



UNIFORM POLICY

South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
Unit 7 & 8, Talisman Business Centre, Talisman Road,
Bicester, Oxfordshire, OX26 6HR

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DOCUMENT INFORMATION	2
1. PURPOSE	3
2. SCOPE.....	3
3. GENERAL POINTS	3
4. SPECIFIC POINTS	4
5. NHS 111 STAFF	7
6. PPE & SAFETY.....	8
7. INFECTION CONTROL AND HYGIENE.....	9
8. SUNGLASSES, MAKE-UP, AND BODY MARKINGS	11
9. TRUST IDENTITY CARDS (ID).....	11
10. UNIFORM REPLACEMENT PROCEDURE – (FAIR WEAR & TEAR POLICY).....	11
11. RESPONSIBILITIES.....	12
12. MONITORING.....	12
13. AUDIT AND REVIEW	13
14. RELATED POLICIES.....	13
15. REFERENCES	13
APPENDIX 1: STANDARD ALLOCATION OF UNIFORM.....	15
APPENDIX 2: T-SHIRT FABRIC	15
APPENDIX 3: OPERATIONAL UNIFORM REPLACEMENT FLOWCHART	15
APPENDIX 4: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	15

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Author: Mark Ainsworth / HR Dept, Dan Holliday

Consultation & Approval: Operations Policy Review Group

This document replaces: N/A

Notification of Policy Release:

- Operations Bulletin
- Staff Notice Boards
- Intranet /Internet

Date of Issue: July 2018

Next Review: March 2021 Next March 2023

Version: 8.4

Version Control

Review

This policy is regularly reviewed and updated with the information in line with relevant national guidance and legislation. A full 'Review and amendment' is available on request

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To ensure that staff wear uniform in a way to minimise the spread of infection; comply with health and safety requirements and present a professional image.
- 1.2 To ensure that there is consistent practice across the Trust and that all operational managers and staff have a single source of reference for the standards set by SCAS for the wearing of uniform.
- 1.3 To clarify the responsibilities of individual staff and managers within Operations (inclusive of EOC and NHS111 staff) in relation to operational uniform and associated PPE.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all uniformed employees of SCAS. Non uniformed employees may be issued South Central Ambulance Fleece jackets which will be marked with the Trusts name only.

EQUALITY STATEMENT

The Trust is committed to promoting positive measures that eliminate all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, marriage and civil partnership, disability, race, gender, religion/belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy/maternity or any other basis not justified by law or relevant to the requirements of the post. The Trust will therefore take every possible step to ensure that this procedure is applied fairly to all employees regardless of the aforementioned protected characteristics, whether full or part-time or employed under a permanent or a fixed-term contract or any other irrelevant factor.

By committing to a policy encouraging equality of opportunity and diversity, The Trust values differences between members of the community and within its existing workforce, and actively seeks to benefit from their differing skills, knowledge, and experiences in order to provide an exemplary healthcare service. The Trust is committed to promoting equality and diversity best practice both within the workforce and in any other area where it has influence.

Where there are barriers to understanding; for example, an employee has difficulty in reading or writing, or where English is not their first language, additional support will be put in place wherever necessary to ensure that the process to be followed is understood and that the employee is not disadvantaged at any stage in the procedure. Further information on the support available can be sought from the HR Department.

Employees exercising their rights and entitlements under these regulations will suffer no detriment as a result.

3. GENERAL POINTS

- 3.1 All operational staff are expected to be in possession of a full set of uniform – see Appendix 1 for the standard allocation of uniform tables for each operational job role.

