

Dress, Hygiene and Professional Standards

Policy Responsibilities and Authorisation

Department Responsible for Policy	Organisational Support
Document Facilitator Name	Tracey Ashworth
Document Facilitator Title	Human Resources Business Partner
Document Owner Name	Kate Coley
Document Owner Title	Executive Director Organisational Support
Target Audience	All Waikato DHB Employees, External Personnel and Volunteers.
Authorised By	Executive Leadership Team
Date Authorised	1 December 2021
Disclaimer: This document has been developed by Waikato District Health Board specifically for its own use. Use of this document and any reliance on the information contained therein by any third party is at their own risk and Waikato District Health Board assumes no responsibility whatsoever.	

Policy Review History

Version	Updated by	Date Updated	Summary of Changes
07	Nicola Purves & Vicki Parry		Combined 2174 <i>Dress Standards Professional Image</i> and 5732 <i>Dress and Hygiene Standards</i> policies
08	Elsbeth Baker-Vevers		Changed HR contact for uniform alternatives. Added clarification of standards required for non-clinical employees in 4.4.

Released under the Official Information ACT 1982

Dress, Hygiene and Professional Standards

Contents

1. Introduction 3

 1.1 Purpose 3

 1.2 Scope 3

 1.3 Background 3

 1.4 Scope 3

2. Definitions 3

4. Policy Processes 4

 4.1 Roles and Responsibilities 4

 4.2 All Employees 4

 4.2.1 Identification 4

 4.2.2 Tattoos 5

 4.2.3 Footwear 5

 4.3 Clinical Employees - Uniformed and Non-Uniformed 5

 4.3.1 Clinical Employees – Uniformed 5

 4.3.2 Clinical Employees – Non-uniformed 6

 4.3.3 Contamination 6

 4.3.4 Laundry 6

 4.3.5 Travelling in Uniform 6

 4.3.6 Uniform Alternatives 7

 4.3.7 Providing Clinical Care 7

 4.3.8 Personal Grooming 7

 4.3.9 Nails 7

 4.3.10 Jewellery and Piercings 7

 4.3.11 Maternity 8

 4.3.12 Termination of Employment 8

 4.4 Non-Clinical Employees 8

 4.5 Health & Safety and Personal Protective Equipment 9

 4.6 Smokefree Environment 9

5. Audit 9

 5.1 Indicators 9

 5.2 Tools 9

6. Legislative Requirements 9

 6.1 Legislation 9

 6.2 Associated Waikato DHB Documents 10

7. Associated Documents 10

 7.1 Bibliography 10

Released under the Official Information ACT 1982

Dress, Hygiene and Professional Standards

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure employees are clear on the standard of dress, hygiene and appearance whilst at work, whether wearing a uniform or non-uniform.

Some areas will require service specific requirements reflecting their particular needs that will complement this policy.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all Waikato District Health Board (DHB) employees, external personnel, volunteers and students.

1.3 Background

Waikato DHB expects employees to present a professional clinical and corporate image in dress and behaviour which inspires public confidence in the organisation.

Due to the nature of health work infection prevention control, and health and safety it is in the best interests of patients and employees that appropriate uniforms, protective equipment and footwear is provided in some areas. Uniforms are also provided for most customer facing roles to help patients better identify employees and the service they work for.

1.4 Scope

All Waikato DHB employees, external personnel, volunteers while on placement.

2. Definitions

Casual	A relaxed, tidy style of dress suitable for every day wear.
Clinical Care	Clinical care is any time personnel are in an environment where clinical care may be provided and includes that which involves physical touching or handling of a patient e.g. lifting, turning, undertaking procedures such as taking vital signs, medications, dressings, Infection and Control requirements – isolation etc.
Corporate image	The impression of Waikato DHB that is imparted to the public.
External personnel	Contractors, agency temporary workers, students on placements, any other relevant persons of interest and non employees.
Offensive	In this policy the term offensive includes, offensive language, gang affiliations, racist or religious statements. What an ordinary and reasonable person would consider to wound the feelings of, or arouse real anger, resentment, disgusts or outrage.
Professional	A health-care provider's personal appearance must project professionalism and competence to engender trust in patients. Conveying professionalism in the workplace encompasses the way we communicate, how we express courtesy and body language, and what we wear. Standardized uniform style and colour. Wear photo ID badge at all times. ID badge is to be worn at chest level.

Dress, Hygiene and Professional Standards

3. Policy Statements

- Employees are expected to present a professional clinical and corporate image and behaviour which inspires public confidence in Waikato DHB.
- Infection prevention & control and health and safety issues are addressed.
- Easy identification of role, profession and individual employee is maximised through clear and visible identification
- Waikato DHB recognises the diversity of cultures, religions and disabilities 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 prevention and control considerations.

