

Policy & Procedure

DRESS & APPEARANCE

PEOPLE DIRECTORATE

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1. Equality Statement

Sue Ryder designs and implements policies, procedures and ways of working that meet the diverse needs of our clients, service users and employees. We ensure that our policies not only don't discriminate but also consider the unique needs of certain identities and communities. This document has been reviewed to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment on the protected characteristics of their age, disability, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity. We take into account the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 whilst going above and beyond to protect people that aren't protected in the act, for example, non-binary people.

2. Introduction

We recognise that, like most companies, all individuals act as representatives of the Charity and should therefore dress accordingly. The way in which individuals dress and present themselves plays an important part in the image that Sue Ryder portrays to service users, customers, suppliers and the general public. For this reason, you are asked to be aware of how you present yourself when representing Sue Ryder.

Those who are working with service users and/or due to their work requirements are required to wear clothing appropriate to the nature of their work i.e. uniform. (Please refer to the [Uniforms and Appearance Policy](#) under Healthcare on RyderNet). At fundraising events branded clothing may be worn.

All people are expected to maintain a clean and tidy appearance and to dress suitably in line with the nature of their responsibilities or in the context of a particular event.

Everyone is requested to wear a Sue Ryder badge for security reasons except for in circumstances where this might pose a health and safety risk.

This procedure is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of dress and appearance and staff should use common sense in adhering to the principles underpinning the procedure.

3. Eligibility

This procedure applies to all people engaged in work (paid, unpaid or volunteer) for Sue Ryder and should be read in conjunction with the Diversity & Inclusion, Health & Safety, Uniform and Appearance Policy and Retail Policies which can be found on RyderNet.

4. Responsibility

All individuals have a responsibility to respect the provisions of this procedure.

The People Team has a responsibility to provide advice to managers on any aspect of this procedure.

Individuals who are issued with Charity Uniforms must wear them whilst at work and are responsible for keeping their uniforms clean and in good repair.

Individuals who are issued with Charity branded clothing must wear this when required and are responsible for keeping it clean and in good repair.

Everyone has a duty to ensure they are dressed suitably and appropriately for the work they are expected to perform.

5. Legislation

The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 places a responsibility on employers to ensure the health and safety at work of employees. Sue Ryder is committed to ensuring that the health and safety of all people (including volunteers and service users) is considered when applying any dress code.

There is no law that deals specifically with the subject of dress or appearance but in some instances rules on dress or appearance may constitute direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, religion or belief. Indirect discrimination could occur if a requirement or rule had a disproportionate adverse impact on either men or women, on people from a particular racial group or on people of a particular religion. Any justification for a particular requirement may be acceptable if the reason for the requirement/rule is linked to safety, health or hygiene, to prevent offence or to ensure that all individuals present a professional image.

The Human Rights Act 1998, Article 10 (the right to freedom of expression) will impact on any rules or restrictions that the employer chooses to enforce in relation to dress and appearance. It can be argued that an employer's rights to expect individuals to dress in a manner appropriate to the needs of the Business will outweigh an individual's right to wear unconventional clothing to work or that individuals have a right not to be caused offence by the way in which their colleagues express themselves.

6. Personal Hygiene

Personal hygiene must include regular bathing, shampooing hair, use of deodorant and keeping hands and fingernails clean.

7. Dress

Discretion in style of dress and behaviour is essential to the image and the safe and efficient operation of Sue Ryder. People are expected to dress in a manner appropriate for their working environment and to the type of work performed. Individuals, in conjunction with advice from managers, may use their judgement regarding their dress and their schedule of activities should determine work attire.

It would be expected that, on occasions when individuals are meeting with external visitors from other organisations or interviewing candidates, that they would dress in an appropriate business-like manner.

During periods of extreme weather the dress code may be relaxed to enable comfort.

Some sites may operate a 'dress down' day.

Everyone must abide by the safety policies and procedures and wear required protective clothing and safety equipment should the work they undertake require it.

Sensible footwear appropriate to the work environment should be worn at all times.

We trust people to judge the best dress within these guidelines.

8. Inappropriate Attire

As a rule, clothing that is very revealing or works well for the beach and gym for example, is not appropriate for a professional appearance at work. Any clothing that has words, terms or pictures that may be offensive to other people is unacceptable. This includes images that are political or religious in nature, are sexually provocative, use profanity or are insulting of other people. Use common sense when wearing clothing that has words on it; people are easily offended by words.

Do not wear any articles of clothing, footwear or jewellery which may present a Health and Safety hazard.

9. Tattoos and Body Art

As an inclusive organisation we accept self-expression in the workplace and the visibility of tattoos and body art, within professional boundaries. However, there may be occasions such as interviews or meeting with some clients when we require that any tattoos in marginally visible places, such as the ankles and arms, be covered.

Body art and/or tattoos of an offensive nature (either picture or wording) must be covered. If an individual believes or receives feedback from another source that their body art is offensive, we would expect the individual to respect those views and cover up.

10. Hair, Piercings and Jewellery in the Workplace

We have an inclusive approach to the length, colour and styling of hair; we just ask that it is clean and hygienic and tied back where necessary for hygiene, infection control or health and safety reasons.

Body piercings, body modifications and microdermal implants must not pose a safety risk to you, colleagues, service users, supporters or customers. We reserve the right to request you to remove piercings where necessary. Some roles within Health and Social Care and Catering require piercings etc to be covered, jewellery removed. Please refer to the [Uniform and Appearance Policy](#) under Healthcare on Rydernet.

11. Equality and Diversity

We embrace the diversity of cultures and religions of our people and take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and any uniform requirements. However, there may be specific circumstances (for example to protect the health and security of our staff and customers) where we have to have an entirely neutral environment.

We expect equivalent standards of dress and appearance from all employees of any gender, regardless of how they identify, appropriate to the circumstances.

If there are circumstances that make it difficult for you to follow our dress code (for example, if you have a disability or are experiencing certain menopausal symptoms), please let us know and we can discuss how we can support you.

Where employees are transitioning to live in the gender with which they identify, we will apply and adapt this policy sensitively and flexibly. Where the role requires a uniform, this includes providing uniforms appropriate to an employee's affirmed gender.

12. Failure to adhere to this Procedure

Where a manager considers that an individual's appearance is unacceptable, the individual may be asked to return home to change.

Any persistent breach procedure may result in Disciplinary Action being taken.

If you have any feedback or concerns relating to this policy, you should raise this with your line manager or with your People Advisor if the issue involves your line manager.