- 3.2 A uniform is provided by the Trust as a means of easy identification and to present a professional image.
- 3.3 All uniformed staff are expected to maintain their uniforms in accordance with this policy.
- 3.4 Each uniform wearer is allocated a number of uniform items, which will differ according to the standard allocation (see Appendix 1) agreed as part of this policy.
- 3.5 **Exceptions:** on medical grounds, and/or in accordance with specific religious beliefs, modified uniform may be requested. All such requests will be considered sympathetically on their merits (see section 4.10, below).
- 3.6 **Off-duty:** Staff wishing to travel to and from work in uniform must ensure that Trust insignia and/or uniform markings are not visible. The uniform must not be worn for any unauthorised activities outside of the employment of the Trust.
- 3.7 **During Training:** uniform should be worn unless it is agreed with the Education Department that this is not a requirement for part or all of the course.
- 3.8 **Non-operational duties and outside visits:** Trust staff undertaking official Trust business in the form of non-operational duties and visits to outside agencies, organisations and premises may be required to wear their operational uniform including high visibility garments.
- 3.9 **Ownership:** (see Section 11) all issued items of uniform remain the property of the South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust at all times. When operational staff leave the Trust, it is their responsibility to ensure all uniform items, outfit and PPE are returned to their line manager. Failure to return a full set of issued uniform will result in the costs being deducted from final pay.
- 3.9.1 Due to security implications, staff must not give items of uniform to third parties including other staff member - when they leave the organisation. All uniform needs to be returned to Procurement for disposal.
- 3.9.2 Disciplinary action will be taken against any member of staff who contravenes 3.8.1 Staff are encouraged to report any instances of SCAS/NHS uniform being worn by non SCAS staff or sold/advertised.
- 3.9.3 SCAS uniform must only be worn when undertaking SCAS work and must not be worn when undertaking private work.

4. SPECIFIC POINTS

4.1 Shirts

- 4.1.1 Shirts must be buttoned and tucked into waistbands at all times.
- 4.1.2 Polo shirts are issued for staff to wear should they choose to. As per the above they must be tucked into waistbands at all times. Staff do not have to wear Polo shirts if they choose not to.

4.2 T-shirts

- 4.2.1 T shirts must be worn under such circumstances that require “full uniform”. Examples would include when staff are formally representing SCAS at an external meeting and other “formal” occasions. To this end, staff must always (whilst on duty) have access to a clean, serviceable T shirt.
- 4.2.2 SCAS provides white T-shirts for staff to wear under their uniform shirt and no other colour may be worn.
- 4.2.3 Trust-provided T-shirts are made of breathable fabric (not 100% cotton), so staff may prefer to provide their own WHITE cotton T shirts, which they can wear as an alternative.
- 4.2.4 Wearing of T-shirts during normal operational shifts will remain optional.
- 4.2.5 It is a requirement that staff always present a professional image to the public and patients and must not cause offence as a result of their “dress”. This must be properly considered by all staff, prior to deciding not to wear an T shirt.

4.3 Footwear

- 4.3.1 Only approved Trust footwear is to be worn.
- 4.3.2 The Trust will provide all operational staff with protective footwear as part of their standard issue PPE and as part of their uniform.
- 4.3.3 Where it is not possible for an individual to wear these standard issue boots for a medical reason, following advice of a medical professional the staff member will be referred for a consultation with the Trust’s Occupational Health Provider. Following consultation with the Trusts Occupational Health Provider the service will look to find a suitable alternative which is in line with the Trusts current standard costings.
- 4.3.4 Non-operational uniformed staff who are not issued with Trust footwear as part of their standard Trust issue uniform, are expected to wear black shoes.
- 4.3.5 Socks should be plain black.

4.4 Epaulettes

- 4.4.1 All garments to have epaulettes including shirts, soft shell/fleece and the RTC jacket.
- 4.4.2 Staff will be issued with epaulettes showing their grade or rank. See appendix 1:
- 4.4.3 If bands or decorations are worn, they must be in keeping with the operational uniform.

- 4.5 **Cold Weather Protection:** during periods of cold weather (normally 1 November to 1 March), staff may wear the following items:

4.5.1 **Hat:** a “beanie” style hat with SCAS logo is available through Uniform procurement. These will be issued upon request as not all staff may wish to have one. Hats are only available to Field Operational staff and PTS.

4.5.2 **Scarf:** a plain black, navy blue or dark green scarf may be worn. No markings or badges are permitted. These are not supplied by SCAS

4.5.3 **Gloves:** plain black, navy blue or dark green gloves may be worn. These are not supplied by SCAS.

