



Uniform and Personal Standards Policy

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POL030, Uniform and Personal Standards Policy

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The East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust has made every effort to ensure this policy does not have the effect of unlawful discrimination on the grounds of the protected characteristics of: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity. The Trust will not tolerate unfair discrimination on the basis of spent criminal convictions, Trade Union membership or non-membership. In addition, the Trust will have due regard to advancing equality of opportunity between people from different groups and foster good relations between people from different groups. This policy applies to all individuals working at all levels and grades for the Trust, including senior managers, officers, directors, non-executive directors, employees (whether permanent, fixed-term or temporary), consultants, governors, contractors, trainees, seconded staff, homeworkers, casual workers and agency staff, volunteers, interns, agents, sponsors, or any other person associated with the Trust.

All Trust policies can be provided in alternative formats.



Contents

Paragraph		Page
1.	Policy Statement	4
2.	Scope	4
3.	Access to the Procedure	4-5
4.	Roles and Responsibilities	5
5.	Dress Code	5-7
6.	Other Use of Uniform	7
7.	Condemnations, Resignations and Retirements	7
8.	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	7-8
9.	Head Gear	8
10.	Footwear	8
11.	Personal Standards	8-9
12.	Hair	9
13.	Facial Hair	9
14.	Cosmetics	9
15.	Jewellery	9-10
16.	Tattoos	10
17.	Glasses and Sunglasses	10
18.	Electronic Equipment	10
19.	Policy Review	11

Appendices

Appendix A	Condemnations, Resignations and Retirements	12-13
Appendix B	Body Armour	14-16

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 This document outlines the Uniform Policy for The East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (the Trust). The Trust provides a fit-for-purpose uniform and equipment to enable uniformed employees to carry out their duties effectively and safely, maintaining a professional image to the general public and partner agencies. It is anticipated that common sense should prevail and no-one should present themselves in a manner that is likely to offend patients.
- 1.2 The public and professional image of the Trust stems directly from the appearance, bearing and conduct of its employees. It is essential therefore, that every member of the service is smartly presented at all times especially when in the presence of the general public and representatives of other emergency services and public bodies. The standard required to achieve this, and those required under health and safety legislations, are contained within this policy.
- 1.3 Uniform is initially issued as a full pack of work wear. There will no longer be a yearly bulk replacement of all uniform items. Instead, a process of replacing uniform items will now be adopted (see Section 7 below).
- 1.4 This policy combines and updates the uniform policies of the three former ambulance NHS Trusts which, following the merger in 2006, now form the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust.
- 1.5 This policy has been written in partnership by management and staff side.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Trust employees who are required to wear uniform or work wear. For example; Emergency Operations, Non-Emergency Service, Primary Care (including Out of Hours), Health and Emergency Operations Centre (HEOC) and Support Services personnel such as Couriers, Ambulance Fleet Assistants (AFA's) and Scheduling. Every effort will be made to cater for employees whose cultural and religious beliefs do not allow them to fully conform to this policy. Reasonable adjustments will be made for employees who have a genuine medical reason, or for reasons of disability.

3. Access to the Procedure

- 3.1 All employees are entitled to access to this policy which is located in the HR Policies and Procedures Folders and/or on the Trust's Intranet. However, if you require this policy in any other format please seek guidance from the Human Resources Department, your line management or trade union representative.
- 3.2 Employees and Managers may also wish to consult related Trust policies and publications such as Health and Safety, No Smoking, Infection Control Policy – Section 20, Part A - Employees Clothing and Uniform and Part B - Guidance on home laundering of uniform and work clothing', the Department of Health (DOH) - Uniforms and Work Wear: Guidance on uniform and work wear policies for NHS Employers March 2010 and the Department of Health Ambulance Guidelines Booklet 2008. Please refer to and make yourself familiar with the contents of these publications. Specific guidance may also be issued to all employees that require specialist work

wear designed to meet statutory requirements relating to Health & Safety & Infection Control, in particular.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Human Resources Department is responsible for keeping the provisions within this policy in line with employment legislation, best practice people management principles and NHS guidelines.
- 4.2 Responsibility for adherence to this policy lies with all managers and uniformed employees employed by the Trust. Managers are responsible for ensuring the compliance of their employees with this policy and are expected to give advice and guidance when necessary. Managers and employees will adopt a reasonable and common sense approach to the application of this policy.
- 4.3 Managers, HR employees and trade union representatives are responsible for providing advice and guidance to employees on the application of this policy and procedure.
- 4.4 Management and trade union representatives are responsible for bringing any mutually beneficial improvements to this policy to the attention of the Trust.

