

Dress Code



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim

- 1.1.1 In Lambeth we take pride in the quality of service we provide to our citizens. The majority of our staff have some degree of personal contact with residents, local businesses, contractors, clients or suppliers. Our reputation as an organisation is influenced by how we present ourselves to these members of our community. Appropriate clothing and a professional, business-like image enhance our credibility when dealing with our clients. What is appropriate will of course depend upon the duties that you are carrying out.
- 1.1.2 During working hours our staff continuously act as representatives of the Council, and by extension they also represent our community to the world at large. This also applies when working at other times, such as when attending external events or evening/residential functions on behalf of the Council.
- 1.1.3 The same is true when we carry out our day-to-day work with our colleagues inside the Council, and it's important that we don't see dressing "appropriately" as only being important when dealing with "the public".
- 1.1.4 This Dress Code sets out the standards we expect for appropriate dress while working in Lambeth Council. It must be interpreted in a way which is consistent with the Council's commitment to equality (avoiding, for example, gender stereotypes).

1.2 Scope

- 1.2.1 This Dress Code applies to all of our employees and workers, including casual and flexible contract workers, temporary staff, agency workers, work placements and volunteers. The requirements and standards it sets out are equally applicable in all situations, regardless of whether the individual's role is "public facing" or not.
- 1.2.2 Managers have the discretion to agree local standards in specific situations where this is appropriate. For example, some staff may be required to wear a uniform, or may work with clients in circumstances in which a different standard of dress is appropriate to that which would be appropriate in an office environment. HR should always be consulted if managers are seeking to agree a specific local dress code in these circumstances.

1.3 Responsibilities

1.3.1 Staff

All staff (see para. 1.2.1 above) are responsible for:

- making themselves familiar with the contents of this Dress Code
- ensuring that they adhere to it at all times

- following reasonable instructions or advice from local management regarding appropriate dress for particular situations
- telling their manager if they can't comply with the code for any reason, and why
- telling their manager if they need any reasonable adjustments made to the Code for any reason.

1.3.2 **Managers**

Line managers are responsible for:

- ensuring that staff adhere to the Dress Code
- ensuring that new staff are made aware of the Code and its contents
- addressing any issues raised by staff regarding the contents of the Code and the standards it sets
- considering and resolving any requests for reasonable adjustments to the requirements in the Code
- treating all staff appropriately with respect to the requirements in the Code, especially in light of gender and religious/cultural practices.

1.4 Breaches of the Dress Code

1.4.1 If you breach this Dress Code or fail to follow local management instructions on dress without good cause you will, in the first instance, be spoken to by your line manager about the issue. If your dress is seriously inappropriate (e.g. poses a safety risk or is offensive) or if you've been spoken to previously about your dress you may then be sent home and required to return in suitable attire.

1.4.2 Disciplinary action as set out in the Council's Disciplinary Policy may be taken against you if you:

- refuse to adhere to the standards set out in this Dress Code, or
- repeatedly fail to do so, without good cause, after being advised by your manager.

2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

2.1 We expect all staff to dress in a way which is appropriate to their working environment and to the kind of work they are carrying out. *(Guidance on what is appropriate is given at paras. 3 and 4 below.)*

2.2 Your clothing should always be clean and tidy and should present a positive, professional appearance.

2.3 Where a uniform is provided as part of your role, you should wear this at all appropriate times unless management specifically instruct otherwise. If for any reason you can't wear your uniform, you should advise your manager immediately. If you've been issued with

uniform and the uniform is not adequate, you should in the first instance inform your manager. You'll be permitted to wear business-like clothing until a permanent alternative uniform has been agreed.. You are responsible for the upkeep and cleanliness of your own uniform; in some circumstances you may be able to claim tax relief for the cost of cleaning your own uniform, and you can seek advice on this from your HR team.

