

The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Use of Mobile Telephones and Personal Computing Devices within Trust Premises Policy

Effective: March 2011

Review: March 2013

1. Introduction

The Department of Health has issued revised guidance on the use of mobile telephones and personal computing devices in hospitals. Previous guidance had resulted in the Trust imposing a complete ban on mobile telephones and personal computing devices within hospitals. This ban was based on firm evidence that interference from mobile telephones and personal computing devices could impact on the safe use of medical equipment. The result of the revised guidance is that the Trust can now review previous policy and allow limited mobile telephones and personal computing devices use in identified areas only.

The Trust's aim is to safeguard and promote the welfare of all patients, including children, and it is well aware that mobile camera phones and personal computing devices pose a potential risk to this, and the confidentiality of other patients. In addition the Trust is aware that mobile phones and personal computing devices have the potential to;

- interfere with some medical equipment resulting in potential harm to patients.
- cause a nuisance and be annoying to patients and staff.
- breach the principles of privacy, dignity and confidentiality of all Trust users including patients, carers, visitors and staff in the event they are fitted with cameras

The Trust is endeavouring to establish the principles of mobile telephones and personal computing devices use whilst ensuring privacy and without causing inconvenience to patients. It is trying to balance the right of patients and visitors to use their mobile phones and personal computing devices with the rights of patients and staff in respect of privacy and dignity.

In terms of nuisance or unwanted disturbance within patient care environments, the guidance in here can be applied to the use of PatientLine.

2. Scope

This policy applies to patients, visitors and staff.

- 2.1 The Trust has established areas within the hospital and they are designated as being acceptable for mobile phone / personal computing devices use, where issues of privacy and dignity and interference with medical equipment can be kept to a minimum.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all staff, visitors and patients within the Trust environs.
- 2.3 Areas where Mobile Telephones and Personal Computing Devices can be used

The use of mobile phones and personal computing devices in the following areas is permitted;

- Hospital reception and entrance areas
- Non-clinical communal areas – which may include lift lobbies and café areas
- Specially designated rooms/areas
- Public corridors
- Single cubicles
- On wards e.g. dayroom and non-clinical areas where direct clinical care is not delivered.
- On wards – bed bays. Patients can use their mobile phones in bed only with permission of the nurse in charge and with consideration for other patients and staff at all times.

However, it may be that it is not always appropriate for mobile telephones and personal computing devices to be used even in the areas listed. Users of these devices must never use them to take photographs of patients or other service users without their consent.

- 2.3 As a precautionary measure the use of all mobile communication devices should be prohibited within two metres of any patient connected to a medical device.
- 2.4 It is not possible from current guidance to give complete assurance that it is safe to use a mobile phone or personal computing device whilst attached to a medical device such as an infusion pump. Therefore patients attached to medical devices must not use such devices. It is the responsibility of the nurse staff in charge of the patients care to explain the risk to patients and document accordingly.
- 2.5 Mobile phones or personal computing devices should not be used without the permission of the nurse/ midwife in charge.
- 2.6 Mobile phones or personal computing devices must always be used with consideration for others. Use should be kept to a minimum. Where possible patients should refrain from making telephone calls from their bed or the bed bay.
- 2.7 The following criteria must be applied where mobile telephones and personal computing devices are being used as identified;
- Telephones must be switched to vibrate mode, computing devices should be muted or headphones used
 - Must not be used in patient areas between 23:00 and 07:00
 - Not in any area where care is being delivered
 - Cameras must not be used except where this is a locally agreed exception and there must be screening to protect the privacy of other patient/staff in the environment e.g. single cubicle or behind a curtained area.
 - Must not be used to record / video any aspects of care delivery including communication.

2.8 Areas where Mobile Telephones and Personal Computing Devices cannot be used

For safety, privacy and dignity and annoyance reasons, mobile telephones and personal computing devices are **not to be used** in the following areas;

- Critical care units
- Operating theatres
- Special care baby units
- Renal Dialysis Unit
- Designated areas within Audiology as indicated by notices.

Exceptions in these areas, such as patients with specific communication or carer needs or those confined to bed areas, must be discussed and agreed with the Nurse in Charge.

2.9 Use of Laptop, Palmtop Computers and Gaming Devices Containing Radio Data Transfer Systems

Laptop/palmtop computers and gaming devices may be fitted with data transfer radio systems such as GPRS or 3G that present a risk of interference to medical devices similar to that from Mobile Telephones and Personal Computing Devices. Their use should be controlled as for Mobile Telephones and Personal Computing Devices.

