

National Estates and Facilities Uniform Project Workforce Survey Briefing Document

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Responding to the survey

Your opinion is really important to us, so thank you for your interest in this project and for taking the time to complete the national Estates and Facilities uniform staff survey.

The closing date for the survey is 16 January 2023.

To have your say and take part in the survey please visit:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Estates-Facilities-Workforce/>

Alternatively, to respond via email, please send your feedback to:

nationaluniforms@supplychain.nhs.uk

To respond via post, please send your feedback to:

National Facilities and Estates Uniforms
NHS Supply Chain: Hotel Services (NOE CPC)
3rd Floor - Don Valley House
Savile Street East
Sheffield
S4 7UQ



Why we are running this project

Following feedback from the estates and facilities (E&F) workforce over the last four years, NHS England is working with NHS Supply Chain to develop a national uniform for the E&F workforce in England.

Currently each NHS trust designs and procures their uniforms independently, resulting in a complex supply chain with many styles, colours, embroidery, and role identifiers in use.

The project aims to develop a clear and consistent visual identity for the E&F workforce to make staff more easily identifiable to patients and other staff groups; to improve patient safety; and to improve the sense of belonging among the workforce.

The NHS spends approximately £7 million annually on E&F uniforms so there is an opportunity to create economies of scale from a consistent national approach.

Benefits of a national approach include

- Improve patient safety by making the E&F workforce more easily identifiable by patients and other staff groups, supporting recommendations made in the 2013 Francis Inquiry.
- Increase the sense of pride, belonging and professionalism among the E&F workforce.
- Raise the profile of the E&F workforce by creating a clear and consistent visual identity.
- Develop a high performing, ethical and sustainable supply chain.
- Reduce lead times to improve flexibility in uniform supply and demand.
- Reduction in uniform costs.

A national approach will ensure consistency of uniform items available and their look and feel across England, making the process simpler, more time-efficient and more cost-effective. The uniforms will be well designed, use high-quality, sustainable materials and be adaptable for the evolving demands of a modern health service.



Engagement with the E&F workforce to date

The project covers six E&F staff groups which are:

- Catering Teams
- Cleaning and Housekeeping
- Front of House and Corporate
- Hard FM
- Porters and Drivers
- Security Teams.

Engagement to date with these staff groups has indicated that there is support for a national approach and has provided guidance on some initial styles, colours and features that would make the garments suitable for the modern-day care environment and enable each profession to carry out their role safely, effectively and with pride in their uniform.

This workforce survey will capture a wider view of each of these elements from those individuals who wear E&F uniforms daily.

How we will use your information

Information we receive, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that under the Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) there is a statutory Code of Practice for public authorities. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information, we will take full account of your explanation, as well as any exemptions that may apply in relation to the information provided, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances.

NHS Supply Chain: Hotel Services will process any personal data collected in accordance with the DPA and in most circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

An anonymised summary of the responses to this survey will be made available before or alongside any further action. It is the intention of NHS Supply Chain: Hotel Services to commence some preparatory tendering and contracting activity in parallel with this survey but no commitments or final decisions regarding the preferred approach or design will be made until the results of this survey are known.



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the benefits of a national NHS uniform?

There are many benefits to introducing a national uniform for estates and facilities (E&F) staff, specifically to:

- Improve patient safety by making the E&F workforce more easily identifiable by patients and other staff groups, supporting recommendations made in the 2013 Francis Inquiry.
- Increase the sense of pride, belonging and professionalism among the E&F workforce.
- Raise the profile of the E&F workforce by creating a clear and consistent visual identity.
- Develop a high performing, ethical and sustainable supply chain.
- Reduce lead times to improve flexibility in uniform supply and demand.
- Reduction in uniform costs.

2. Have you considered diversity in the workforce?

We recognise the diverse and inclusive nature of the E&F workforce and their varied needs when it comes to a uniform. We have therefore held discussions with EDI leads from a number of NHS trusts and NHS England. We intend to engage them throughout this project. We have also taken learnings and feedback from the staff networks that we engaged with during the healthcare uniform project and will continue to do so through the course of this project.

We would welcome additional input to help us fully understand the needs of diverse staff groups. Please get in touch with us via nationaluniforms@supplychain.nhs.uk if you would like to get involved or include your feedback in the uniform survey.

3. Will the proposed national uniform be worn by the whole NHS workforce?

The scope of this project is for those working in roles within NHS Estate and Facilities. You can find out about the national healthcare uniforms project, which is developing a national uniform framework for nursing, midwifery, pharmacy and AHP professionals by visiting <https://www.supplychain.nhs.uk/categories/hotel-services/national-healthcare-uniform/>

4. Will the proposed uniform be for NHS Estates and Facilities professionals working for third-party providers and wholly-owned subsidiaries?

Yes, if these groups currently wear a uniform and are part of the NHS workforce. It has been suggested that having a consistent uniform across all settings could help patients and other staff groups to recognise E&F staff and improve patient safety. A key objective of this project is to increase the sense of pride and belonging so our workforce feels as part of the wider NHS workforce.

We have included third-party providers and wholly-owned subsidiaries in our communications from the start of this project and will continue to do so throughout the project.



5. Does this proposal mean everyone will be wearing a uniform in the future?

We are aware that there are many clinical settings where it is not deemed appropriate to wear a uniform because of the effect this may have on a patient. It is not the intention of this proposal to change that.

6. When will we have to implement the new uniform?

We anticipate that trusts will implement the new uniform as and when they need to purchase new uniform items. There will be no set date for introducing the uniform.

7. How can we be assured that suppliers are resilient and we do not encounter unavailability of garments?

As part of the procurement process, we have evaluated suppliers on their resilience in terms of stock holding etc. The new programme will also enable us to incorporate regular checks through the contract management process, which we will continually monitor closely.

8. What have you done with regards to sustainability?

Suppliers will complete a Carbon, Waste and Water Reduction assessment which gives us an understanding on how they manage environmental aspects of their organisation. Suppliers will also be asked to complete a Modern Slavery Assessment and Labour Standards Assessment.

In addition, we will be working to make sure that uniforms meet sustainability requirements such as garments sourced using the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) and the use of 100% recycled polymer blends.

We will also be focusing on recycling and end of line product disposal to ensure sustainable options are available.

9. Why are you proposing a National NHS Estates and Facilities uniform now?

The proposal for a national NHS uniform aligns to the priorities outlined in the National E&F Workforce Action Plan. The breadth of roles within the E&F workforce are integral to NHS service delivery and we want to offer uniforms that meets their varied needs, are well designed, high quality and inclusive for all.

10. How much will this cost? Is this the right thing to be focusing on now given other pressures on the NHS?

The adoption of a standardised approach can lead to a cost saving of around 30%; this has been determined based on the experiences from implementation within Scotland and Wales. The saving is subject to final uniform design and market situation, but is a realistic expectation based on current costs and the inefficiency in supply.



11. Is this part of the National Healthcare Uniform Project?

No, the national healthcare uniform is a separate project to develop a national uniform for nursing, midwifery, pharmacy and AHP staff across the NHS. It is in the final stages of design and supplier selection, and will be trialling the preferred design later this year, with roll out starting in 2023.

NHS Supply Chain are overseeing both the National Healthcare Uniform Project and the National Estates and Facilities Project.