5. Dress Code

Employees may only wear uniform when duly authorised by the organisation and/or appropriate to their training and post within the organisation. For example only appropriately qualified operational personnel may wear an operational uniform or call handler within HEOC.

5.1 Operational Uniform

- 5.1.1 Once issued, all employees are expected to maintain a full set of uniform in a reasonable state of repair and uphold a good standard of personal cleanliness and hygiene.
- 5.1.2 When on duty, employees will only wear uniform that is currently issued by the Trust and that complies with any relevant Health and Safety Instructions. The only exceptions to this are:
 - During a transitional period when a new uniform issue is in progress or an employee is awaiting adjustments made to issue uniform;
 - An employee is awaiting adjustments to be made to a uniform;
 - Any other staff group where an agreed dress code applies, such as Hazardous Area Response Team (HART), Chemical Biological Radioactive Nuclear (CBRN), helicopter and bicycle paramedics.
- 5.1.3 Nothing may be worn that could constitute a Health and Safety hazard i.e. scarves, or be offensive to another person on the basis of age, colour, disability, ethnicity, national origin, political or social affiliation, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

- 5.1.4 Wherever possible, operational employees should keep a clean uniform available on station or, when employed away from their normal base station carry a spare uniform so that in the event of a uniform becoming damaged or soiled during the course of their shift, they may change.
- 5.1.5 Items of uniform issued to employees will not be altered in any manner except where those alterations relate to the size of a garment. It is not permitted to alter High Visibility clothing in any manner.
- 5.1.6 There should be nothing attached to uniforms that employees are not able to clean to the required infection control standards. Rank and other title markings, including badges or epaulettes denoting status will be worn on the uniform as appropriate to the garment and duties being undertaken. All employees must be in possession of a current valid identity card bearing their current first and surname and it should be available to be produced on request. Only badges issued or approved by the Trust may be worn. Examples are those for length of service, Trust volunteering or those representing organisations recognised by the Trust as promoting inclusion. Any badge must have been approved by the Trust IPC compliance lead in consultation with the Director of People & Culture.
- 5.1.7 Employees shall not wear uniform whilst off duty except when they are representing the service in an official capacity in their off duty time and/or has permission to do so.
- 5.1.8 Employees wishing to travel to and from work in uniform must wear a jacket or other item of clothing that covers the Trust insignia and/or rank markings. Particular vigilance must be exercised with regard to items which could be used as a means of identity e.g. badges and items such as head gear. High visibility coats and other uniform must not be left on display in private vehicles.
- 5.1.9 Operational shirts will be tucked neatly into waistbands with only the collar button undone (when a tie is not worn) if the design of the shirt is such. The collar should be folded down and worn as the shirt design is intended.
- 5.1.10 Operational staff must adopt a 'bare below the elbows' practice when in direct patient contact. This requires any long or ¾ sleeved clothing to be pushed up above the elbows or removed. When this is not possible e.g. when wearing a high visibility jacket or on religious or medical (which would be agreed via Occupational Health) grounds, then disposable and transparent sleeve protectors must be worn. These are single use and disposable in exactly the same way as disposable gloves. (Comprehensive guidance will be issued in the revised IPC manual.)
- 5.1.11 The revised DOH guidance (March 2010 on page 5) states "for some clinical staff working outdoors, particularly ambulance teams a wrist watch may be essential and where worn, these wrist watches must be washable and be removed for hand washing." However, it is recognised that very few wristwatches are washable therefore the Trust will provide these clinical staff with a fob watch, compliant to IPC standards and on a "once-only" basis.
- 5.1.12 The DOH guidance (March 2010) includes an appendix which makes recommendations on issues such as sleeve length for reasons of faith. Requests for long sleeves under these recommendations can be facilitated on an individual basis.

- 5.1.13 Damaged/lost uniform should be reported to your line manager so that replacement items can be supplied without delay in line with condemnation policy (Appendix A).
- 5.1.14 In certain circumstances employees may be excluded from the standards of dress and appearance and modifications may be made to the uniform replacement procedure. For example, maternity wear for pregnancy, if on recuperative or management/specialist duties, medical or reasons of disability. Exclusions and/or modifications should be agreed with the line manager.