4.6 **Warm Weather Protection:** during periods of warm weather staff are permitted to wear a baseball style cap in plain black, navy blue or dark green. No markings or badges are permitted other than “Ambulance” or a SCAS crest. These are not supplied by SCAS

4.7 **Clean Uniforms**

4.7.1 Uniform including boots must be kept clean, pressed and neatly presented at all times. However, it is recognised that, from time to time, operational demands may limit or prevent this.

4.7.2 If operational staff need to change an item of uniform due to soiling, etc, they should put in a request to EOC to authorise a return to their base station to change it as soon as practicable, unless they have a spare garment with them on the vehicle. If staff cannot replace uniform at work, then they may need to be returned home to change.

4.7.3 Operational staff should keep a spare, clean, and presentable uniform in a secure place at their designated station base.

4.8 **Alterations**

4.8.1 Items of uniform issued to staff must not be altered in any manner except size.

4.8.2 It is not permitted to alter PPE clothing in any manner; if a different size is required this should be requested in the normal way.

4.9 **Markings**

4.9.1 Job title markings will be worn on the uniform as appropriate to the garment, in the form of epaulettes and an ID badge.

4.9.2 Official awards, medal ribbons, orders and decorations may only be worn and displayed in the appropriate position and at the appropriate time/occasion.

4.9.3 No other badges will be worn except a recognised Trade Union badge of office when the Union Representative is not deployed in a patient facing role.

4.9.4 The Trust recognises that there are commemorative events, such as Remembrance Day where it is seen to be appropriate for emblems (not metal) to be worn. On these such occasions, it will be agreed that the Trust will relax the uniform policy in consideration of these events, for a period no greater than

2 weeks. However, if the emblem becomes soiled or poses a risk, it must be removed from the uniform and may be replaced at no cost to the Trust.

4.10 Exceptions on grounds of Religious Beliefs

4.10.1 A member of staff may identify a need to wear different or modified items of uniform in order to comply with their religious beliefs.

4.10.2 Head coverings required to be worn, due to religious beliefs, should be in a plain green colour, as near to Trust corporate green as possible. Headscarves should be securely fastened with no trailing ends and should not cover the face.

4.11 Exceptions on Medical Grounds

4.11.1 Certain medical or other conditions may result in an individual requiring modified uniform.

4.11.2 Occupational Health must confirm that there is a need to issue non-standard items: if such confirmation is not provided, the individual will be informed, and only standard allocation items will be issued.

5. NHS 111 STAFF

5.1 Purpose /Introduction

To provide uniform guidelines for NHS 111 staff.

5.2 To ensure that NHS staff wear appropriate uniform to comply with health and safety requirements and to present a professional image at all times.

5.3 General Points

5.3.1 The required uniform for NHS 111 staff is a polo shirt which comes in four colours. The polo shirt should be worn at all times whilst NHS 111 staff are on an operational shift.

5.3.2 It is a requirement that all team leaders and shift managers will wear the same coloured shirts but will display a badge with their job title with their uniform. There are also badges for coaches as well.

5.3.3 This uniform will be issued to all SCAS contracted NHS 111 staff.

5.4 Dress Code

5.4.1 The Trust will only provide polo shirts for staff to wear. In addition to wearing these polo shirts staff are asked to wear dark trousers/skirt with their polo shirt and staff must wear dark shoes.

5.4.2 No jeans are allowed to be worn in the contact centre. If staff need to wear additional clothing due to variances in temperature, then a white t-shirt may be worn under the polo shirt or a black or navy jumper/cardigan may be worn.

5.4.3 Staff must wear appropriate footwear at all times

5.4.4 Staff should cover up the polo shirt outside of the work environment, including travelling to and from work.

5.5 Uniform Issue

Given the environment that NHS 111 operate in, the guidelines for issuing uniform are:

- Full-time staff (37.5 hours) 3 polo shirts
- Part-time staff (up to 37.5 hours) 2 polo shirts

Staff may request further polo shirts via their Head of NHS 111, if they feel they require a greater number.

