



Use of Mobile Phones by Service Users and Visitors

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Category:	Operational Policies
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Lead Officer:	Operations Director
Equality Impact Assessment completed:	Yes

Applicable Legislation/Regulations:

The Health and Social Care Act 2008; The Care Act 2014
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Codes of Practice:

Purpose:

This policy aims to recognise and find a balance between service users' need to maintain communication with family and friends, versus the organisation's obligation to maintain the safety, privacy, dignity and confidentiality of service users, staff and visitors.

Version Control Table

Date Ratified	Version Number	Status
		Live

Date	Key Revision
17/02/18	Full policy review

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1.0 The Policy

- a) Inmind Healthcare Group recognises that when a service user is in a hospital, communication with family and friends is an essential element of support and comfort.
- b) Communication is made easier today with the widespread use of mobile phones and other devices and their integrated functionality.
- c) However, these devices also often provide additional functionality i.e. Information & Communication Technology (ICT) including the capability to access the internet and use camera and video recording functions and music players.
- d) The use of mobile phone policy relating to hospital facilities will, if required on an individual basis, utilise guidance regarding Deprivation of Liberty (DOL) and incorporate the principles of “best interest” and “least restrictive intervention” whenever possible. However, incorporation of DOLS guidance needs to be balanced against the potential risk of harm to vulnerable service users (and visitors) from the inappropriate use of mobile devices, e.g. access to detrimental material and or taking unauthorised photographs or video recordings which could interfere with service user safety, dignity and privacy and compromise service user confidentiality in line with Information Governance.
- e) In addition, the use of mobile phones can be intrusive and impact adversely on the environment of others. Service users have a right to, and a need for, a peaceful environment, both day and night time, uninterrupted by a number of different ringtones. Also, the mobile device/phone chargers can pose a ligature risk.
- f) Therefore, it is important that we control/restrict the use of mobile devices/phones/chargers within hospital facilities by taking the following factors into consideration:
 - Providing a therapeutic environment
 - Promote dignity and respect
 - Promoting Safety & Recovery
 - Protecting Confidentiality
 - Protecting people from abuse
 - Protecting the Human rights of individuals (including DoLS)
 - Promoting socially acceptable standards of behaviour
 - Promoting positive contact with carers, friends & family
- g) Throughout this policy the term “mobile device” automatically includes mobile phones, camera phones, laptops and chargers and any device which connects to internet or has capacity to record either sound or pictures.

2.0 The Procedure

2.1 Inmind's Liability

- a) Inmind will not accept responsibility or liability for loss or damage to mobile phones belonging to service users or visitors and will not accept responsibility or liability for mobile phone bills.

2.2 Designated Areas for Use of Mobile Devices/Phone

- a) A care plan relating to the service user's mobile phone usage should be documented. The care plan must be signed by the patient.
- b) Service users will be permitted to keep mobile devices/phones (excluding chargers) subject to the satisfactory completion and ongoing review of the risk assessment process by the Multi-disciplinary team.
- c) All staff are responsible for ensuring the risk assessment processes and implementation of risk management plans in order to reduce the risk of harm to self and others is carried out consistently.
- d) Controls may include the removal of all mobile devices until any identified risks have been reduced or resolved.
- e) Chargers may be removed on admission and stored by nursing staff for safe keeping due to the potential ligature risks. All mobile devices can be charged as and when requested at a central point.
- f) All chargers in use must be Portable Appliance Tested (PAT) checked by the maintenance department.
- g) Inmind encourages all service users to look after their expensive electrical devices, computers and phones.
- h) All service users will be made aware of certain restrictions that can be placed on the use of mobile devices as follows;
 - Ward mobile phones will be utilised for S17 leave and personal calls to family and important others.
 - Phone numbers will need to be checked for authenticity and put on an approved list for each patient.
 - The ward mobile phone will not be used for taking of pictures or recording of other people.
 - The ward mobile phone will not have numbers stored on it.
 - No use of the recording or photographing facility on personal mobile phones
 - No 'ring tone' (silent/vibrate setting) on personal mobile phone
 - Avoid lending to others

- i) Mobile devices may be used in:
 - Living rooms (with the provision that this does not cause disturbance for or conflict with other service users)
 - Bedrooms
 - Dining rooms (except during meal times)
- j) Mobile devices may not be used in the following areas:
 - Toilet and bathroom facilities
- k) If a service user is observed using their mobile device in breach of these conditions they will be asked to hand their phone in to the nursing staff for safe keeping and its use reviewed by the MDT.
- l) Clear explanations will be given as to why this policy is necessary within the ward environment. If the service user refuses to comply with the request, then the risks will be assessed and discussed within the ward Multi-disciplinary team. Actions will be agreed and recorded in the service user's care plan and discussed with the patient and reviewed regularly.
- m) The service user's use of their mobile phone may be closely monitored/supervised if necessary and appropriate.
- n) If, however the service user is using their phone for an illegal act or an act that is felt to be detrimental to their mental health it may be necessary to contact the Police for advice and support in removing the mobile phone.

2.3 Visitors

- a) Visitors are requested not to use mobile phones whilst in clinical areas and asked to keep them on silent during the visit to avoid disturbing the peace and quiet of the ward environment.
- b) If visitors are found to be using their mobile phone's recording or photographic facility they will be advised that their action constitutes a breach of service users' confidentiality and human rights and will be asked to delete the recording or photograph. They must do so in the presence of an Inmind member of staff. If they refuse, the situation must be escalated to a senior manager who will decide if it is appropriate to report the situation to the Police.
- c) In the event of a visitor refusing to respect these restrictions to their mobile phone use, they will be asked to leave the clinical area and the multidisciplinary team may decide to refuse entry for future visits.

2.4 Additional Points

- a) All mobile device/phone chargers must be submitted to staff on admission.
- b) Staff are not permitted to access or use on a service user's behalf their mobile device without the service user's consent.
- c) Where mobile phones cannot be used by service user's, alternative arrangements (supervised or otherwise) are available through use of the landline.
- d) All ward areas are responsible for displaying information to service user's, visitors and staff about this policy.
- e) Exceptional circumstances will be accommodated by the Nurse-in-Charge.

Appendix 1

Equality Impact Assessment for this policy

Protected Characteristic (domain)	Area of conflict	Resolution
Age	Nil	N/A
Disability	Nil	N/A
Gender Reassignment	Nil	N/A
Pregnancy & Maternity	Nil	N/A
Race	Nil	N/A
Religion or Belief	Nil	N/A
Sex	Nil	N/A
Sexual Orientation	Nil	N/A
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Nil	N/A

All relevant persons are required to comply with this policy and must demonstrate sensitivity and competence in relation to diversity in race, faith, age, gender, disability and sexual orientation. If you feel you are disadvantaged by this policy, please contact the Registered Manager and the service will actively respond to the enquiry.