5.2 Ceremonial Uniform

- 5.2.1 Designated employees may be in possession of Ceremonial uniform and this may only be worn when representing the Trust on official duties or when a VIP is visiting the Trust. It is acceptable to use smart formal suits as a substitute when Ceremonial dress is not available.
- 5.2.2 Awards, Orders and Decorations authorised by the Sovereign may only worn on the Ceremonial Uniform and should be displayed on the left breast above the pocket. The only exception to this is the Royal Humane Society awards which are worn in a similar fashion on the right. These medals should only be worn on those occasions when it is deemed appropriate by either the Trust or other authority i.e. The Royal British Legion.
- 5.2.3 Medal ribbons may be worn on either the Ceremonial Uniform Jacket or Shirt.

6. OTHER USE OF UNIFORM

- 6.1 Employees undertaking non-operational duties and visits to outside agencies, organisations and premises should wear normal working uniform including High Visibility Coats if appropriate.
- 6.2 Specialist equipment used for the decontamination of casualties from a chemical incident must only be worn by those employees specially trained in its use.
- 6.3 The uniform remains the property of the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust at all times. Employees of the Trust will not donate, loan or offer for sale under any circumstances any items to any such person or organisation. Therefore, requests for items of Service uniform that come from people or organisations outside of the Trust should be directed to the Associate Director of Operations Support.

7. CONDEMNATIONS, RESIGNATIONS AND RETIREMENTS

- 7.1 All uniform and equipment will be handed in for secure disposal in line with Appendix A.

8. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- 8.1 Appropriate PPE will be issued for the protection of employees whilst undertaking operational duties. It is not permitted for employees to wear Trust issue PPE outside of their Trust duties.
- 8.2 Those employees that are normally issued with PPE must ensure that they maintain a full set of items which are currently provided for their role.

- 8.3 Employees who are required to attend incidents outside their normal place of work must have high visibility clothing available for use in such circumstances.
- 8.4 High visibility clothing should be worn whilst on operational duties where the circumstances present a risk to the personal safety of the crew or there is a need to be readily identifiable within large crowd events. For example, poor weather conditions, road traffic collisions (RTC), concerts, football matches etc.

9. HEAD GEAR

- 9.1 Safety helmets approved for use by the Trust will be worn where crew safety may be compromised. For example:
- Major incidents;
 - Over ground and underground railway incidents;
 - Fire calls;
 - Incidents on motorways and major roads or where employees are at risk from moving vehicles and/or flying debris;
 - RTC's where the patient is trapped and the Fire Service has been asked to affect a rescue;
 - Incidents on building sites and/or other industrial complexes;
 - Places where it is required to comply with Health and Safety notices and policies;
 - Firearms/Explosion incidents;
 - Aircraft incidents, or incidents requiring and within the vicinity of, a helicopter;
 - Chemical incidents;
 - This list is not exhaustive.
- 9.2 Reasonable adjustments should be made, where appropriate, to address operational and Health and Safety requirements. Consideration will be given to cultural and religious beliefs not specifically covered within this document.
- 9.3 Employees who normally wear religious and cultural headwear should be allowed to do so on duty. The colour of the material used must be considered and where appropriate compatible to the Trust uniform. They should be able to be laundered in line with the Infection Control Policy. Further advice can be sought if required from the Trust's religious leader.

10. FOOTWEAR

- 10.1 All employees when engaged on operational duties will wear only the approved footwear as issued by the Trust. Footwear must be clean, polished and in an acceptable state of repair. Issued 'Wellington' boots must be available for use on duty.

11. PERSONAL STANDARDS

- 11.1 It is essential for all employees to maintain the highest standards of personal hygiene.

- 11.2 Hands must be clean at all times. Nails must also be kept clean and to a length appropriate to their job role. For example, operational staff involved in direct patient care should not have nails longer than the end of the finger. False nails, gel nails, nail extensions and/or nail jewellery should not be worn by employees in direct patient care activity as they may harbour micro-organisms.
- 11.3 In the event of an employee becoming dirty or contaminated as a result of operational duties then they will be allowed reasonable time to shower and change, wherever possible.

12. HAIR

- 12.1 Hair should be kept clean and tidy. Long hair should be tied back and secured in an appropriate manner as to prevent it becoming entangled or easily pulled or grabbed by patients.
- 12.2 If hair bands or decorations are worn they must be in keeping with the uniform.
- 12.3 Hairstyles should not impede the effective use of the service approved Trust safety helmet.

13. FACIAL HAIR

- 13.1 Beards and other facial hair including sideburns should be kept short and neatly trimmed. Reasonable adjustment will be made where there is a religious requirement.
- 13.2 HART trained personnel may not wear/grow a beard or extended moustache as these can prevent an effective seal being made when wearing respirators.