6. PPE & SAFETY

6.1 For detailed guidance around the wearing of PPE items operational staff should refer to the Trust's PPE policy (Health & Safety Policy & Procedure Appendix (H), paragraphs 1315)

6.2 Some items of uniform also serve as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and correct PPE must be issued and worn whenever appropriate, regardless of employment status.

6.3 When on duty, staff will only wear uniform and PPE that has been issued by the Trust and that complies with this policy and any other relevant Health and Safety instructions/policies relating to PPE. The exception to this will be the wearing of additional PPE not supplied by the trust as stated in 4.6.

6.4 Operational staff who are normally issued with PPE must ensure that they possess a full set of those items which are currently issued and have them readily available to wear. This includes Trust-issued footwear, particularly PPE-related boots or shoes.

6.5 Safety helmets approved for use and issued by the Trust to staff must be worn where staff safety is at risk and in particular in the following situations:

- Major incidents
- Railway incidents
- Fire calls
- Incidents on motorways and major roads or where staff are at risk from moving vehicles and or flying debris
- All Road traffic collisions/accidents (RTCs) especially where the patient is trapped and the Fire Service have been asked to affect a rescue
- Incidents on building sites and other industrial complexes
- Places where there is a requirement to comply with Health and Safety notices and policies.

- When instructed to do so.

NB. This list is not exhaustive

- 6.6 Scissors must not be carried in breast or sleeve pockets as they may cause harm when moving patients. Such items should be carried away from possible direct patient contact to prevent harm or cross-contamination/ infection.
- 6.7 Operational staff who wear corrective spectacles which react to light are reminded of the potential dangers related to those lenses (particularly how slowly they change back from dark to light), especially when driving service vehicles.

7. INFECTION CONTROL AND HYGIENE

- 7.1 In the interest of infection control best practice, Operational Clinical staff must undertake the following prior to, during and following each shift.
- 7.2 Operational clinical staff should change into a clean uniform at the start of each shift. It is accepted that trousers may not require to be changed every shift but should be changed regularly or when soiled.
- 7.3 Once off duty, operational clinical staff should change into “home” clothes as soon as possible – ideally before leaving their station or workplace.
- 7.4 The responsibility for uniform laundering rests with the individual member of operational staff. Uniforms or other work clothes should be washed as soon as possible after they have been worn and in accordance with the care label instructions – preferably on as hot a wash as the fabric will tolerate.
- 7.5 On occasions, uniforms may be exposed to body fluids. This should be avoided as far as possible by the use of PPE, including disposable aprons. For cases where extensive soiling or contamination is foreseeable, a disposable coverall should be worn as an outer garment, in addition to any other PPE items necessary. After use, the suit should be disposed of as clinical waste and the uniform checked to ensure it has been fully protected.
- 7.6 If, despite all efforts, contamination of the uniform occurs, arrangements should be made for the crew to return to base for a shower to remove any skin contamination and a uniform change. Heavily contaminated uniform may have to be disposed of as clinical waste in the absence of local laundry facilities and replacements requested as per Trust procedure. Staff may need to be sent home to achieve this.
- 7.7 Hi-Visibility Reflective clothing should be wiped over with disposable detergent wipes as regularly as required and following any contamination. Periodic washing using manufacturer’s instructions will ensure the clothing is kept in serviceable condition.
- 7.8 **Personal Hygiene:** it is essential for all operational clinical staff to maintain the highest standards of personal hygiene.
- 7.9 **Hand** hygiene is paramount, and accidental contact of clothes or medical alert

bracelets with patients is to be avoided. They must be clean at all times; fingernails must be kept clean and cut to a length which will not damage medical examination gloves or risk causing injury to a patient. No nail varnish, nail extensions, false nails or any other type of hand decoration is permitted under infection control best practice guidance.

7.9.1 **Hair:** Long hair must be secured and retained in a fashion that does not compromise the safe delivery of patient care or impede the effective use of service approved safety helmets.