2.10 Use of Bluetooth® Technology

Bluetooth technology presents a low risk and this technology is therefore not subject to restriction; this however must be considered in context, i.e. if a Bluetooth hearing aid is to be used with a mobile phone, then the mobile phone restrictions still apply when in the vicinity of a medical device. There is no restriction of use in designated mobile phone areas or if used for non-mobile phone applications e.g. MP3 players.

3. **Guidance regarding the recording of images is applicable in Maternity Areas**

As a general principle the recording of images is not permitted, this is to protect the privacy and dignity of patients, visitors and any users of Trust premises including staff.

- 3.1 However it is recognised that there may be occasions where the recording of images is desirable, e.g. new parents to take and transmit pictures of newborn children. However, it is important that the privacy and dignity of other adjacent patients or staff is considered. Pictures can only be taken with the permission of the midwife in charge and with the consent of the patient/parent and in the presence of mothers/patients (as applicable) and must be within private environment e.g. with curtains drawn around the bed/cot area.

4. Use of Mobile Phones and Personal Computing Devices by Staff

The principles above are all applicable to staff.

As with any communication device mobile telephones and personal computing devices must not be used whilst on duty. Personal mobile phones and computing devices should be switched off at all times whilst in clinical areas or involved in the delivery of care. Failure to do so will be managed under the Trust Disciplinary Procedure. Work related mobile telephones and personal computing devices (or personal mobile phones) being used for work related business must be used away from areas where direct clinical care is being delivered and in appropriate environment to afford confidentiality, e.g. ward office area.

Staff required to give out work contact details should not rely on personal mobiles but give departmental contact details.

Please note the Trust can take no responsibility for lost, damaged or stolen mobile phones or computing devices.

References

- For further information on the Trust's duty to respect a patient's private life see The Human Rights Act 1009 (HRA).
- Department of Health (2009) 'Use of mobile phones in NHS hospitals'.
- Medical Devices Agency (1997) 'Electromagnetic compatibility of medical devices with mobile communications' (MDA DB9702).
- Medical Devices Agency (1999) 'Emergency service radios and mobile data terminals: compatibility problems with medical devices' (MDA DB1999(02)).
- Medical Devices Agency (2001) 'Update on Electromagnetic Compatibility of Medical Devices with Mobile Communications: TETRA (Terrestrial Trunked Radio System) and Outside media broadcasts from hospital premises' (SN 2001(06)).

Original Author : Patient Services Manager

Amendments : Data and Telecommunications Manager, Bob Beckwith

THE NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST
IMPACT ASSESSMENT – SCREENING FORM A

This form must be completed and attached to any procedural document when submitted to the appropriate committee for consideration and approval.

Policy Title:	Use of Mobile Phones Within Trust Premises	Policy Author:	Patient Services
	Yes/No?	You must provide evidence to support your response:	
1.	Does the policy/guidance affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:	No	The policy relates to all users of mobile phones regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, religion, belief or age
	• Race	No	
	• Ethnic origins (including gypsies and travellers)	No	
	• Nationality	No	
	• Gender	No	
	• Culture	No	
	• Religion or belief	No	
	• Sexual orientation including lesbian, gay and bisexual people	No	
	• Age	No	
	• Disability – learning difficulties, physical disability, sensory impairment and mental health problems.	Yes	The use of mobile phones within Trust premises will allow for compliance of the Trust with it's Disability Equality Duty by supporting the use of equipment which will provide for those with a communication impairment to make contact in a similar way to those without the impairment.
	• Carer	Yes	The use of mobile phones will enable carers to continue that role whilst in hospital premises and ensure their piece of mind.
2.	Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	No	
3.	If you have identified potential discrimination, are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	N/A	
4(a).	Is the impact of the policy/guidance likely to be negative? <i>(If "yes", please answer sections 4(b) to 4(d)).</i>	N/A	
4(b).	If so can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
4(c).	What alternatives are there to achieving the policy/guidance without the impact?	N/A	
4(d).	Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	N/A	

Comments: The Trust Equality, Diversity and Human rights Group contributed to the completion of this Equality Impact Assessment screening and have reviewed and agreed the final assessment screening.	Action Plan due (or Not Applicable):
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Name and Designation of Person responsible for completion of this form Frances Blackburn (Head of Nursing for Freeman & Walkergate)..... Date: August 2010

Names & Designations of those involved in the impact assessment screening process: Jean Fraser (Development Worker, National Association of Laryngectomee Clubs), Katie Dodd (Carers Centre), Christine Holland (Senior HR Manager, NUTHFT).....

(If any reader of this procedural document identifies a potential discriminatory impact that has not been identified on this form, please refer to the Policy Author identified above, together with any suggestions for the actions required to avoid/reduce this impact.)