



SOUTHERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST

Trust Guidance on the Use of Personal Electronic Devices and Mobile Phones Within Mental Health Facilities

Reviewed	February 2019
Date of Next Review	February 2022
Division	Mental Health & Disability
Author	Andrew Ruck
Service Lead	Louise Hall

Contents	Page No.
1.0 Introduction and Background	3
2.0 Purpose and Aims	3
3.0 Guidance Statement	3
3.1 Guidelines for Patients	4
3.2 Guidelines for Staff	5
3.3 Staff usage of personal electronic devices and mobile phones	6
4.0 Detained people who use services	6
5.0 All Areas	6
6.0 Scope of Guidance	7
7.0 Responsibilities	7
8.0 Equality and Human Rights Consideration	8
9.0 Alternative Formats	8
10.0 Copyright	8
11.0 Sources of Advice and Further Information	8
12.0 This guidance has been developed with reference to:	8
13.0 References	9
 <i>Appendices</i>	
Appendix 1- <i>Receipt of Mobile Phone</i>	10
Appendix 2 – <i>Guide on the use of personal electronic devices/Mobile phones for people who use our services and visitor</i>	11

1.0 Introduction and Background

It is accepted that admission to in-patient services can be a difficult time for patients, and in particular, when patients are without the support of relatives and friends. The Southern Health & Social Care Trust respects the need for patients to maintain contact with people outside the ward environment.

However, personal electronic devices and mobile phones, also commonly have extended functionality, including camera and video recording capability and music players. It is the potential for patients and visitors to use this functionality inappropriately which presents the greatest potential to interfere with patient dignity and privacy.

2.0 Purpose and Aims

Given the prevalence of electronic devices and mobile phones incorporating photographic and audio recording capability the assumption should be that they are most likely to have this function. Photographic images and voice recordings can be captured and shared within moments using mobile phone technology. This represents the potential for a gross invasion of privacy for staff and people who use services.

The purpose of this guidance is to set out some key principles about the use of personal electronic devices and mobile phones in the inpatient and outpatient areas. The camera or recording facility is not to be used at any time and signs to this effect must be prominently displayed in all areas.

3.0 Guidance Statement

It is important to find a balance between the needs of patients and employees to maintain communications and contact with family and friends versus the need to protect people against the misuse of advanced technology.

A proper and adequate record of any decisions relating to removal of a device or phone, and subsequent clinical discussions must be documented in the patient's clinical notes.

There is a need to ensure we find the balance between competing needs of:

- Providing a therapeutic environment.
- Protecting the rights of individuals.
- Promoting recovery.
- Promoting confidentiality.
- Protecting vulnerable individuals from abuse.
- Promoting professional standards of behaviour.
- Promoting positive contact with carers, friends and relatives.

- Safeguarding against inappropriate phone calls to the Emergency Services.

The use of personal electronic devices and mobile phones including camera or recording facility by visitors is not permitted.

3.1 Guidelines for Patients

- Where possible the Trust will support patients to maintain telephone contact with their family and friends.
- People who use services and visitors will be discouraged from bringing their personal electronic devices and mobile phones onto in-patient/day care units and into out patient clinics. They will be informed of the risk of theft/loss of the device and the restrictions placed on their use.
- If people who use services or visitors choose to retain their personal electronic devices/mobile phones they must be asked to agree to restrictions being placed on the use of the personal electronic devices /mobile phone including;
 - No use of the recording or photography functions of their device(s)
 - No 'ring tone' (silent setting).
 - The personal electronic device /mobile phone must only be for the patient's individual use. Avoid lending to other patients.
 - The Trust will accept no liability for damage to or loss of personal electronic devices /mobile phones belonging to patients or visitors.
 - Not to be used in communal areas, such as lounges, dining areas and dormitories.
 - Staff will accommodate patients without phone with alternative telephone access.
 - Recharging of personal electronic devices/ mobile phones will take place in a designated area on the ward.
 - All battery chargers and leads will be stored in a designated area when not in use.
 - Personal electronic devices/mobile phones are not permitted in Occupational Therapy groups, individual assessments or treatment sessions on the Ward or in Shared Therapy Department.
 - In respect of other patients privacy and help promote sleep, use of a personal electronic device/ mobile phone will be restricted to 0800 – 2300 hours

The use of personal electronic devices/mobile phones could be withdrawn from patients for reasons including the following:

- Making/receiving nuisance calls to or from any party.
- Personal electronic devices/mobile phones which contain a camera will be withdrawn if they are used to create any images including videos whilst on Trust premises.