7.9.2 **Beards** should be kept neat and tidy at all times.

7.10 **Jewellery and Body Piercing**

The uniform and workwear policy guidance issued by the Department of Health (DH) recommends that excessive jewellery, including necklaces, visible piercings and multiple earrings should **not** be worn by NHS staff undertaking duties that bring them into contact with patients and members of the public. This is because it does not support a professional image and may be hazardous, e.g., hoop earrings and necklaces could be inadvertently pulled or grabbed by confused patients injuring the wearer or their patient.

7.10.1 Jewellery and watches can harbour micro-organisms and make effective hand hygiene more difficult, therefore:

- Necklaces, bracelets, bands and bangles may not be worn on duty unless religious or medical exclusions apply. In the event that these override health and safety, this must be agreed between the employee, line manager and – if for medical reasons – Occupational Health.
- The responsibility for damage/repair to or replacement of jewellery that operational staff choose to wear on duty lies solely with that member of staff and is not the Trust's responsibility.

7.8.2 Patient-facing operational staff may wear:

- A single wristwatch with a washable strap;
- a maximum of one single wedding band/ring at any one time.
- discreet studs or small sleepers (no more than 1cm in diameter), which must be restricted to one in each ear.

7.9 **Facial Piercings:** some patients consider visible piercings to be upsetting or disconcerting, so these are not considered appropriate for uniformed staff who come into contact with patients/ the public. Therefore, for the purposes of presenting a professional image, when carrying out a public role, the following applies:

7.9.1 The following piercing is allowed:

- Earrings – maximum of one in each ear.

7.9.2 These are not allowed:

- Eyebrow studs or rings
- Lip studs or rings
- Cheek studs or ring
- Nose studs or rings

7.9.3 A plain (neutral or transparent in colour) keeper may be worn if required to prevent a piercing from closing.

8. SUNGLASSES, MAKE-UP, AND BODY MARKINGS

8.1 **Sunglasses** may be worn by operational staff when appropriate. Staff must completely remove sunglasses when dealing directly with patients as they can act as a barrier to eye contact and thus inhibit effective communication. The exception to this would be if staff would be exposed to harmful UV light if they are in direct sunlight. Staff should use their own judgement as to whether wearing sunglasses are essential.

8.2 **Make-up** must be kept to a minimum and only muted lipstick colours are permissible.

8.3 Bona fide religious symbols permanently marked onto the skin will be respected by the Trust as long as they do not compromise health and safety requirements or contravene infection control best practice guidance.

8.4 **Tattoos** whether visible or otherwise - should not "undermine the dignity and values of SCAS, cause offence to members of the public or colleagues and/or invite provocation" or "indicate unacceptable attitudes towards any individual or section of the community".

9. TRUST IDENTITY CARDS (ID)

9.1 All staff must carry a current SCAS identity card, which must be readily available to provide confirmation of both identity and that they are a member of the Trust's staff.

10. UNIFORM REPLACEMENT PROCEDURE – (FAIR WEAR & TEAR POLICY)

10.1 The Operational Uniform Replacement Procedure identifies the process that must be followed by staff and their line managers to obtain replacement uniform items.

10.2 Follow flowchart in Appendix 2.

10.3 If any operational staff require replacement uniform items after they have received their initial uniform allocation, they must follow the uniform item replacement procedure. This procedure enables staff to request replacement of uniform items from their line manager under the following circumstances:

- The item is unsuitable for use or wearing as it no longer allows the operation staff member to comply with the Trust's uniform policy and/or current health and safety legislation
- External garments do not provide adequate protection against adverse weather
- The item is beyond economic repair
- The item is so soiled it cannot be laundered successfully and should be disposed of in line with the Trust's policy on Infection Prevention and Control Procedures
- The item has been lost or stolen.

10.4 In the event of items of uniform being stolen, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to complete Datix so that the loss can be reported to the CFSMS.