4. Policy Processes

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

All Employees

- All employees are required to comply with the standards of dress and personal appearance appropriate to their service area at all times.
- Return uniforms and identification badges upon end of employment at Waikato DHB. Please return your items to Bryant Education Centre Auditorium.

Clinical Employees

- All employees are required to comply with the specific infection prevention and control requirements.

Managers

- Responsible for communicating service specific requirements.
- Ensure compliance with requirements of this policy and any service specific requirements in respect of the employees they manage.

4.2 All Employees

4.2.1 Identification

Identity badges must be worn in a prominent position at all times.

In certain identified areas (e.g. Mental Health and Addiction Services), for personal security and privacy reasons, it may not be advisable to openly display an identification badge. In this circumstance, the line manager’s approval must be given for the authorised Waikato DHB identification badge not to be visible. However, it must be accessible at all times by being retained for example, in a pocket, and must be displayed on demand. A personal name badge must be worn and be visible. This may have the person’s first name only if approved by the line manager.

Released under the Official Information ACT 1982

Doc ID:	2174	Version:	08	Issue Date:	1 DEC 2021	Review Date:	1 DEC 2024
Facilitator Title:	Human Resources Advisor			Department:	Organisational Support		
IF THIS DOCUMENT IS PRINTED, IT IS VALID ONLY FOR THE DAY OF PRINTING							Page 4 of 10

Dress, Hygiene and Professional Standards

4.2.2 Tattoos

- It is recognised that in today’s society many individuals now have tattoos. Where an employee has a tattoo in an area that remains exposed when wearing their uniform or clothing this must not be offensive. Where a tattoo is considered offensive, as defined in this policy, the individual will be requested to cover the tattoo during work hours.
- Taa Moko will not be asked to be covered.

4.2.3 Footwear

- Footwear must be appropriate to the role employed. Footwear colour should be discreet and a sensible professional colour when worn with a uniform.
- Sensible plain, low heels and shoes that are clean and in good repair and provide good support and an enclosed toe must be worn in clinical and front line working areas, to prevent damage to toes should a crush or other injury occur. Footwear must enclose the whole foot, and have non-slip soft soles.
- Footwear should be a lace up or slip-on full shoe and have a soft sole and heel to minimise noise. These are provided by the employee. Backless and/or open toe shoes or sandals, jandals must not be worn as these constitute a hazard. Shoes made of ethylene-vinyl acetate (EVA) or petroleum derived foam e.g. Crocs; or shoes made from similar material are not acceptable for infection prevention and control reasons. Theatre crocs made of a medical grade material are acceptable.
- Certain roles require employees to wear protective footwear. Where protective footwear is provided, or an allowance given for this, it must be worn in the workplace.

4.3 Clinical Employees – Uniformed and Non-Uniformed

4.3.1 Clinical Employees – Uniformed

- All services that require personnel to wear uniforms will make these available.
- A clean uniform must be worn each day.
- Approved uniforms must be worn in a clean and presentable fashion at all times.
- Uniforms for nurses, midwives and healthcare assistants are issued by Bryant Education Centre team on Extension 98642. Uniforms for allied health employees are issued by the line manager.
- A sweatshirt, cardigan or vest may be worn over the top of the uniform for warmth to and from the clinical work area.
- If thermal undergarments are worn beneath the uniform it must not be any longer than the uniform sleeve length and must comply with bare ‘below the elbows’ directives.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Doc ID:	2174	Version:	08	Issue Date:	1 DEC 2021	Review Date:	1 DEC 2024
Facilitator Title:	Human Resources Advisor			Department:	Organisational Support		
IF THIS DOCUMENT IS PRINTED, IT IS VALID ONLY FOR THE DAY OF PRINTING							5 of 20 Page 5 of 10

Dress, Hygiene and Professional Standards

- Head scarves / Hijab / tudongs are to be either issued as part of the uniform or to be plain in colour similar to that of the main uniform worn, fitted to the head and neck and tucked into the uniform top. There should be no adornments on the head scarf i.e. sequins, fringing, beading, etc.

4.3.2 Clinical Employees – Non-uniformed

- Neat clean clothes. Professional and professional casual clothing. Clothing should support good infection control, in accordance with this policy.
- Headscarves must be clean and professional looking.

4.3.3 Contamination

- If uniforms become contaminated with blood or body fluids during a shift, contact the duty nurse manager or coordinator (for rural hospital employees) who will advise of the process for a replacement.
- If uniform is visibly contaminated / soiled this must be changed as soon as possible.