- 2.4 If you've been issued with Personal Protective Equipment(PPE) or other safety-related clothing you must wear this at all the times it is required. The Council is responsible for the provision of PPE which is clean and suitable for its purpose.
- 2.5 We recognise that issues such as cultural practice and religion require a sensitive approach where they affect dress and uniform requirements. We welcome diversity in the workplace and the wearing of items in accordance with particular religious beliefs or cultural practices will be accepted where it doesn't compromise safety and where it couldn't reasonably be considered to cause offense to others.
- 2.6 If you have particular dress needs relating to a health or disability issue we will make the necessary reasonable adjustments to the Dress Code to meet your needs.
- 2.7 We have the discretion to deem some days as "casual" or "dress down" days; on these days standards may be relaxed, in which case your clothing can be less formal but should still be clean and presentable. *(Guidance on what is appropriate is given at para.5 below.)*
- 2.8 You are responsible for your own health, safety and welfare; where weather conditions mean that your workplace is uncomfortably hot or cold the Council will do all that it reasonably can to maintain comfortable working conditions. In those circumstances, however, you may need to depart from the standards of this Dress Code, for example you may need to wear lighter or more casual clothing in hot weather if you are not meeting citizens, or you may need to wear additional clothing in cold weather). You should always consult your manager if you feel that working conditions require a temporary change to the dress standards.

3 WHAT IS APPROPRIATE DRESS ?

- 3.1 In the majority of situations, "business-like" dress is appropriate. What is "business-like" will depend upon the nature of your work (for example, wearing a suit and tie when working in a library or as a social worker visiting a client might not be appropriate). When you have contact with citizens, customers, visitors from external organisations, interview candidates, etc. you should wear suitably smart attire that is appropriate for the occasion. This might include a suit or smart trousers and shirt, appropriate uniform, dress, skirt, blouse or smart top. Cultural dress will also be appropriate in these circumstances. The Council does not seek to discriminate on grounds of gender, but expects similar standards of attire, recognising that men and women may choose to dress differently.
- 3.2 Head and other coverings are acceptable where they are appropriate to the individual's faith, culture, health, disability or other reason (e.g. turban, Hijab, etc.).

4 WHAT IS NOT APPROPRIATE DRESS ?

4.1 The following are not acceptable:

- Shirts, tops or other clothing with slogans, advertising logos (other than discreet manufacturer's labels), pictures containing nudity/foul language, or symbols/insignia that might reasonably be considered by others to be offensive or discriminatory
- Sports wear
- Military clothing
- See-through clothing or garments that might reasonably be considered by others to be inappropriately revealing or offensive
- Torn, damaged or dirty clothing
- Any articles of clothing or jewellery which could present a Health and Safety hazard
- Any other items of clothing that might reasonably be considered by others as offensive, inflammatory or discriminatory.

4.2 T shirts (other than those which are part of smart and appropriate professional attire) or jeans are not generally appropriate in formal business situations.

5 “DRESS DOWN” or “CASUAL” DAYS

5.1 On discretionary “casual” or “dress down” days, standards are more relaxed and your clothing can be less formal but it should still be clean and presentable. However if you're having contact with citizens or other external contacts on these days we expect you to adhere to the normal standards for professional business-like dress.

5.2 If as a matter of course you're required to wear a uniform or protective clothing you must continue to wear this on “dress down” days.

5.3 On “dress down” days, and if not meeting with the public, plain t-shirts, polo shirts and tops are acceptable, as are smart jeans which are not torn or heavily faded.

6 DETAILS OF APPROVAL AND VARIATION PROCESS

6.1 Where the Council wishes to amend or terminate this Code, it will consult with the relevant trade union with a view to reaching agreement over the proposed amendment(s)/termination. This procedure may be amended or terminated by agreement with the relevant trade unions at any time. Where agreement has not been reached with the relevant trade unions arising from consultations, the Council reserve the right to implement its proposed amendment(s)/termination by giving one months notice to employees of its proposal(s).

This Code is approved and signed by:

Nana Amoa-Buahin

Director Cooperative Business Development (HR & OD)

Jon Rogers (Branch Secretary – UNISON)

On behalf of Trade Unions