

Reference:	FOI.21110.26
Subject:	Recovery and Post Anaesthetic Care Unit (PACU)
Date of Request:	22 July 2026

Requested:

I would be grateful for the following information about staff working in your operating theatre department, and in particular recovery and post anaesthetic care unit (PACU) staff.

1. Please provide the current procedure or policy governing what staff in the perioperative or theatre department wear. This includes any theatre uniform procedure, theatre etiquette standard operating procedure, or local departmental dress code that applies within the operating theatre suite, in addition to the corporate uniform and dress code policy.
2. Please provide the relevant provisions of your infection prevention and control policy, or equivalent, that apply to work attire in the operating theatre department and in the recovery or PACU area. In particular, please include what it says about designated theatre attire in those areas, the changing of visibly soiled or contaminated attire during a shift, the laundering of that attire, and any bare below the elbows requirement.
3. Within the theatre department, please state what attire recovery and PACU practitioners are required to wear on shift. Specifically, are they required to wear theatre scrubs, ward nursing uniform, or other designated attire? Please answer for recovery and PACU staff in particular, rather than for theatre staff in general.
4. Do recovery and PACU practitioners enter the anaesthetic room and/or the operating theatre to assist in patient care during a shift, for example to take handover, assist with the airway, or respond to a deteriorating patient? If so, please indicate how routinely this occurs.
5. Are recovery and PACU practitioners issued with theatre scrubs by the Health Board? If so, approximately how many sets per practitioner, and are these laundered by the Health Board or by staff at home?
6. Please provide any risk assessment, equality impact assessment, or governance record (for example the minutes of the forum that approved it) relating to the attire that recovery and PACU staff are required to wear.
7. If the attire required of recovery or PACU staff has changed within the last three years, please provide the date of the change, the reason recorded for it, and the document or decision that authorised it.

Response:

1. Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) confirms that all staff are required to adhere to the UHB's 139 – Uniform and Dress Code Policy, in conjunction with the All-Wales NHS Dress Code, produced by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG).

Details of theatre scrubs can be found within the UHB's 139 Policy, a link to which is provided below:

hduhb.nhs.wales/about-us/governance-arrangements/policies-and-written-control-documents/policies/139-uniform-and-dress-code-policy-for-all-health-board-staff/?ts=1785412939358

Additionally, the theatre scrubs utilised by the UHB adhere to the requirements set out in the Association for Perioperative Practice (AfPP) guidelines. A link to their Infection Control document is provided below:

[AfPP - Infection Control - V2.indd](#)

2. The UHB confirms that all theatre staff, including recovery staff are required to wear theatre attire as set out in the AfPP guidelines, due to the requirement of entering the operating theatre space itself for support and/or the transferring of patients to recovery.

Within the All Wales NHS Dress Code guidance, Appendix 1 states “Staff must change as soon as is practical if uniform or clothes become visibly soiled or contaminated with blood or body fluids.” and “Organisations must ensure that there is a local arrangement for this.” Theatre staff within the UHB have sufficient provisions to a change of uniform within the department changing room.

Additionally, theatre uniform laundering falls within the category of a clinical environment, whereby a laundry service is provided by the employing organisation, in accordance to the All Wales NHS Dress Code.

Furthermore, in accordance with the UHB’s Dress Code Policy, it states “Adhere to the principles and practice of safe infection prevention and control including the need to be ‘bare below the elbows’ to facilitate effective hand hygiene”. This is implemented in conjunction with the Infection, Prevention and Control Policy, 149 – Hand Hygiene Policy. A copy of this policy can be found at Attachment 1.

3. The UHB confirms that PACU, also known as ‘recovery’, staff are required to wear theatre scrubs due to the nature of the role and the requirement to enter theatre suites.
4. The UHB confirms that PACU/recovery staff enter the anaesthetic rooms and/or the operating theatre to assist in patient care on a regular occasion as part of the daily shift requirement.
5. The UHB does not hold all of the information requested as PACU/recovery staff are not provided with a set number of theatre scrubs. However, they do have access to readily available theatre scrubs onsite within the theatres changing facilities. Furthermore, theatre scrubs are laundered by the UHB.
6. The UHB does not hold the information requested as it adheres to the AfPP guidance.
7. The UHB confirms the attire required by PACU/recovery staff has not changed in the last three (3) years.