4.3.4 Laundry

- Some degree of contamination, even on a uniform or clothing which is not visibly soiled will exist. A clean and freshly laundered uniform or clothing must be worn daily in clinical areas.
- They should be washed separately from other clothing in a hot water wash of 65° for at least 10 minutes or in a cold wash then tumble dried or ironed on a hot setting. If a tumble dryer and/or iron is not available it is acceptable to dry uniforms on a washing line.
- Scrubs must be cleaned by the hospital laundry and must not be removed from the work place.

4.3.5 Travelling in Uniform

Uniforms may be worn whilst travelling to and from work with the exception of theatre employees or any other employees wearing scrubs. Theatre employees and any other employees wearing scrubs are required to change in the designated area.

If a uniform is ruined or soiled during work hours, a replacement uniform can be organised by contacting the BEC team (Waikato Hospital only), scrubs must not be worn offsite.

Employees are discouraged from wearing uniforms in public places e.g. shops, supermarkets. Should circumstances arise where this is necessary, every effort must be made to cover the uniform e.g. coat / jacket should be worn.

Released under the Official Information ACT 1982

Doc ID:	2174	Version:	08	Issue Date:	1 DEC 2021	Review Date:	1 DEC 2024
Facilitator Title:	Human Resources Advisor			Department:	Organisational Support		
IF THIS DOCUMENT IS PRINTED, IT IS VALID ONLY FOR THE DAY OF PRINTING							Page 6 of 10

Dress, Hygiene and Professional Standards

4.3.6 Uniform Alternatives

- Employees wishing to wear an alternative uniform or additional items of clothing must obtain written approval from the Manager – HR Operations. The Manager – HR Operations will consult with the relevant professional lead as appropriate.
- For Powhiri plain black clothing is required. Women are to wear black dresses or black skirts below the knee and men should wear black trousers.

4.3.7 Providing Clinical Care

- Lanyards must be tucked into the top or removed.
- Neck ties must be tucked into the top or removed when providing clinical care given to patients e.g. wound management
- Clinical employees must remove their sweat shirts / cardigans and jackets when providing clinical care involving patient handling so that arms are bare below the elbows
- Any other items of clothing with long sleeves must be pushed up / rolled up above the elbow to allow effective hand hygiene practice when in a clinical environment; a bare below the elbows approach must be taken.
- In areas that provide disposable over sleeves these may be worn over the skin up to where the sleeves have been pushed / rolled up to.
- Clothing that hinders proper patient examination or observation may not be worn.

4.3.8 Personal Grooming

- Hair, moustaches and beards must be washed regularly and kept clean and tidy.
- Hair, moustaches and beards must be containable when using personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and hats. Employees may be required to remove their beards and/or moustaches if they are unable to obtain fit testing for PPE – especially N95 masks.
- In clinical areas hair must be tied back and contained in a plait, bun or net. Hair must be off the shoulders.

Employees are to maintain a high level of personal hygiene and cleanliness including minimisation of strong body odour, perfumes or body sprays.

4.3.9 Nails

Finger nails should be kept short and clean. When viewed from the palm of the hand the natural fingernails should not project far beyond the pad of the finger. Clinical employees must not wear nail varnish, nail art or artificial nails whilst on duty. The wearing of acrylic or gel nails is strictly forbidden, as they pose an infection control risk.

4.3.10 Jewellery and Piercings

Released under the Official Information ACT 1982

Doc ID:	2174	Version:	08	Issue Date:	1 DEC 2021	Review Date:	1 DEC 2024
Facilitator Title:	Human Resources Advisor			Department:	Organisational Support		
IF THIS DOCUMENT IS PRINTED, IT IS VALID ONLY FOR THE DAY OF PRINTING							Page 7 of 10

Dress, Hygiene and Professional Standards

- Some work areas may prohibit the wearing of jewellery where hazards have been identified that pose a risk to safe work practices. In such areas this will be documented in the service specific protocol.
- In work environments providing clinical care, provided that it does not interfere with the provision of safe work practices, the wearing of jewellery must be limited to the following:
 - Studs or sleepers only in facial piercings.
 - Flat ring only without stones e.g. wedding ring.
 - One neck chain or one cultural item may be worn which must sit close to the neck or be able to be tucked into the uniform top.
 - Medic alert bracelet / neck chain if required.
- Wristwatches and activity trackers are not to be worn when providing clinical care.
- If a medic alert bracelet is worn, it must be removed when providing clinical care involving patient handling and for all hand hygiene. It is preferred that medic alerts are necklace type rather than bracelets. Bracelets may be pinned to the uniform

4.3.11 Maternity

Maternity uniforms are available via BEC team and can be provided to personnel for the duration of pregnancy. The uniforms must be returned to the line manager on the last day of work prior to commencing maternity leave.