14. COSMETICS

- 14.1 Cosmetic make-up should be kept to a minimum and in keeping with the professional image of the Trust. There will be reasonable adjustment where there is a requirement for cosmetic camouflage.

15. JEWELLERY

- 15.1 This section of the Policy is more specifically applicable to operational employees.
- 15.2 Jewellery should be minimal and must not present a hazard to patients, colleagues or the individual. Employees should be mindful of the potential for such items becoming trapped, entangled or grabbed by a patient. Employees must consider Infection Control issues related to the wearing of jewellery (i.e. soap trapped under rings can cause skin complaints). Rings are a potential cause of infection. Clearly the risk increases if they are worn in number or are ornate in design, therefore only plain band rings should be worn.
- 15.3 With the exception of medic-alert and religious bracelets, bangles and bracelets of all types are not to be worn whilst on duty. Where medic-alert or religious bracelets are worn they either need to be pushed up above the elbow or the employee must wear disposable sleeve protectors during patient contact.

- 15.4 Necklaces, including medic alert necklaces, should not be visible, nor should they hang outside the uniform shirt.
- 15.5 Long earrings and hoops are not permitted however employees can wear plain stud earrings.
- 15.6 Any items of jewellery worn should portray a professional image.
- 15.7 The following items of jewellery are not permitted under any circumstances whilst on duty:
- Eyebrow studs or rings;
 - Lip studs or rings;
 - Cheek studs or rings;
 - Tongue studs or rings;
 - Nose studs or rings.
- 15.8 The responsibility for damage to or replacement of items of personal jewellery, including watches, worn by employees on duty lies with the employee.
- 15.9 Where religious or cultural requirements necessitate the wearing of a specific piece of jewellery, this may be permitted after a risk assessment has shown that there is no significant risk to health and safety and Infection Control. Any item worn should be as unobtrusive as possible.

16. TATTOOS

- 16.1 All tattoos and other forms of body art should normally remain covered by standard uniform items.

17. GLASSES AND SUNGLASSES

- 17.1 Employees who wear either corrective spectacles or contact lenses should carry a spare pair wherever possible and should also be aware of the potential dangers related to those lenses which react to light especially when driving service vehicles.
- 17.2 Suitable sunglasses can be worn when appropriate. It is important that employees consider removing them when dealing directly with patients, members of the public or cultural groups as they can present an authoritative or aggressive image and act as a barrier to eye contact and thus inhibit effective communication.
- 17.3 It must be noted that glasses and/or sunglasses do not provide protection when eye protection (against splashing) is required. Eye protection (if required as PPE) must be in addition to prescription glasses/sunglasses.

18. ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

- 18.1 Employees are reminded about the inappropriate use of personal electronic equipment in the presence of patients, e.g. personal mobile phones, MP3 players etc. Trust provided mobile phones should be set to an appropriate ring tone.

19. POLICY REVIEW

- 19.1 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or amended in the light of new employment legislation, updated infection control advice and/or relevant case law.



Appendix A

Condemnations, Resignations and Retirements

All uniform and equipment will be handed in to the individuals' line manager for secure disposal, on cessation of service with the Trust.

Staff are expected to look after their uniform by keeping it clean and in a good state of repair. However it is recognised that items of uniform will become worn out through normal wear and tear or sometimes become damaged, lost or stolen in the course of duty. In the event of this happening the individual can request that replacement item(s) be ordered and/or provided.

It is also recognised that minor colour variances are acceptable due to the age and wear of individual garments. As new technology and designs are instituted they will be phased into service, unless otherwise stated, and existing garments will remain in use until stocks are run down.

On occasion, the Police may require items of uniform due to the seriousness of an incident or to assist an investigation. In these cases, a Line Manager should request a replacement from Stores as a matter of urgency if the item is a single issue, i.e. PPE High Visibility clothing or footwear.

