



***Please Note: This policy is currently under review and is still fit for purpose.***

# Mobile Communications Policy

This procedural document supersedes: CORP/HSFS 16 v.4 – Mobile Communications Policy.



## Did you print this document yourself?

The Trust discourages the retention of hard copies of policies and can only guarantee that the policy on the Trust website is the most up-to-date version. **If, for exceptional reasons, you need to print a policy off, it is only valid for 24 hours.**

Author/reviewer: (this version)	Andrew Leverton Medical Technical Services Manager
Date written/revised:	September 2018
Approved by:	Trusts Health and Safety committee
Date of approval:	18 September 2018
Date issued:	30 August 2019
Next review date:	September 2021- <b>Extended to March 2023</b>
Target audience:	Trust wide

## Amendment Form

Please record brief details of the changes made alongside the next version number. If the procedural document has been reviewed **without change**, this information will still need to be recorded although the version number will remain the same.

Version	Date Issued	Brief Summary of Changes	Author
Version 5	30 August 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of associated policies</li> </ul>	A Leverton
Version 4	29 October 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• References updated</li> <li>• <b>APD</b> revised to the new format</li> <li>• Updated guidance on ward based use of mobile communications.</li> </ul>	A Leverton
Version 3	October 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy title change</li> <li>• Amendment form and contents sheet added</li> <li>• Items re-numbered throughout</li> <li>• 1 - updated references to 'Using Mobile Phones in NHS Hospitals'</li> <li>• 2 - section re-written to take account of above guidance</li> <li>• 14 - additional supporting information on Trust implications</li> <li>• Added new and removed outdated references</li> <li>• Additions and deletions to the list of restricted areas.</li> <li>• Updated list of permitted areas</li> </ul>	A Leverton
Version 2	January 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Item 1 - Reference made to the Department of Health's recommendations in "Use of mobile phones in Hospitals and other NHS premises".</li> <li>• Item 18 - clearer guidance relating to the impact of using Cellular telephones based on the above recommendations.</li> <li>• Items 19 &amp; 20 - separated and numbered paragraphs</li> <li>• Added references</li> <li>• Additions to the list of restricted areas.</li> <li>• Added list of permitted areas</li> <li>• Added appendix showing permitted use sign</li> </ul>	A Leverton

## Contents

	Page No.
1. INTRODUCTION .....	4
2. PURPOSE.....	4
3. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	4
4. PROCEDURE .....	5
4.1 Types of Device.....	5
4.1.1 Cellular (Mobile) Phones (Analogue and Digital) .....	5
4.1.2 Wide Area Emergency Services Radios (Ambulance, Fire, Police).....	5
4.1.3 TETRA (Terrestrial Trunked Radio System) .....	6
4.1.4 Hospital Radios for Security, Car Park and Community Personnel.....	6
4.1.5 Hospital Bleep System (Two-Way Pagers) .....	7
4.1.6 Computer Radio – Local Area Networks (RLAN) .....	7
4.1.7 Portable Multifunctional Communication Devices e.g. Blackberry/smart phones .....	7
4.1.8 Cordless Telephones .....	7
4.2 Loan Equipment .....	7
4.3 Patients and Visitors.....	7
4.4 Contractors.....	8
4.5 Outside Media Broadcasts .....	8
4.6 Implications arising from the use of Mobile Phones on Trust premises.....	8
4.7 Camera Facility .....	9
4.8 Trust owned Equipment.....	9
5. TRAINING/SUPPORT .....	9
6. MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROCEDURAL DOCUMENT .....	9
7. DEFINITIONS .....	10
8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT .....	10
9. ASSOCIATED TRUST PROCEDURAL DOCUMENTS .....	10
10. REFERENCES.....	11
APPENDIX 1 - RESTRICTED AREAS AND PERMITTED AREAS .....	12
APPENDIX 2 - SIGN – SWITCH OFF ALL MOBILE TELEPHONES .....	13
APPENDIX 3 - USE OF MOBILE PHONES WHILST DRIVING .....	14
APPENDIX 4 - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT PART 1 INITIAL SCREENING .....	15

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Information received from the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA) as a result of an in-depth study of the problem, has indicated that a wide range of mobile communication equipment have the potential to cause interference with sensitive Electro Medical Equipment and could therefore have a serious impact on patient care. This should be balanced with 'Using Mobile phones in NHS Hospitals January 2009', published by the Department of Health, which recommends that trusts should recognise that:

