**West Sussex – Practice Guidance**

IROs are qualified social workers with at least five years’ experience, and who have acquired the right skills to carry out this role.

**Dress Code for staff**

**Why dress code is important**

* Clothing and appearance is intrinsically linked to identity and personal choice and this practice guidance does not seek to restrict individuality or expression.
* Clothing can have a cultural or religious significance and the council would seek not to impede individual choice as long as this does not impact on the health and safety of the individual or others around them.
* WSCC wishes to establish clear expectations of staff who work with some of the most vulnerable children in our area with regards to appropriate, suitable and fit for purpose clothing while working in a Children’s Home.
* What you wear, your physical appearance and how you present yourself will have a significant impact on children in our care. It is the expectation of the Local Authority that all staff will act as positive role models for children, in doing so, presenting themselves in a way that is appropriate to their role.

**Health and Safety**

* When preparing to come to work, all staff should ensure they are wearing clothing that is appropriate for the job they do and will not cause offence or provocation to others. Clothing will be presentable, fit for purpose and create a professional image in line with expectations.
* Staff who require specialist clothing or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided with this, appropriate for the purpose. Staff will be expected to wear protective clothing for the duration of the identified activity and seek to change into everyday wear when the activity is completed.
* It is at the discretion of the Registered Manager whether staff are required to wear an identifiable uniform while on duty, and this will reflect the duties placed on staff and impact on children in their care.
* The wearing of jewellery should be risk-assessed and limited (e.g. wedding ring, earring studs) if worn at all. Staff must consider whether wearing necklaces, bracelets, dangling earrings or any other item could cause injury to themselves or others. This also applies to children residing in the home.

**Appropriate clothing**

* Staff must not wear any clothing which conveys a political, sexually suggestive, drug related, pro-violence, ‘gang’ related message or contains recognised swear words or other controversial logos.
* Clothing which is sexually provocative or unusually revealing (low cut or see through) must not be worn.
* Staff should make reasonable effort to conceal any tattoos that may have political, sexually suggestive, drug related, ‘gang’ related, recognised swear words or other controversial logos.
* Some clothing may be suitable for some context but not others. Staff must remember they are representing the organisation in all public arenas and should bear this in mind when considering what they wear.
* Any clothing that might restrict movement, compromise decency in responding to alarms or participating in restraint (skirts, dresses, tight fitting trousers or tight jackets) should not be worn by staff who may be involved in these activities.
* Vests, crop tops and cropped shorts are not considered appropriate items of clothing and should not be worn as everyday work wear. This is unless a staff member is partaking in a sporting activity after which they should be replaced by normal smart casual wear. *Please refer to Practice Guidance relating to ‘Holidays and Trips away’.*
* Very expensive clothing or possessions of high monetary or sentimental value must not be worn by staff working in a situation which put these items at risk (i.e. working with physically aggressive young people, sporting activities) or where they may be stolen.
* Damage to staff personal clothing or other items (watches, glasses) will be assessed by Registered Managers on an individual basis and may be replaced where all appropriate risk assessment and procedures have been followed.

**Staff on night duty**

* Staff who are required to sleep in as part of their duties must ensure they wear appropriate nightwear that allows them to quickly respond to situations should the need arise. Staff should have loose fitting clothing close at hand, for example jogging trousers and sweatshirt. When attending to a situation, staff should be appropriately covered.

**Compliance with Dress Code**

* All Staff should be directed to read this guidance during their induction period and periodically thereafter and confirm they have understood the expectations contained within it.
* Any concerns about staff who do not appear to be complying with this Dress Code should be directed to the Line Manager for the staff member, with examples and specific occasions when the dress code has caused concern, for a young person or colleagues.
* Line managers will raise this with individual staff members in supervision, providing a written account of the issues raised and the agreed actions. Where issues are not resolved, they should be referred to the relevant Line Manager.

**General points about the policy**

* West Sussex County Council is fully committed to supporting diversity within the work place and this includes observing cultural and religious beliefs. Staff members who wish to wear clothing consistent with their culture must ensure to do so does not place themselves or others at risk of injury. Any issues requiring clarification can be discussed with the Registered Manager.

**Links to related documents:**

Staff Expectations (forthcoming)