

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

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AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÄNNYSTRIE O

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HSS(MD) 5/2008

To: Chief Executives, HSC Boards and Trusts
Medical Directors, HSC Trusts
Chief Nurses and Directors of Nursing, HSC Boards
and Trusts
Directors of Public Health, HSC Boards
Dean, Medical School
Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery, QUB
Head of School of Nursing, UU
Chief Executive, RQIA

Your Ref:
Our Ref: HSS(MD) 5/2008
Date: 8 February 2008

Dear Colleague

REGIONAL DRESS CODE POLICY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON STAFF CHANGING FACILITIES FOR NORTHERN IRELAND.

Minister has announced the introduction of a dress code for all health care staff as part of his new measures to improve patient safety and to reduce the spread of health care associated infections. A copy of the policy, which has been published today, is attached.

This policy meets the requirement set out in **Changing the Culture: An action plan for the prevention and control of healthcare associated infections in Northern Ireland 2006/2009** to issue guidance on a standard dress policy for staff and the availability of changing facilities. It is based on the evidence published by the Department of Health, **Uniforms and workwear: An evidence base for developing local policy** (September 2007), on the wearing and laundering of uniforms.

We are aware that the public perception is that the wearing of hospital uniforms outside the workplace is linked to an increased risk of cross-infection. There is, however, no conclusive evidence that uniforms pose a significant hazard.

The objectives of the policy are to:

- promote a professional image of the service and the individual HSC worker;
- promote public confidence in the HSC staff commitment to the reduction of Healthcare Associated Infections;
- ensure that health & safety, security and legal issues are incorporated into the dress policy; and
- make recommendations on the provision of staff changing facilities.

Implementation

The dress code policy should be implemented immediately and staff changing facilities should be provided on a staged basis as detailed in the policy. Provision for staff changing has been built into the capital costing for new builds. In relation to existing facilities, the development of staff changing will be addressed as part of refurbishment schemes.

This policy applies to all HSC staff, employed by, or contracted on behalf of HSC bodies, and includes students and others on placement in HSC facilities.

Guidance on home laundry of uniforms will be issued under separate cover.

Yours sincerely



DR MICHAEL McBRIDE
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER



MARTIN BRADLEY
CHIEF NURSING OFFICER

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