

Admin Team Uniform Responses 15/02/2023

What are your thoughts regarding staff uniform in general?

- I don't feel a uniform is necessary and does not aid me within my role. I am aware of how much the uniform costs and I'm unsure of the benefits of wearing it from the cost perspective. It does not affect how I interact with residents/visitors or colleagues. We wear lanyards and have staff badges which identify us as staff and I feel it gives STC an old fashioned feel.
- In general I do not mind uniform or really have a preference if I wear it or not. But I would like more flexibility and choice.
- I am happy to wear the uniform provided.
- Important in an environment where PPE is required. I would not like to be asked to wear my own clothes if I was a member of the SDT. Old fashioned approach. I believe that CC brought uniform in for staff in the libraries but it was withdrawn because some customers found it to be a barrier. The community engagement training mentioned that some people may find people in uniform less easy to approach. Where the requirement for uniform has a hierarchical approach it raises barriers (them/us) and doesn't promote the feeling of being in a 'team'. Wearing uniform makes me feel quite exposed and more of an object than an individual. I associate uniform with school! It would be appreciated if mandatory uniform was much more flexible to accommodate different personal needs and environmental conditions.

Thoughts if the Personnel Committee considered removing staff uniform?

- I would welcome the opportunity to not wear uniform anymore and to be able to dress appropriately for the weather/body shape/menopause. Even though it would cost me money to supply my own clothes overall I would still prefer to not wear a uniform. My reasons for this are based on my concerns below.
- I would welcome whatever decision the Town Council made with good reasoning provided for clarity – They are my employer and I respect the decision they make.
- Equally, it wouldn't concern me if the Committee decided to remove staff uniform. I would abide by their decision. I would welcome this as it would give me the opportunity to be more comfortable and dress according to my needs. Being uncomfortable, particularly during long committee meetings, affects concentration. This does not mean I am going to dress inappropriately for a work environment (I never have). Members of staff can be identified by the lanyards they are required to wear. Line managers could discreetly advise if a member of their team is not deemed to be dressed appropriately.
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Any concerns around staff uniform?

- As a member of staff who is approaching menopausal age I am concerned about how I will cope wearing the current synthetic uniform. This coupled with the hotter summers we are experiencing concerns me, as the synthetic fabric is not comfortable to wear when it is hot. It's not a fabric I choose to wear and I often find in summer that it's too clingy and not breathable. It's stifling and I would much prefer to be able to dress for the weather instead of being expected to wear the same clothes no matter the time of year. There are currently no different top options for our shape and needs and I do not find it flattering. I am a very different shape to my colleagues and the one option we are given does not suit us all. The uniform can be uncomfortable when it is the 'time of the month' and feeling bloated, there is no give in it and it can be itchy. I have also had to put a wash on just to wash the uniform as I have run out, in the current cost of living crisis this is far from ideal. In winter I struggle to get it dry over the weekend. The uniform I have been given is predominantly 2nd hand so it's worn, bobbling and stretched
- No.
- I would appreciate a little flexibility around uniform. This would accommodate for the fact that women are different shapes and sizes and therefore have diverse requirements. For example, I prefer a stretch fabric top as I have arthritis in both shoulders and would find a more structured top difficult to put on. Early mornings and late evenings are the most difficult times those with arthritis. I would find it difficult to put on button through items, such as a blouse in the early morning.
- The use of synthetic fabrics do not meet the aims of the council to promote environmental sustainability. Cost to the public purse. The current uniform is uncomfortable and restrictive. (The skirt is really difficult to drive in.) It's also not smart/professional looking. There is no summer/winter option which is an issue with the extreme temperatures that we seem to be experiencing. There need to be options for different (and changing) shapes and allowing for health issues e.g. that may affect fit, comfort, ability to wear certain fabrics or even get certain garments on. With no changing facilities, there is the issue of the uniform making staff identifiable outside of the building, which might not always be welcome or appropriate.

Are you happy to wear uniform, if the current issued items are not deemed suitable, would different items/design be consider, if so any suggestions?

