

## Service User Property Policy

Inmind Reference:	OPS32
Category:	Operational Policies
Version Number:	1.2
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Lead Officer:	Operations Director
Equality Impact Assessment completed:	Yes

### Applicable Legislation/Regulations:

The Care Act 2014

### Codes of Practice:

The Mental Health Act Code of Practice 2015

### Purpose:

To ensure Inmind Healthcare Group fulfils its responsibility to provide safe custody for money and other personal property handed in by service users or in the possession of service users. To ensure that all staff are aware of the procedures and safeguards in place in this area.

### Version Control Table

Date Ratified	Version Number	Status
	1.2	Live

Date	Key Revision
27/06/18	Revision to 'policy statement'. Policy re-formatted.

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## 1.0 The Policy

- a) The principal concern of InMind Healthcare is to ensure the safe keeping of service users' property at all stages of their care and treatment; however due to the differing arrangements over how wards/units and services are operated to meet their service user specific needs, it is not possible to provide a definitive process or procedure. It is important also to recognise that because of the long-term nature of service user admissions they will tend to regard their "room" as "home" for the duration. As such they may seek to bring personal property and items. Staff must remind service users over the need to keep items safe and to use safe keeping facilities.
- b) The use of the term "property" shall be taken to include money, valuable and personal belongings
- c) As a general principal it is the service user's responsibility to ensure the storage and safe keeping of their property unless it is handed over for safekeeping. Where service users bring in electrical equipment, for example radios, portable TVs, hair dryers/straighteners these remain the responsibility of the service user; however, each device must be PAT tested by the Estates team to prevent the risk of fire. This is especially important with items that may require a charger.
- d) It must be assumed that service users have the mental capacity for the management and safekeeping of their property. If there is concern to indicate otherwise, an assessment of their mental capacity must be undertaken for that particular task and performed regularly where any service user's condition can change. Where there are concerns over a service user's capacity staff, should liaise with the service user's family/representatives and to discourage them from leaving cash and/or valuables with the service user unless the ward/unit staff have been advised.
- e) Definitions

**Cash** - money in the form of coins or notes as distinct from money orders or credit

**Valuables** – items having significant monetary value; having great importance or usefulness; cherished or esteemed because of personal qualities; capable of being assigned a value for example - a possession that has significant monetary value

**Personal possessions** – items owned by or for the personal use of the service user, other than those which are considered valuable

**Illicit substances and risk items** – this term covers items which may be in the possession of the service user on arrival at the ward/unit; that they may bring to the unit following a period of leave or which has been brought in by a friend or relative and which may be harmful to their or other service users' safety and consequently must be removed from the service user, for example knives; sharp items or possible ligature risks. Illicit substances such as controlled drugs will be handed to the police for destruction and a receipt must be given to the patient. However, do not report small amounts of illegal substances to the police as, on balance, the duty of confidentiality outweighs the misdemeanour of possession.

## 2.0 The Procedure

### 2.1 Admission

- a) Items handed in to the hospital staff for safe custody should be entered on the Service user Property Sheet by a member of the unit staff, in the presence of a second member of staff and in the presence of the service user, where practicable. The sheet should then be signed by both members of staff and by the service user, except where the latter is restricted by mental incapacity. If the service user is unable to sign, the senior nurse in charge may sign on his behalf, with a short explanation of the circumstances. This signature must be witnessed by another member of the nursing staff.
- b) The Property Sheet should be the only official record for this purpose and must always be kept in safe custody and be immediately available for inspection by staff and service user.
- c) The term “gold”, “silver”, “diamond”, etc., should not be used and the description “yellow metal”, “white metal”, or “white stone”, etc., should be used.
- d) £50.00 per service user may be kept in the Ward safe, but cash in excess of this amount should be handed to the General Office as soon as possible. Out of office hours, property should be placed into the care of the most senior member of the nursing staff on duty.
- e) Valuables should be placed in a sealed envelope, bearing the service user’s name and hospital number, and where possible, signed by nurse in charge of the ward plus one other nurse and kept in the safe.
- f) On no account must property be returned to a service user’s relative by Ward staff after the property has been accepted for safe keeping, without permission from the service user, who must first sign the to say that they have taken the property in the presence of a member of the nursing staff.
- g) The Service user Affairs Officer must maintain a personal account for each service user. The account should record receipt of payments and balances held.
- h) All property on admission must be checked for items listed on the contraband list. Any items owned by the service user which are on this list must be removed for safe keeping. An explanation must be given to the service user as to why these items have been removed from their possession.

### 2.2 Following Admission

- a) Any property given to or purchased by the service user with the exception of toiletries, food, tobacco and other disposable items must be recorded on the service user’s property sheet. Any receipts for property are to be handed into the General Office for safe keeping.
- b) All monies received by the service user should be recorded in the service user monies book and accurate records maintained. Please see policy on service user money for further detail.

### 2.3 Disposal of Property

- a) Any property handed by the service user to relatives, or at the service user's request has been destroyed must be recorded on the Property Sheet.
- b) Service user's must not pass their property on to another service user unless there has been discussion with the named nurses of both service users involved and a contract has been signed by both the service users and the named nurses. The property listed on the service user who is giving the property, property sheet must be removed from that list and added to the new owner's list.

### 2.4 Deceased Service User's Property

- a) It is most important that the property of deceased service users held personally by the service user in the Ward at the time of death should be listed in the Property Sheet as soon as possible after death and the property sheet signed by two members of staff.
- b) The property for deceased service users should be kept safely until such time as it is collected by the Service user's relatives and a signature is received on the Service user Property Sheets.
- c) **PLEASE NOTE:** Under no circumstances should property or valuables be handed to relatives when a service user dies without appropriate signatures being obtained.

### 2.5 Unclaimed Property

- a) Property left in hospital by service users is usually of little value, unless it is deposited for safekeeping. If it is not claimed within two months after discharge, it may be assumed to have been abandoned and the hospital can dispose of it in an appropriate manner. Care should be taken to ascertain whether articles are of value and hasty action to dispose of an article because it is thought to be of no value is unwise. Expert advice should be sought if there is any doubt about value.
- b) If unclaimed articles are valuable, reasonable efforts should be made to trace the owner or the next of kin, but if this is not successful; the articles should be kept for a reasonable length of time before disposal. Under the Limitations Act 1949, a period of six years would normally be reasonable in the case of property deposited, although this period of recovery may be extended in the case of disability, acknowledgement, part payment and/or error.

**Appendix 1**

**Equality Impact Assessment for this policy**

<b>Protected Characteristic (domain)</b>	<b>Area of conflict</b>	<b>Resolution</b>
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.