4.3.12 Termination of Employment

Uniforms remain the property of the Waikato DHB and must be handed in by employees who leave or retire. ID badges must also be returned before leaving employment. Failure to do so may delay the exiting process and could result in deductions being made to final pay to recoup the cost of such items.

4.4 Non-Clinical Employees

- Clothing must be neat, clean, and appropriate to the area in which the employees are working.
- Positions that are client facing (internal or external clients) will require smart business like attire, more so than non-client facing roles which can be tidy casual.
- Clothing must be worn at modest length and style ensuring acceptable coverage of skin.
- All types of jandals or flip flops and track pants are not considered appropriate, nor is damaged or torn clothing (including fashionably distressed items).
- Clothing must not promote alcohol, tobacco, drugs, food or drink as this may contradict our healthy people vision.
- Clothing must not contain language, symbols or images which could be offensive e.g. swearing, gang affiliations, racist or religious statements

Doc ID:	2174	Version:	08	Issue Date:	1 DEC 2021	Review Date:	1 DEC 2024
Facilitator Title:	Human Resources Advisor			Department:	Organisational Support		
IF THIS DOCUMENT IS PRINTED, IT IS VALID ONLY FOR THE DAY OF PRINTING							8 of 20 Page 8 of 10

Dress, Hygiene and Professional Standards

- Hair, moustaches and beards must be washed regularly and kept clean and tidy.
- Employees are to maintain a high level of personal hygiene and cleanliness including minimisation of strong body odour.

4.5 Health & Safety and Personal Protective Equipment

A number of clinical and non-clinical employee groups are required to wear protective clothing as part of their individual role. The principles are based upon the need for patient safety, personal safety and legislative requirements.

- Departmental risk assessments will indicate where personnel are required to wear specific protective equipment such as a selected type of footwear or clothing.
- Health & Safety requirements will take priority over cultural, religious and personal expectations when determining dress standards.

4.6 Smokefree Environment

- All Waikato DHB personnel must not smoke publicly during working hours.
- Waikato DHB personnel members who leave the grounds and facilities to smoke may do so during designated meal breaks but are required to conceal any reference or identification as Waikato DHB personnel (while smoking).
- Identification badges should be removed and uniforms covered as per the Waikato DHB [Smokefree / Tobacco free – Awhiri Kore / Tupeka Kore](#) policy (Ref. 0121)
- Uniforms or clothing must not smell of tobacco smoke.

5. Audit

5.1 Indicators

- Audits show at least 90% compliance to:
 - Bare below the elbows in clinical areas
 - Approved jewellery worn only
 - Adherence to correct uniform

5.2 Tools

- [Infection Prevention & Control Uniform Audit](#)

6. Legislative Requirements

6.1 Legislation

- Health & Safety at Work Act 2015
- Human Rights Act 1993

Dress, Hygiene and Professional Standards

6.2 Associated Waikato DHB Documents

- Waikato DHB [Exiting](#) policy (Ref. 0894)
- Waikato DHB [Managing Behaviour and Performance](#) policy (Ref. 5250)
- Waikato DHB [Poowhiri and Whakatau](#) guideline (Ref. 1847)
- Waikato DHB [Smokefree / Tobacco free – Auahi Kore / Tupeka Kore](#) policy (Ref. 0121)
- Waikato DHB Operating Theatre [Surgical Attire](#) procedure (Ref. 4701)
- Lippincott [Hand Hygiene](#) Procedure

7. Associated Documents

7.1 Bibliography

- Uniforms and Workwear: Guidance on uniform and workwear policies for NHS personnel
- Uniforms and Workwear: An evidence base for developing local policy Dress, Appearance and Uniform Policy: Newcastle on Tyne NHS Foundation Trust Wilson et al 2007 as cited in RCN (2009) Guidance on uniforms and work wear, 2nd Ed.
- Standard NZ: Laundry Practice AS/NZS 4146:2000

Released under the Official Information ACT 1982

Doc ID:	2174	Version:	08	Issue Date:	1 DEC 2021	Review Date:	1 DEC 2024
Facilitator Title:	Human Resources Advisor			Department:	Organisational Support		
IF THIS DOCUMENT IS PRINTED, IT IS VALID ONLY FOR THE DAY OF PRINTING							Page 10 of 10

Memorandum

Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand
Waikato

To: Michelle Sutherland: Interim Director Hospital and Specialist Services

CC: Sue Hayward: Chief Nursing & Midwifery Officer

From: Vicki Aitken: Operations Director, Mental Health and Addictions Service

Suzette Poole: Nurse Director Mental Health and Addictions Service

Date: 4/12 2023

Subject: Proposal: Increase in nursing uniform budget required to enable nurses and mental health assistants working in mental health and addiction services to have access to a uniform.

