

Best Practice for Uniforms/Workwear



We recommend that all organisations/provisions:

- Have local uniform policies in place and monitor compliance with these
- Provide enough uniforms/workwear for staff to have clean clothes for every shift to avoid daily washing
- Provide changing and storage facilities for staff and ensure these are cleaned regularly

Practice	Infection control risk and suggested further guidance
Change into uniform or clean clothes at the beginning of your shift and out of uniform/clothes at the end of your shift.	We must presume some degree of contamination following a shift, even on uniform or clothing which is not visibly soiled. Employees must therefore change out of their uniform promptly at the end of each shift.
Ensure that outdoor coats are stored in staff lockers or left in cars. If this is not possible, coats should be stored in disposable bags during shifts and not in communal areas.	We must presume some degree of contamination following a shift and therefore staff should be vigilant around storing coats
Change immediately if uniform or clothing becomes visibly soiled or contaminated.	Visible soiling may present an infection risk
Ensure staff are working bare below the elbows. This means no jewelry or wrist watches.	Cuffs at the wrist become heavily contaminated and are likely to come into contact with patients.
Have clean, short, unvarnished fingernails. This includes no false nails or gels.	Long nails are harder to keep clean and are a potential hazard.
Tie long hair back off the collar.	Keeping hair off the collar reduces the incidence of bacterial growth around the collar areas ¹ .
Wear soft-soled shoes, closed over the foot and toes.	Closed shoes offer protection from spills and dropped objects. Open shoes risk injury or contamination for staff.
Staff must ensure that they use appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment) as required to reduce the risk of cross infection.	PPE guidance infographic. Donning and doffing infographic.
Staff must ensure that they are wearing an appropriate surgical mask at all times whilst on shift.	Surgical mask use infographic.
Headscarves must be worn unadorned and secured neatly.	Headwear, for example, turbans and kippot, veils (Christian or niqab) and headscarves are permitted on religious grounds provided patient safety is not compromised. These must be washed and/or changed between each shift or immediately if contaminated.
Wear clear identifiers during all shifts, such as sticky labels	Patients like to know the names and roles of staff who are caring for them.

Regardless of wearing PPE, uniforms should be laundered as follows:

- separately from other household linen if heavily soiled
- at the maximum temperature the fabric can tolerate, then ironed or tumble dried.

If you cannot wear a uniform, we would recommend that all staff change clothes upon arrival to the site and at the end of the day as this will reduce risk of transmission in the home setting. The clothing should be transported home in a disposable plastic bag and washed separately as above, if unable to wash on site.

This does not need to apply to underclothes unless contamination from the resident's body fluid (e.g. vomit, or fluids soaked through external items).

¹ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Uniforms-and-Workwear-Guidance-2-April-2020.pdf>