*'The working presumption should be that patients will be allowed the widest possible use of mobile phones in hospitals, including on the wards, where the local risk assessment indicates that such use would not represent a threat to patients' own safety or that of others, the operation of electrically sensitive medical devices in critical care situations and the levels of privacy and dignity that must be the hallmark of all NHS care.'*

## 2. PURPOSE

While the focus is on the usage of mobile phones, other types of communication and recording equipment that have a capability to produce Electro-Magnetic Interference (EMI) are widely available and could potentially be used in the hospital environment. Therefore this policy seeks to give advice and direction on how to manage these various technologies while ensuring maximum benefit and minimum risk.

## 3. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section includes an overview of individual roles, departmental and committee duties including levels of responsibility.

### **Ward/Departmental Managers**

Ensure that appropriate signage is obtained and displayed in all ward areas to inform staff, patients and visitors about the restrictions of use of mobile phone use in their areas.

Ensure that clear information on mobile phone prohibition and restriction is included in local induction.

Monitor adherence to the policy by staff, contractors and visitors by review of incident data.

### **All Staff**

Comply with this policy

Act at all times to ensure that photographs are not taken with mobile phones.

Ask any person or persons failing to comply with this policy to switch off their mobile phone. Persons refusing to comply with such a reasonable request should be asked to leave the area.

Report breaches or potential breaches of the policy, or incidents related to mobile phones, via the incident reporting mechanisms.

## 4. PROCEDURE

### 4.1 Types of Device

#### 4.1.1 Cellular (Mobile) Phones (Analogue and Digital)

Mobile phones are now very popular and are commonly used by visitors, sales representatives and contractors as well as staff, and patients. Whenever anyone is in hospital, or receiving social or health care, communication with family and friends becomes an essential element of support and comfort. Communication is much easier today with the widespread use of mobile phones and their integrated functionality such as text messaging and e-mailing.

It is acknowledged these have some potential to interfere with medical equipment at very short range. Their use should therefore be restricted in areas where high-risk equipment is routinely used. These areas are listed in Appendix 1.

Appropriate signs are displayed in all such areas as per Appendix 2.

Medical and Nursing staff should be aware of the potential interference of mobile phones when transporting critical patients between restricted areas, and ensure that any medical equipment in use is monitored more closely during the transfer.

Ward managers and staff should encourage the use of day rooms for patients and relatives using mobile phones to reduce the noise pollution in the bedded areas. If necessary, phones should be requested to be set to silent to avoid offensive or disruptive ring tones.

**Modern mobile phones are now available with apps installed that can assist in clinical environments. Use of this technology in restricted areas by professional medical and nursing staff should therefore not be discouraged. However, all efforts to minimise the risk of interference should be taken. This will include, switching the phone to 'airplane mode', keeping as much distance as possible from patient connected medical devices and monitoring devices more closely while apps are in use. A list of the restricted areas can be found in Appendix 1.**

All mobile phones will require periodic charging using a mains powered charger. Mains chargers are classed as portable appliances and must not be used within the Trust. Patients, visitors and staff are requested to have their mobile phones charged at home and brought back in if required. Trust owned devices should have their chargers checked for electrical safety annually.

#### 4.1.2 Wide Area Emergency Services Radios (Ambulance, Fire, Police)

These are the most likely to cause problems because of their higher power transmitters and lower operating frequencies. **They will only be used in an emergency and never within designated restricted areas.** The emergency services have been informed of these restrictions.

### 4.1.3 TETRA (Terrestrial Trunked Radio System)

The police have changed their communications equipment from the high power two-way radios that were in use, to a terrestrial trunked radio system. This system operates in a similar way to mobile phones, and as such they have the potential to interfere with sensitive apparatus such as medical equipment. The MHRA have conducted studies and conclude that TETRA handsets pose a similar level of risk to mobile phones.

Therefore the use of TETRA handsets is permissible on the Trust's premises subject to the conditions imposed for the use of mobile phones.

Where an urgent call is placed for officers to attend an incident in an area subject to the restrictions, these officers must consult with Medical /Nursing staff on entering the area, whose responsibility it will be to ensure that any relevant medical equipment in operation is effectively monitored while the officer is in the vicinity.