This proposal requests approval of \$82,570 to ensure there is a supply of uniforms for nurses and mental health assistants working in mental health and addiction services as the current stock is insufficient following a decision that it will be mandatory for all nurses and mental health assistants working in inpatient units to wear a uniform. The wearing of a uniform by nurses and mental health assistants working in community services will be optional.

Background

Currently Nurses and Mental Health Assistants (MHA) working in inpatient units or community practice settings have an option to wear a uniform or not. Many working in inpatient units choose to do so but not all. No Nurses or MHAs working in the community choose to wear a uniform and wear their own clothing. This results in a mix of some staff choosing to wear their own clothing and some choosing to wear uniforms largely within mental health inpatient units.

Nationally there is variance in the wearing of uniforms by Nurses and MH Assistants within inpatient units, however there is a trend for more to do so following Covid. In some units it is mandatory. Similar to our area, uniforms are not worn by Community Nurses or MH Assistants

Nurses and MH Assistants are employed either under the PSA or NZNO MECA which include clauses that apply to Clothing and Laundry allowances. PSA and NZNO MECAs have similar definitions for when a clothing allowance can be paid ie: where for therapeutic requirements or in interest of patient care rehabilitation an employee is required by the employer to wear civilian clothing instead of a uniform. The allowance of \$3.42 per day is the same for each MECA. The PSA MECA includes an additional laundry allowance of \$300.00 per year. The NZNO requires that direction to not wear a uniform shall be in writing and a copy sent to NZNO. Payment of allowances to Nurses and MH Assistants has not been consistent and recently some have applied to be back paid for a maximum period of 6 years. This process is being managed by Rachael Aitchison (Director of Acute Adult inpatient units, Forensic MH services and Mental

Memorandum

Health Services for Older Persons) in partnership with our services HR business partner. The requests for back pay are costly.

A memo advising unions and Nurses and MH Assistants will be issued once we have secured the funding to increase the supply of uniforms. The memo will advise that Mental Health Nurses and Mental Health Assistants (MHA) employed to work in the following inpatient units: wards 34, 35, 36, Low Stimuli Area (LSA), 41, OPR1, Puna Maatai, Puna Awhi rua, Puna Poipoi, Puna Taunaki, Puna Whiti and the new 10 bed unit (due to open early next year) will be required to wear a uniform ie; it will become mandatory.

The uniform for inpatient staff will be the standard issue uniform. The number of inpatient staff requiring uniforms has been calculated at 228 at a cost of \$71, 800 and a 15% contingency has been added to allow for any additional following CCDM FTE calculations due to be completed in early 2024. Total cost requested is \$82,570.

The wearing of a uniform by nurses and mental health assistants working in community services will be optional. A new uniform for nurses and mental health assistants working in the community has been determined ie; polo shirt and standard issue blue trousers and black shorts. It is not expected that there will be a demand to community uniforms. The contingency will cover any demand for community uniforms.

A memo advising unions and Nurses and MH Assistants will be issued once we have secured the funding to increase the supply of uniforms. The memo will advise that Mental Health Nurses and Mental Health Assistants (MHA) working in inpatient will be required to wear a uniform ie; it will become mandatory and will be optional for those working in the community.

The number of additional uniforms required has been included in the annual forecasting schedule.

Student nurses will be asked to wear their student uniforms.

Implementation

A phased approach will be taken to introduce this change once supply of uniforms is in place and managers, Nursing and Mental Health Assistant staff, NZNO and PSA have been informed.

Phase 1: January 2024 to March 2024

First rollout will then commence: MH Adult acute units: wards 34, 35, 36, Low Stimuli Area (LSA), 41, OPR1. 91 staff will require uniforms

Phase 2: March to June 2024

Commence second rollout: Puawai- Forensic Mental Health Service: Puna Maatai, Puna Awhi rua, Puna Poipoi, Puna Taunaki, Puna Whiti, the new 10 bed unit and Bureau
137 staff will require uniforms

Phase 3: June to September 2024

Community teams

There are currently around 100 staff who could request a uniform but this is highly unlikely

Memorandum

The problem/opportunity

The problem is that currently there is not enough supply of uniforms to meet the increased demand from the mental health and addiction service. The projected increase in supply of uniforms will require additional funding. The directive to introduce mandatory uniforms with the inpatient units cannot be made until we have confirmed that a supply of uniforms will be available. Funding for Uniforms is managed under the RC of the Chief Nurse and not the Mental Health and Addiction Service.