- If we are to still wear uniform I would request natural fibres, with options for different tops depending on our preference and body shape. Items that are cut specifically for women as the current fleece is oversized and not fitted. I don't think the fit of the uniform is smart, it's impossible for one uniform to suit every body shape and need. I would like a regular schedule of replacements and enough sets to not have to rush to wash it all the time.
- I am happy to wear a uniform but would reiterate I would prefer a flexible approach and more choice. All women are different shapes and sizes with different needs requiring to be considered. I personally prefer to wear a shift dress. I do not like to wear trousers. This would differ from others. I would like a more breathable fabric that is easier to wash as the current uniform is synthetic and often takes days to dry – especially if I do not have my heating on or if I cannot use the washing line. If I use the washing line the pegs make marks and therefore looks scruffy and misshaped. Not resulting in a professional look at all which I believe is what is trying to be achieved with staff wearing uniform. Different designs and options would be most welcome. Maybe a directive to wear Navy Blue may be an option the Town Council may wish to consider? Staff could purchase their own uniform – cost saving on the public purse whilst offering flexibility to employees for their different wants and needs, however still offering the appearance of professionalism and uniformity when employees liaise with the public
- I have carried out research previously with regard to uniform. There are only to my knowledge, two major companies providing professional uniforms at a reasonable price. It is extremely difficult to find items which will suit all staff due to differing body shapes and health requirements. For example, I preferred the long line cardigan previously provided to receptionists as part of their uniform when working at the Guildhall as it provided more warmth. However, as the library staff did not like this item, I acquiesced to wearing a shorter cardigan. The current uniform provides little warmth due to the synthetic fabric of both top and cardigan. Whilst a fleece has been provided, allowing staff to layer additional items, to provide more warmth in winter would be appreciated.
- Personally I would prefer not to wear uniform because I'm a funny shape and have other issues! However, if it is required please provide a wide choice of style and fabrics as we are all different shapes and have different needs. There also needs to be a replacement/renewal programme in place. Please could 'not wearing the correct uniform' not be a disciplinary issue? This has caused me a lot of anxiety when I've been having issues with the fit of my skirt!

Would it be useful to have a branded fleece for the Winter

- No
- I am not keen on branding if I am completely honest. I already often get caught when on my lunch break in Fore Street from the public resulting in me not wanting to go out some days. The uniform stands out and people often recognise me. I don't see how a branded uniform is necessary when working in a non public facing office the majority of the time. I would question why branding would be wanted for office staff? What would be the purpose of spending the money on embroidery for staff who are not public facing? We already have name badges and lanyards another item with STC logos all over it seems excessive and not a suitable use of the historic Town Seals or public money.
- I am happy with the plain navy fleece provided. I would not be happy to wear a branded fleece. Service Delivery require to wear branded uniform, otherwise residents would wonder who is cutting grass or watering plants etc. However, the administration staff work in the Guildhall and have lapel badges and ID with Saltash Town Council lanyards. I have never worked in a professional office where administrative staff are required to wear branded items.
- No – I don't want to be identifiable outside of work. My approach to staying warm is thermal layers (usually a lot of them!).

Any other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If we to still wear a uniform I would request that it is based on a colour rather than specific garment choices. I am a different size and shape to my colleagues and I want to feel comfortable, smart and good about myself when I am at work.• I really want to be constructive but am feeling a little frustrated with the whole thing. This has been ongoing for months now and I have expressed my thoughts on the uniform previously when asked. I feel this whole situation could have been discussed and resolved many months ago. From memory when the Town Council requested we wear uniform we got what the library wanted/ needed. They seemed to have all the say and admin were exhausted with the to and fro-ing. The amount of parcels being received and then sent back was silly and such a waste of staff time. I have never complained and just got on with wearing the uniform provided – there are far more important things in life than if I wear uniform or not! Such a shame staff time and energy is being spent on this subject rather than the far more important work of the Town Council. Can I add that I have hand me downs from previous staff members that do not fit, are ‘bobbly’ and I have sewn two cardigans back together due to holes. I have not received a new item of staff uniform in nearly 4 years as to not create another cost to the Town Council. If we are to receive a uniform I would request a schedule for replacements / additional items – God forbid should I put on weight. How embarrassing to have to come and ask for more uniform. I for one do not wish to discuss this any further and would request the Town Council make a decision once and for all and stick to it.• I know that the Personnel Committee have many important and pressing issues to discuss. However, I would appreciate it if a decision could be made regarding uniform, in order that there might be no further discussion surrounding this matter.• I appreciate being asked for my comments. Do any other town councils in Cornwall require all staff to wear uniform?
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