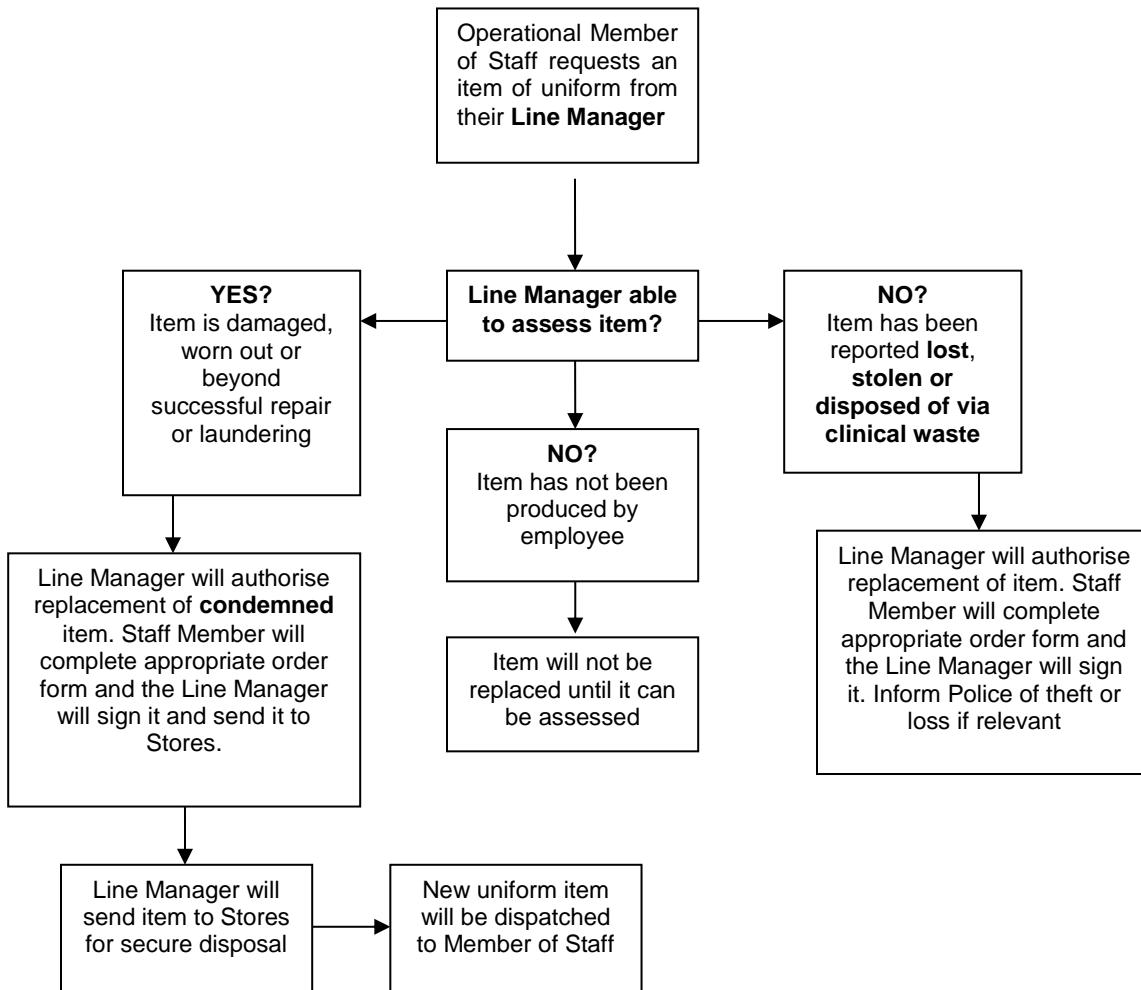
If an item of uniform is believed to require replacing due to:

- Loss or Theft;
- Damage, rendering it beyond economic repair;
- Wear and Tear, rendering the item unsuitable or safe to use;
- Soiled beyond successful laundering in line with the IPC Policy. These items are immediately deemed clinical waste and must be disposed of within a suitable clinical waste receptacle.

The employee must provide the item (unless lost, stolen or disposed of via clinical waste) to their Line Manager to assess and for approval to order a replacement. The employee will submit an order form for the item and the Line Manager will approve it if the item is deemed due for replacement.

The Line Manager will ensure disposal of returned work wear locally in the confidential waste receptacles provided.

The uniform replacement procedure below will be followed:



Unauthorised requests will not be supplied



Body Armour

This appendix has been adapted from the former Essex guidance but will apply to any employees previously issued with this item by the Trust.

PROTECTION LEVEL HG1A/KR1/SP1 to PSDB

Body armour will give protection against the vast majority of knife threats, 'spikes' and will provide protection from handgun ammunition. Broadly speaking this includes all weapons up to and including 9mm and .357 Magnum Handguns.

Research has shown that few knives used or carried are capable of penetrating the garment with which you have been issued. Body armour will also stop all slashing attacks. Some ultra sharp implements at high energy (as wielded by a frenzied attacker) may penetrate the armour, but the garment will greatly reduce their effectiveness and depth of penetration. Body armour will also provide protection against such items as broken bottles. Whilst most commercial shotgun rounds will be stopped, significant injury may still occur due to the high energy of these rounds "pushing" the armour into the body.