Benefits

Mental Health Nurses and Mental Health Assistants (MHA) working in inpatient practice settings will all be required to wear a uniform. It will be clearer for tangata whai ora and whānau to see who staff are and what their role is.

The continual monitoring of staff dress standards for nurses and MH Assistants will cease.

Wearing of uniforms will help support infection control actions given some tangata whai ora- patients are admitted with Covid or develop Covid when living in the inpatient units.

As Nurses and MH Assistants will have access to a uniform the payment of allowances would cease.

Risks

If additional funding for uniforms is not secured then there will be a delay in our ability to introduce mandatory uniforms in the inpatient unit. Furthermore the payment of allowances including requests for back-pay will continue be a cost to the Mental Health and Addiction Service.

Recommendation

Recommendation is to approve the request for increased funding for uniforms that will be held in the Chief Nurse budget.

Approved 02/01/2024

[Signature]

Michael Sutherland
Group Director Operations

Note: Approval based on recommendation from Sue Hayward - Chief Nurse.

MEMO – Waikato only

To: Operations Managers, Team Leaders, Associate Team Leaders, Nurse Educators, Clinical Nurse Coordinators, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Charge Nurse Managers, Associate Charge Nurses Managers, Registered Nurses, Enrolled Nurses, Support Workers, Mental Health Assistants (also known as Psychiatric Assistants, Health Assistants).

PSA Union - support@psa.org.nz
Daryl Gatenby - daryl.gatenby@psa.org.nz

NZNO Union - nzpolicyanalysts@nzno.org.nz
Nigel Dawson - Nigel.Dawson@nzno.org

CC. Sue Critchley, Sue Hayward, Kylie Balzer, John Kanava

From: Suzette Poole (Nurse Director) and Vicki Aitken (Operations Director), Eve Martin, (Human Resource Business Partner,

Date: 7 March 2024

Subject: Proposed directive to PSA and NZNO nurses and mental health assistants (including Psychiatric Assistants, all Health Care Assistants, and Support Workers) regarding uniforms in Mental Health and Addiction Services at Health New Zealand, Te Whatu Ora Waikato.

You may be aware that there have been ongoing discussions about uniforms for nurses and mental health assistants (including Psychiatric Assistants, all Health Care Assistants, and Support Workers working in Mental Health and Addiction Services. We have had discussions with the unions regarding this proposed directive in the fortnight. This was via a memo sent to both PSA and NZNO.

We are now working with the unions and have received initial feedback requesting further information about the rationale for the proposed directive which is outlined below. The unions have also requested that opportunities to provide feedback. Nurses and mental health assistants will have the opportunity to provide feedback via two face to face meetings or via an electronic survey.

Rationale for proposed directive

The rationale behind having uniforms for the MH&A inpatient services as below;

Visual identification:

Visual identification of staff has become increasingly difficult with more casual attire worn by staff. We have received feedback from other staff members, tāngata whaiora, and their whānau that at times it is not obvious who staff members are. Having a uniform helps make staff identifiable to others which is particularly important if an incident occurs. If a tangata whaiora or whānau requires assistance, they know to look for a person in a uniform.

Professionalism and tāngata whaiora trust: The clothing worn in the units in some cases falls below our Dress, Hygiene, and Professional Standards policy. When nurses and health assistants wear neat and tidy uniforms, it shows they are professional. Tāngata whaiora and their whānau see staff in uniforms as being approachable which makes them feel more confident in the care they are receiving.

Health NZ Unity:

Nurse and Health Assistant uniforms provide a standardised appearance. Our Mental Health and Addiction service is the only Waikato hospital-based inpatient team where nurses or healthcare assistants are not wearing uniforms. The uniform unifies the profession and brings inclusivity to all areas of the Waikato Campus where employees in the same role wear the same uniform.

Standardised Infection Control: Nurse and health assistant uniforms ensure that all healthcare professionals follow the same infection control practices. This uniformity reduces the risk of oversight and enhances overall hygiene protocols. This is particularly important with the continued episodes of COVID-19 infections in the inpatient mental health units.

Suitability: The uniforms consist of two pieces with either a tunic or a polo shirt worn with shorts or trousers which are suitable attire in the event either a nurse or mental health assistant may need to psychically restrain a tangata whaiora.