10.5 If an item of uniform is deemed by the staff member to require replacement under the terms of the Trust's Wear and Tear Policy, they must provide the item to his/her line manager for approval or a replacement, unless it is unavailable due to the following:

- It has been disposed of already under the Trust's policy on Infection Prevention and Control Procedures as clinical waste
- Loss, theft or other reason.

10.6 It is the line manager's responsibility to follow the Fair Wear and Tear policy when assessing their staff's request for replacement uniform items and for the decision whether or not to authorise a replacement.

11. RESPONSIBILITIES

11.1 The responsibility for ensuring that the policy is enforced lies with the **Trust Board** and the **Chief Executive**.

11.2 The **Operations Director** is responsible for overseeing the policy on a day-to-day basis.

11.3 **Procurement** will ensure appropriate resources, facilities and associated supplies for staff to effectively adhere to this policy are available and maintained.

11.4 All **Executives, Managers, Clinical Managers and Supervisors** are responsible for ensuring that this policy is being routinely applied by all uniformed staff and that suitable and necessary facilities to support this policy are readily available in all Trust settings.

12. MONITORING

12.1 All Managers and Supervisors are responsible for monitoring compliance to ensure that this policy is adhered to.

12.2 Monitoring compliance on a day-to-day basis will be undertaken by Operational

Managers, Clinical Managers and Supervisors by observing staff during duty hours. Remedial action for non-compliance should be part of a personal development plan.

- 12.3 The compliance against this policy will be monitored within the Trust via a variety of audits these are identified in the table below.

13. AUDIT AND REVIEW

- 13.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust's Management Team and Staff Side Representatives
- 13.2 Procurement team will audit and review the policy to ensure that the recommendations and standards are adhered to.

14. RELATED POLICIES

Please read this policy in conjunction with the following:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Policy
- Infection Control Policy
- Hand Hygiene and Care Policy
- Infection Control Guidance and Procedures

15. REFERENCES

- Department of Health (2006), The Health Act 2006 (rev. 2008): Code of Practice for the prevention and control of healthcare associated infections. London; DH
- Department of Health (2007) Uniforms and Workwear; an evidence base for developing local policy. London: DH
- Department of Health (2007) Saving Lives: reducing infection, delivering clean and safe care. London: DH
- Health and Safety Executive (IDNG174 rev 08/05) A short guide to the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992. Suffolk: HSE books
- Health and Safety Executive (2005) COSHH a brief guide to regulations: What you need to know about the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002. Suffolk: HSE books,
- National evidence-based guidelines for preventing healthcare-associated infections in NHS hospitals in England. Journal of Hospital Infection, 65pp. S1-S64. Elsevier, Science Direct: Pratt, R. Pellow, C. Wilson, J. Loveday, H. et al (2007) epic2
- The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 sections 2 and 3. Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (Management Regulations), that extend the cover to patients and others affected by microbiological infections and include control of infection measures.

- 'Securing Health Together', the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) long term strategy for occupational health, which commits HSE/ Health and Safety Commission and their fellow signatories (including the Department of Health) to a 20 percent reduction in ill health caused by work activity by 2010.
- Health Act 2006 Code of Practice, Duty 4 to maintain a clean and appropriate environment includes at section (g) that the supply and provision of linen and laundry reflects Health Service Guidance HSG95 (18), as revised from time to time and at section (h) that clothing (including uniforms) worn by staff when carrying out their duties is clean and fit for purpose.

APPENDIX 1: STANDARD ALLOCATION OF UNIFORM

The above form is available for Internal use by SCAS Staff. It can be accessed internally via our [Staff Intranet](#).

APPENDIX 2: T-SHIRT FABRIC

Information regarding T-shirt fabric is available for Internal use by SCAS Staff. It can be accessed internally via our [Staff Intranet](#).

APPENDIX 3: OPERATIONAL UNIFORM REPLACEMENT FLOWCHART

Information regarding T-shirt fabric is available for Internal use by SCAS Staff. It can be accessed internally via our [Staff Intranet](#).

APPENDIX 4: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy and is available on request to the public and internally via our [Staff Intranet](#). (see also section 4.)