The patient will be asked to delete the recording or photograph and the phone will then be removed and placed in storage until discussion at the next clinical review (Appendix1).

- Personal electronic devices/mobile phones can also be withdrawn if used in a manner that is deemed to be offensive and cause upset to others or seen to be detrimental to the patient's health.
- People who use services assessed by the clinical team not to have the capacity to manage the identified risk can have their personal electronic device/mobile phone removed for the duration of the risk.

3.2 Guidelines for Staff

- The use of ward or personal electronic devices/mobile phones should be included in admission information leaflets for your particular area for patients/ carers/ relatives.
- Such information should include contact numbers for your area.
- Ward Teams have a responsibility for assessing the appropriateness with regards to a patient/individual's mental health in relation to personal electronic device/mobile phone use.
- Consideration to be given to the patient's mental health needs at the time.
- Recharging of the personal electronic devices/mobile phones will take place in a designated area, ensuring no essential equipment is unplugged.

The use of personal electronic devices/mobile phones could be withdrawn from patients for reasons including the following:

- Making/receiving nuisance calls to or from any party.
- Personal electronic devices/mobile phones which contain a camera will be withdrawn if they are used to create any images or sound recordings including videos whilst on Trust premises.

The patient will be asked to delete the recording or photograph and the personal electronic device/mobile phone will then be removed and placed in storage until discussion at the next clinical review (Appendix 1). The reason for removal and subsequent clinical

discussion should be documented in the patient's clinical notes.

- Personal electronic devices/mobile phones can also be withdrawn if used in a manner that is deemed to be offensive and cause upset to others or seen to be detrimental to the patient's mental health.

3.3 Staff usage of personal electronic devices/mobile phones

3.3.1 Employees should not carry personal electronic devices /mobile phones when on duty as incoming phone calls can impact on the quality of clinical or therapeutic interaction between patients and employees. (Comfort and meal breaks should be used for checking messages and/or for making calls).

4.0 Detained People who use services

- Persons that use our services that are detained under the mental health order have the same rights as voluntary persons using the service to have contact with family and friends through readily accessible telephone facilities. However the Mental Health Order (N.I.) 1986 recognises that all hospitals have implied powers over detained individuals rights to access and use of telephones, and it would therefore be permissible to restrict the use of personal electronic devices/mobile phones in clinical areas provided there are reasonable clinical grounds for doing so.
- Therefore detained people who use services assessed by the clinical team not to have the capacity to manage the identified risk should have the use of their personal electronic device/ mobile phone denied for the duration of the risk. This should be clearly outlined within their care plan and be reviewed at least weekly during the clinical team review.
- It is recognised that some of the risks linked, particularly in respect of detained people who use services, in the use of making phone calls relate to calls to inappropriate numbers or receiving inappropriate telephone calls placing themselves and/or others at risk. Furthermore, people who use services could make calls to high cost lines, which will result in them receiving higher telephone bills than they might have otherwise expected, with or without capacity.

5.0 All Areas

- The Trust will not accept responsibility or liability for loss or damage to personal electronic devices/ mobile phones belonging to people who use services or visitors.
- The Trust will not accept responsibility or liability for any telephone bills including those resulting from the abuse of personal electronic device/mobile phone calling to expensive chat lines.
- All Clinical areas are responsible for displaying information to people who use services, visitors and staff about this policy. (see appendix 2)

- Information relating to this guidance should be added to Information packs for people who use services and carers where possible

6.0 Scope of Guidance

This guidance applies to:

- People who use services:
 - I. Residing in acute inpatient facilities
 - II. Attending day-care/outpatient services
- Visitors to those facilities
- Staff working in clinical areas

7.0 Responsibilities

7.1 Director of Mental Health & Disability Services

- Provide clear direction to staff regarding implementation of this guidance..
- Empower staff to challenge misuse of mobile phones on the site.

7.2 Acute Mental Health Services Manager

- Provide support to ward/ department managers in dealing with difficult/ complex situations and circumstances relating to the guidance.
- Advise Trust Senior Management Team of compliance to guidance.

