difficulties or offence, due consideration should be given to allowing a different style of uniform within the general standards and principles.
- 9.2 Tattoos - Staff are permitted to have tattoos. However it is essential that staff are 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.

10. Staff Training

- 10.1 All staff should understand their duties and responsibilities in respect of the Uniform Policy. Induction training must include written guidance for staff on the Uniform and Dress Code Policies.

11. Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness

- 11.1 Where an employee feels, for any reason, that they cannot comply with the policy, their objections and concerns will be taken seriously and wherever possible and consistent with the principles in Section 2 an accommodation or compromise will be sought.
- 11.2 Where an employee does not meet the expectations of the policy, the line manager will discuss with the employee how to put the problem right. If non-compliance continues the disciplinary procedure may be invoked.
- 11.3 The approach should be sensitive and pragmatic. Where difficulties are unresolved the advice of the relevant Employee Relations Manager and/or Trade Union representative should be sought.

Appendix A

Advice from: Muslim Spiritual Care Provision in the NHS (MSCP).

Uniforms and Workwear: guidance on uniform and workwear policies for NHS employers (DH, 2010) confirms there is no new evidence from the 2007 guidance and updates examples of best practice. It provides more specific guidance on cultural issues:

1. Exposure of forearms is not acceptable to some staff because of their Islamic faith. The MSCP made some recommendations to ensure that local dress code policies are sensitive to the obligations of Muslims and other faith groups whilst maintaining equivalent standards of hygiene. Incorporating any of these into trust policy will have to be agreed with clinical managers and the infection prevention and control team. PDSE currently does not provide long sleeved or three quarter length sleeved uniforms. However, these could be made available on request. The recommendations below can be related to staff members' own clothing.
 - Uniforms may include provision for full length sleeves when staff are not engaged in direct patient care activity
 - Uniforms can have three-quarter length sleeves
 - Any full or three-quarter length sleeves must not be loose or dangling. They must be rolled or pulled back and kept securely in place during hand-washing and direct patient care activity
 - Disposable over-sleeves, elasticated at the elbow and wrist, may be used but must be put on and discarded in exactly the same way as disposable gloves. Strict procedures for washing hands and wrists must still be observed.

2. Use of hand disinfection gels containing synthetic alcohol does not fall within the Muslim prohibition against natural alcohol (from fermented fruit or grain).

Appendix B

Uniform colours

Staff Type/Role	Colour	Upper Garment Supplied	Lower Garment Supplied	Replaced not more frequently than
Clinic Team Leader	Dark blue tunic with navy blue trousers	Yes	Yes	3 yearly
Dental Nurse	Mid blue tunic with navy blue trousers	Yes	Yes	3 yearly
Trainee Dental Nurse	Purple tunic with black trousers	Yes	Yes	N/A
Clinical Support Worker	Teal tunic with navy blue trousers Black shoes provided by PDSE	Yes	Yes	3 yearly 4 yearly
Sterilisation Unit	Burgundy tunic with burgundy trousers Black Shoes provided by PDSE	Yes	Yes	3 yearly 4 yearly
BDS students	Royal blue tunic with navy blue or black trousers or skirt	Yes	No	See Appendix D
Clinical Supervisors and Clinical Leads	Navy blue tunic	Yes	No	3 yearly
BSc students	Grey tunic with navy blue or black trousers or skirt	Yes	No	See Appendix D
Hygienist/Therapist Supervisors	Light blue tunic (shade to be different to that of the BSc students)	Yes	No	3 yearly
PDSE Clinical Staff (Dentist / Therapist / Hygienist)	Tunic as per Clinical Supervisor staff with navy blue trousers.	Yes	Yes	3 yearly

Appendix C

Acceptable lower garments for BDS and BSc students:

- Navy blue or black trousers or skirts.
- Trousers must be full length, of a professional style and fabric i.e. not denim. Scrub trousers are not considered as acceptable lower garments.
- Skirts must be of a professional style and fabric and of a length to preserve the modesty of the wearer (knee length).
- Shoes must be of professional appearance. They must fully enclose the foot (toes and heels) and be of a material which will protect the foot from liquid spillages or sharp instruments and enable to wearer to move easily around the DEF.

Appendix D

Uniform allocation

Staff category	Provision
Dental Nurses (all grades), Clinical Support Workers and Sterilisation Unit staff	One set (upper and lower garments) provided for each day of the week worked
Clinical Supervisors (all grades) and Clinical Academics	One upper garment provided for each day of the week worked.
BSc Students – 3 year course	3 upper garments provided at the start of Year 1
BDS Students – 5 year course	3 upper garments provided at the start of Year 1. These will be replaced free of charge during Year 4 or Year 5 if they no longer meet the required standard of professional appearance. The Clinic Team Leader will decide whether replacements are required. The old garments must be returned to PDSE at the time of issuing the new garment/s. 1 additional upper garment provided at the start of Year 4.