Hygienic Material Choices: The choice of fabric for uniforms can impact their ability to resist moisture and microbial growth. Modern fabrics with antimicrobial properties can further enhance the hygiene of uniforms.

After considering several factors and to take away any confusion, the Mental Health and Addiction Service wishes to reaffirm our position around uniforms and explicitly issue a directive.

The decision for optional non-branded uniforms for community nurses and support workers is to make available a uniform that is more suited to the community given that care is provided in a range of community practice settings. We have therefore left this as optional at this stage.

We are proposing the below directive and seek your feedback please

Inpatient services

- From Friday 31 May 2024, it will be mandatory for **ALL** inpatient nurses and mental health assistants (including Psychiatric Assistants & Health Care Assistants) covered under NZNO and PSA collectives working in all mental health and addiction inpatient units to wear the standard-issue uniforms for nurses and health care assistants.

Before this date, line managers will work with the Bryant Education Centre staff who will manage a phased approach to supply those nurses and mental health assistants who do not currently wear a uniform with the standard issue uniforms.

- From 31 May 2024 **ALL** inpatient nurses and mental health assistants (including Psychiatric Assistants & Health Care Assistants) covered under NZNO and PSA collectives must wear the uniform supplied and as of that same date, anyone in receipt of clothing or laundry allowances will have this cease.

Community practice

- It will **not** be mandatory to wear a uniform in community practice settings. Te Whatu Ora Waikato will be providing an updated uniform for all nurses and community support workers working in community settings covered under both the NZNO and PSA collectives **may** choose to wear.
- The uniform offered to the community practice settings will be;
Charge nurse managers: Dark blue polo shirt
All other nurses: Light blue polo shirt
Community Support worker: Maroon polo shirt

These tops will be worn with either standard-issue blue trousers or blue shorts.
- Before this date, line managers will work with the Bryant Education Centre staff who will manage a phased approach to supply those who wish to wear the new community uniforms.
- From Friday 28 June 2024 uniforms will be available to all nurses and support workers working in a community practice setting and as of that same date anyone in receipt of a clothing or laundry allowance will have this cease.

Open meetings will be held for all affected staff to attend either in person or via the teams link below.

Date: 13 March 2024

Time: 1.30pm to 2.30pm

Where: HRBC - Level 3, HRBC Meeting Room 1

Teams Link: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MjBmMjk4Y2EtOTBiOC00NjE3LTk4ZWltYTlkM2U1ZjRiMDhl%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2240ee1041-32d4-4b36-8b4f-c1d6fd035337%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2292de4cb2-17dd-45f7-a3c9-f0269e0f6e6f%22%7d

Date: 15 March 2024

Time: 11.30am to 12.30pm

Where: He Toa Takitini (London Street) - Level 1 Meeting Room

Teams Link: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ZDM5NGI5OGEtYjBjMy00YTlxLTIIZDMtZjZmNDZiNGE2MDk5%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2240ee1041-32d4-4b36-8b4f-c1d6fd035337%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%229081e2be-5d3e-46d9-ada5-1ffdbb1ece8%22%7d

If you are on shift at this time and you wish to attend, please talk with your line manager to arrange dialling in from your service if able.

In addition, Daryl from PSA and Nigel from NZNO along with our service are asking for you to please complete the short survey to ascertain your views. Please see the separate attachment.

Ngaa Mihi Nui

Suzette and Vicki

Memo

To	Operations Managers, Charge Nurse Managers, Associate Charge Nurses Managers, Team Leaders, Associate Team Leaders, Nurse Educators, Clinical Nurse Coordinators, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Registered Nurses, Enrolled Nurses, Support Workers, Mental Health Assistants (also known as Psychiatric Assistants, Health Assistants), daryl.gatenby@psa.org.nz, nigel.dawson@nzno.org
CC:	Sue Hayward, Sue Critchley, Kylie Balzer, John Kanawa, Eve Martin
From:	Vicki Aitken (Operations Director) and Suzette Poole (Nurse Director) Mental Health and Addiction Service
Date:	01 July 2024
Subject:	Uniform for Nurses and Mental Health Assistants (including Psychiatric Assistants, all Health Care Assistants, and Community Support Workers)

We have considered the staff feedback and a decision has been made to continue to supply uniforms for all mental health and addiction services and in some areas these will be mandatory. Staff feedback was mixed, with support for and against wearing of uniforms for a range of reasons.

