Nursing & Midwifery Uniforms
A proposal to change the staff uniforms at West Hertfordshire Hospitals to enhance the corporate professional image of our nurses and midwives. Staff and public consultation.

Background
Until recently the Trust purchased uniforms in bulk and distributed them to staff via the sewing room in 62, Vicarage Road. This led to large numbers of uniforms being purchased unnecessarily as the sewing room was required to carry stock to meet the needs of staff who are all shapes and sizes. With the advent of online ordering from uniform manufacturers this is no longer necessary and uniforms can be ordered directly for the individual staff member.

Following a formal tendering process managed by HSMC, the Trust now has a contract with Meltemi, a UK based uniform manufacturer who are a national supplier for the NHS. The contract allows the trust to expect a level of service that was previously not possible from the numerous uniform suppliers used by the Trust.

62, Vicarage Road has been sold to provide income for the Trust and the sewing room staff have been redeployed to alternative posts within the Trust or offered redundancy.

Introduction
This focus on uniforms has highlighted that staff within the Trust wear many different colours of uniforms that rather than distinguishing them, cause confusion for both patients and staff. The uniforms are not always comfortable and practical for staff working in hot or busy environments and do not portray the smart and professional image that nurses and midwives at West Herts Hospitals Trust wish to portray.

This consultation paper will set out a proposal for staff and patients to comment on. The consultation will be for 2 months and the closing date for comments will be 23rd March 2012.

Current uniform changes
- Following local consultation the staff of the Emergency Department, Urgent Care Centre and Minor Injuries unit have changed their uniform completely. All staff now wear smart scrubs with the Trust logo embroidered on the left sleeve and Emergency Department embroidered on the right of the chest. All bands of staff where the same royal blue to reduce confusion for patients. Senior staff wear navy blue, a colour well recognized as one for authority.
- The new role of Assistant Practitioner and those training to be Band 4 assistant practitioners wear sky blue with navy piping.
- Discharge lounge staff have changed to a less formal polo shirt in royal blue with discharge lounge embroidered on the front.
- House keepers after lengthy consultation chose to change to a lilac and white pinstrip tunic.
Colour

It is not possible to provide a completely open proposal for consultation, so a decision has been made by the uniform group, appendix 1, and the senior nurses and midwives that the colour blue will form the basis for all uniforms. Blue is universally recognized as clean, clinical and calming and is the NHS colour.

Style

Smart Scrubs

Smart scrubs are seen to be more comfortable for staff working in emergency or very invasive environments, such as A&E or endoscopy for example. They have a relaxed fit, are less structured and are identical for male and female staff. Patients see this type of uniform to be associated with “emergencies” and it can be see to be very modern and action orientated.

Tunics and Dresses

This is clearly a more traditional uniform and is widely recognized by patients and the public as being the uniform of carers. This uniform provides a more structured appearance, there are three fittings per size for a better look and greater comfort. Tunics and dresses are also available in lightweight fabric for hot weather. Staff will be able to choose a combination of fabric should they wish.

Male Tunics

Male staff will wear the same colour tunic as females.

Trousers

Trousers will be available in boot cut and straight leg options. The fabric is flexi-stretch for comfort and movement.
Proposal for Staff

Senior Sister / Charge Nurse (Band 7)
- Navy blue

Sister / Charge Nurse (Band 6)
- Royal blue

Staff Nurse (Band 5)
- Metro blue

* please note that these uniforms are the same colour
Assistant Practitioner (Band 4)
- Sky blue with navy trim

* please note that these uniforms are the same colour

Health Care Assistant (Band 3 & 2)
- Sky blue

The proposal to bring the band 3 & 2 posts into the same uniform is to facilitate recognition of health care assistants for patients and non nursing staff. In recognition of the senior band, band 3 HCAs will have a red name badge that stands out to those who need to know they are senior.

Choice

Staff will be able to choose between smart scrubs and traditional uniform during the consultation, however staff in a particular ward or department will have to agree to all wear the same. A mix of smart scrubs with traditional uniform will not be acceptable.
Services choosing to wear smart scrubs can choose scrub trousers or uniform trousers.
Services choosing to wear traditional uniform can choose regular or lightweight uniforms or a combination.
Female staff choosing to wear trousers can choose between straight or boot leg cut.

Midwives

It is proposed that midwives will move to wearing the same colours as nursing staff however it is proposed that the whole service will agree to wear either smart scrubs or traditional uniform. Consideration will be made for community midwives to have the most appropriate uniform for work outside the trust.

Paediatric Nurses

Paediatrics will continue to wear their current uniform of smart scrubs with uniform trousers.

Specialist Nurses

There will be no change to the colours for specialist nurses, they will remain in navy with red trim.
All other uniform wearers

There are many other groups of staff who wear a uniform, but who are not professionally accountable to the Director of Nursing. These staff will of course continue to manage their image as they do now.

Next steps

- This paper has been endorsed by JCC and the Board
- The Uniform Group are responsible for this consultation and will circulate it to all staff for comment
- It will be published on the inter and intranet site requesting comment from patients and public
- Patient and public forums will be asked to respond to the consultation formally

Completion of the consultation

The uniform group will review and respond to all the comments received from staff, patients and public. These responses will be published. The uniform group will then refine the uniform proposal and report the results. Following this an implementation plan will be developed and the process of changing, should a decision to change is made, will be executed.

Comments

We would very much welcome comments from staff, patients and the public. Please feel free to send an email to info@whht.nhs.uk or give comments to any of the Matrons who will pass them to the uniform group.
**APPENDIX 1**

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE UNIFORM GROUP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karen Bowler</td>
<td>Matron, Surgery WGH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janette Buckley</td>
<td>Matron, Gynaecology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary Cole</td>
<td>Recruitment &amp; Retention Manager, Maternity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natalie Forrest</td>
<td>Director of Nursing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moira Gallagher</td>
<td>Matron, Medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesley Headland</td>
<td>Stores &amp; Distribution Manager, Pharmacy &amp; Staff Side Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neil Hyde</td>
<td>Manager, Nursing Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula King</td>
<td>Matron, Surgery, SACH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandy Knight</td>
<td>Lead Nurse Emergency Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gabrielle Leyshon</td>
<td>Matron, Medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracy Moran</td>
<td>Deputy Director of Nursing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deborah Sutton</td>
<td>Gynaecology Liaison Officer &amp; Staff Side Secretary</td>
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