BALLISTIC CAPABILITY

Employees previously issued with body armour are equipped with the same level of protection as many police officers, including a ballistic capability. However, the policy of both the police and the Trust is that our employees will not enter the scene of a firearms incident, or any other confirmed or potentially violent incident, until it has been secured and declared safe by the police. Other than the provision of body armour, the policy for attendance at firearms and other violent incidents remains unchanged.

POLICY FOR WEARING BODY ARMOUR

The policy regarding the use of personal issue body armour, set out in detail below.

- Body armour is issued as **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** and as such **MUST** be carried on the vehicle and be available for use at all times when on duty.
- For the most part the wearing of body armour is **discretionary**.

It is the responsibility of each employee previously issued with body armour to ensure that it is carried and available.

Discretionary Wear

With the exception of specific circumstances set out previously, the policy relating to the wearing of body armour is that they should be worn at the discretion of individual members of employees. There is no restriction on when to wear the vests and employees who have been previously issued with the body armour should feel free to do so whenever and wherever they judge it to be appropriate. The decision to do so must be based upon their own personal risk assessment. The risk assessment will

include factors such as the type of call that they are responding to, location and time of day. Factors that have been identified that may assist with personal risk assessments include:

- Data collected about physical assaults on ambulance employees indicate that there is no pattern relating to day of the week;
- Data does indicate that assaults on employees rise steadily from around 1200 hrs, peaking between 2200-2300 hrs then falling off to a lower level by 0400 hrs.

Other factors employees previously issued with body armour like might to consider in relation to the use of body armour include the following examples:

- Receipt of instructions, information or advice from either EOC or from managers, Police or colleagues, that indicates that there may be a higher than normal risk of violence at a particular address or location. Such instances will include, but are not limited to:
 - Attendance at domestic disputes and public order incidents.
 - Attendance at a known or suspected, high-risk addresses or locations.
 - Attendance at an incident where violence/weapons has been reported.
 - At certain times or in certain areas where it is assessed that there may be a higher than normal risk of violence towards ambulance employees. Support to public order incidents
 - Support to other specified planned events such as demonstrations etc.

ADJUSTMENT FOR COMFORT

The garment is gender specific and has been made to measure in order that it fits correctly. It is possible to adjust the fit for personal preference and allow for additional clothing such as pullovers or similar.

Put the garment on and adjust the closing position of both shoulder straps, so that it is comfortable in the sitting position and does not ride up. Now while standing, adjust the position of each side fastening, so that although firm to the body, the garment does not restrict breathing.

The adjustment for wearing the garment is a matter of individual choice, but it is important that it should fit closely with no undue movement on the body. It should be noted that each item was issued to a specific employee and as they are made to measure they are none transferrable between employees.

CARE, LAUNDERING AND MAINTENANCE

Each garment has a unique serial number so that the owner can be identified in the event of loss or theft. Employees previously issued with body armour are individually responsible for the proper care and maintenance of this equipment and will be required to return it to the Trust on leaving.

The cover of your garment can be washed or dry cleaned, please pay attention to the laundering symbols shown on care labels sewn into the cover.

Before laundering, the protective inserts **must** be removed from the cover. Access is gained to these inserts by opening the zips found on the bottom of both the front and back sections of the cover.

Please take care when removing these inserts so as not to unnecessarily bend or crease them. The inserts can be sponged down if required using plain warm water.

Please take this opportunity to examine the covers of these inserts, which are waterproof. They should be free from damage such as rips and tears. If any such damage has occurred, please return the complete garment to your line manager, as it must be withdrawn from service use. It is recommended that the garment cover is washed with the front and back sections assembled and the zips closed. The laundering of products containing 'touch and close' fasteners such as the garment cover, is best done separately from other items as any exposed hook of the touch and close system will try and fasten itself to any other fabric it comes into contact with, and will become damaged in the process.

When replacing the protective armour inserts into the cover, please observe the information label, which contains instruction as to which side of the protective inserts is to be worn towards the body. Each item contains a label stating its issue details and manufacture date. The item must be returned to the Trust five years post date of manufacture as it is no longer considered suitable for use without manufacturer's safety checks. All items reaching this date will be withdrawn from use. It is the employees' responsibility to check this date and ensure out of date items are not used as they may be unsafe and provide inadequate levels of protection.