Mental Health and Addiction Inpatient Services

From Friday 27 September 2024, it will be **Mandatory** for nurses and mental health assistants, (including Psychiatric Assistants & Health Care Assistants) to wear the standard-issue uniform in the following wards: 34, 35, 36, LSA, MHSOP-OPR 1, Puna Maatai, and Puna Awhi-rua. From Friday 27 September 2024 any clothing or laundry allowances will be stopped for staff in these units. From July, the Bryant Education Centre (BEC) staff will be in contact with line managers to manage a phased approach to supply those nurses and mental health assistants, who do not currently wear a uniform, with standard issue uniforms.

From Friday 25 October 2024 it will be **Mandatory** for nurses and mental health assistants, (including Psychiatric Assistants & Health Care Assistants) in the following wards: 41, Puna Poipoi, Puna Whiri, Puna Taunaki, Oranga Rangatira residential unit to wear a new non-branded uniform which will be:

Charge Nurse Managers:	Dark blue polo shirt
All other nurses:	Light blue polo shirt
Mental Health Assistants:	Maroon polo shirt

These tops will be worn with standard-issue blue trousers or blue shorts. From Friday 25 October 2024 any clothing or laundry allowances will be stopped for staff in these units. The Bryant Education Centre (BEC) staff will be in contact with line managers to manage a phased approach to supply those nurses and mental health assistants with this uniform.

Mental Health and Addiction Community Services

A uniform **will** be offered to all nurses and community support workers working in community services but it will **not be mandatory** to wear a uniform.

The non-branded uniform offered will be;

Charge Nurse Managers:	Dark blue polo shirt
All other nurses:	Light blue polo shirt
Community Support workers:	Maroon polo shirt

These tops will be worn with standard-issue blue trousers or blue shorts. From Friday 25 October 2024 any clothing or laundry allowances will be stopped for community staff.

A phased approach beginning in July and ending in October will be taken to the issuing of uniforms where required. Staff working in the acute care wards will be the first group followed by staff in the rehabilitation units and at the same time the option for community staff should they request it. Charge Nurse Managers and Team Leaders will work with their respective staff to manage this process.

Kindest regards



Vicki Aitken
Operations Director



Suzette Poole
Nurse Director

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Memo

To	Mental Health and Addiction Service: Operations Managers, Charge Nurse Managers, Team Leaders
CC:	Sue Hayward, Sue Critchley, Kylie Balzer, John Kanawa, Eve Martin
From:	Vicki Aitken (Operations Director) and Suzette Poole (Nurse Director) Mental Health and Addiction Service
Date:	01 July 2024
Subject:	Information for Operations Managers, Charge Nurse Managers and Teams leaders about uniforms for Mental Health Nurses and Mental Health Assistants (including Psychiatric Assistants, all Health Care Assistants, and Community Support Workers)

Key messages to Line managers

The final directive attached was released to staff and NZNO and PSA unions on Monday 1 July 2024 and included Operations Managers, Charge Nurse Managers (CNMs) and Team Leaders (TLs) and this memo is to provide guidance on the implementation of that directive.

A phased approach will be taken to the issuing of uniforms as there is an estimated 250 inpatient staff who will be required to wear either the standard issue uniform or the new uniform for rehabilitation units. It will not be mandatory for Community staff to wear a uniform but there will be a uniform available if they choose to want to wear one.

BEC staff will manage the process to issue uniforms so please wait until you are contacted to, as the acute wards will commence first followed by the Rehabilitation focused wards.

The transition to the wearing of uniforms in all inpatient units will commence in July and may take a few months. Once an inpatient staff member has been issued with a uniform they will be expected to wear the full uniform at all times. If staff are accompanying tangata whaiora in a community setting then they may wear their own tidy jacket or top over their uniform. CNMs and TLs will monitor this and communicate this expectation to all their staff.

For inpatient staff that are newly hired, please ensure staff complete the uniform requisition and organise to have a uniform to commence work.

Cessation of clothing or laundry allowances will be managed by payroll following direction from HR on the dates set out in the directive. CNMs and TLs do not need to do anything about these allowances. Any questions from staff about allowances are to be sent to Eve Martin (HR) who will liaise with service directors.

Nurse educators will be required to wear their standard issue uniform when they are working in an inpatient ward but not in the community unless they choose to do so. The Practice Development Unit will be advised of this following the directive being issued.

Student nurses will be required to wear their student uniform when they are on placements in all inpatient wards but not in the community. The education providers will be advised of this following the directive being issued.

The operations managers will work with CNMs and TLs to support and monitor this change.

Please carefully consider how you will communicate this change to tangata whaiora and whaanau.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact us.

Kindest regards



Vicki Aitken
Operations Director



Suzette Poole
Nurse Director

Released under the Official Information ACT 1982