7.3 Ward/ Department Managers

- Ensure that all staff are made aware of this guidance through staff induction processes.
- Ensure that all staff comply with the standards set out within the guidance.
- Ensure that information about this guidance is displayed to people who use services, visitors and staff.
- Ensure that information about this guidance is added to information packs for people who use services and carers.

7.4 All Staff

- Familiarise self with and understand the guidance.
- Ensure that information regarding the guidance is given to patients and visitors as part of admission process.
- Ensure that all issues regarding the guidance are directed to ward/ department manager or nurse in charge.

8.0 Equality and Human Rights Considerations

This guidance has been screened for equality implications as required by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Equality Commission guidance states that the purpose of screening is to identify those guidance's which are likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to these.

Using the Equality Commission's screening criteria, no significant equality implications have been identified. The guidance will therefore not be subject to an equality impact assessment.

Similarly, this guidance has been considered under the terms of the Human Rights Act 1998, in particular Article 8: Right to privacy, which states:

“(1) Everyone has the right for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.

(2) There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except which is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedom of others.”

This guidance was deemed compatible with the European Convention Rights contained in the Act.

9.0 Alternative Formats

This document can be made available on request in alternative formats, e.g. plain English, Braille, disc, audiocassette and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.

10.0 Copyright

The supply of information under the Freedom of Information does not give the recipient or organisation that receives it the automatic right to re-use it in any way that would infringe copyright. This includes, for example, making multiple copies, publishing and issuing copies to the public. Permission to re-use the information must be obtained in advance from the Trust.

11.0 Sources of Advice and Further Information

Line Managers should be contacted in the first instance, in relation to any specific queries on guidance content. Line Managers should then escalate queries which they are unable to access, to the Guidance Author.

12.0 This policy has been developed with reference to :

Department of Health, May 2007, “Using mobile phones in NHS hospitals”

Trust Guidance on the use of Personal Electronic Devices and Mobile Phones Within Mental Health Facilities

and further reviewed with reference to DHSSPS Guidance “Using mobile phones in HSC hospitals Best Practice Guidance” June 2009.

Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Trust, “Use of Mobile Phones/Electronic recording equipment by people who use services and visitors in clinical areas”.

Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Trust, “Use of personal mobile phones within in-patient areas”.

13.0 References

1. Mental Health Order N.I. (1986),
2. Human Rights Act (1998)
3. Data Protection Act (1998)

Receipt of Personal Electronic Device/ *Mobile Phone*

Appendix 1

Facility

Ward/Department

Patient Name

Personal Electronic Device/Mobile Phone Description (Please include make and model if available)

.....

Monies left on phone if appropriate

Date Personal Electronic Device/Mobile Phone placed in safe keeping

Patient Signature

Staff Signatures (Please sign and Print) 1.....

2.

Date Personal Electronic Device/Mobile Phone returned to patient

Patient /Visitor Signature

Staff Signatures (Please sign and Print) 1.....

2.....

Guide on the use of Personal Electronic Devices/Mobile Phones for people who use our Services and Visitors

The aim of this Guide is to set out some key principles about the use of personal electronic devices/ mobile phones including those with visual and audio recording capability in the inpatient and outpatient clinic areas.

In order for us to work together in maintaining the balance between:

- Protecting confidentiality of the caller and others
- Protecting vulnerable individuals from abuse
- Protecting the rights of individuals
- Providing a therapeutic environment
- Maintaining people who use services social networks

We would like to ask that you work with us by undertaking the following

- No use of the recording or photography function of your device(s)
- No 'ring tone' (silent setting)
- No use during therapeutic activities
- Avoid lending to other patients
- Acceptance of personal liability for loss etc
- Avoid using in communal areas, such as lounges, dining rooms and dormitories
- **Use of personal electronic devices/ mobile phones by visitors is not permitted**

In the unusual event that persons using our services do not respect the above they will be asked to surrender their personal electronic device /mobile phone.

Occasionally it may be felt for clinical reasons, that a person using our services should not have access to a personal electronic device/ mobile phone. On these rare occasions they will be asked to surrender their device. The reasons for this will be fully explained and documented by the clinical team. In the unusual event that visitors do not respect the above, they will in the first instance be asked to refrain from using their device, or asked to leave if they continue.

Thank you for working with us in protecting the privacy and dignity of those people who use our services.