#### Transmit inhibit

Modern TETRA handsets have a transmit inhibit mode that allows the handsets to receive calls but prevents the automatic periodic transmission of the handset to the base station. To minimise the risk of interference with medical equipment the transmit inhibit function must be activated when entering Trusts premises.

**In the case of emergency services dealing with an on site incident, the risk of interference should be treated as secondary to the risks associated with managing the incident.**

### 4.1.4 Hospital Radios for Security, Car Park and Community Personnel

- Security and Car Park Personnel

Some short-range radio transmitters are now available without the need for licences and depending on the power output and operating frequency these may be classified as cellular telephones for the purposes of this policy.

These devices may be used subject to the conditions outlined for mobile phone use above. Operating Procedures must be written and adopted by the users of these devices to ensure compliance to the policy.

**The Telecommunications Systems Manager and the Medical Technical Services Manager must approve the introduction of such equipment.**

- Community Personnel

Community personnel may use either handheld radios or mobile phones, consideration should be taken when entering any patient's home where sensitive electronic medical equipment is known to exist and may be in use. Use in close proximity to medical devices may cause interference issues.

#### 4.1.5 Hospital Bleep System (Two-Way Pagers)

Due to their low transmitting power, these are deemed to be safe to use in all areas.

#### 4.1.6 Computer Radio – Local Area Networks (RLAN)

These are low powered transmitters used to link personal computers. There is no evidence to suggest that they cause interference with medical equipment and therefore there is no restriction on their use.

#### 4.1.7 Portable Multifunctional Communication Devices e.g. Blackberry/smart phones

These are devices that connect to the cellular telephone network and provide telephone, email and data management services via a small Personal Digital Assistant (PDA). As they communicate via the cellular telephone network their use should be subject to the policy covering mobile phones.

Some of these devices automatically switch connection between the hospitals Radio LAN and the cellular network; they must be treated as mobile phones.

#### 4.1.8 Cordless Telephones

These are low powered devices connected to the internal telephone network. As their power output is low the risk of interference is reduced. The use of such equipment must be dependent on an appropriate risk assessment. **The Telecommunications Systems Manager must approve the introduction of such equipment.**

### 4.2 Loan Equipment

Patients who are given electronic medical equipment for use outside the Trust's premises should be advised of the hazards of using transmitting equipment ie mobile phones, two-way radios, radio controlled toys and models and amateur radio etc in close proximity to the equipment. This advice should be recorded as part of the equipment training and care package and a local risk assessment carried out.

### 4.3 Patients and Visitors

Patients and visitors should be made aware of restrictions by such means as patient information leaflets etc. Suggested wording:

**Use of Mobile Phones on Trust premises**

*In line with current with Department of Health guidelines the Trust has identified restricted areas where mobile phones should be switched off to avoid potential*

*interference with medical equipment. Patients and visitors are therefore asked to switch off their mobile phones before entering areas that are identified by signs.*

*If operating mobile phones in other areas, please use sensitively and with consideration to other patients and visitors. Wherever possible please switch phones to silent mode to restrict noise levels.*

*Please do **NOT** take any photographs using the camera facility as this may inadvertently breach patient confidentiality.*

*Each ward area will have a notice indicating when mobile phones may be used, please abide by these times as they are there to provide privacy, dignity and a peaceful environment for all patients. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.*

#### **4.4 Contractors**

Contractors working on the Trust's sites must also be made aware of the restrictions in the use of mobile phones in certain areas. This requirement must be referenced in any contract detail, specification or order raised for work.

#### **4.5 Outside Media Broadcasts**

In the event of outside media broadcast requests, the main concern centres on the portable two way radios used for communication between broadcast staff. Such equipment must be assessed in line with this policy before the equipment is allowed to be used on Trust premises.

Parking of broadcast vehicles that may be equipped with transmitters, must be such that they do not present a risk of interference to medical equipment that may be in use in adjacent clinical areas.

#### **4.6 Implications arising from the use of Mobile Phones on Trust premises**

**This policy does not confer the right for staff to use mobile phones in approved areas, staff should be reminded by means of team meetings and local management procedures that the use of personal cellular telephones should be kept to a minimum (preferably emergency only) and be made with due consideration to other staff, patients and visitors.**

**Patients and visitors should be reminded in local leaflets and notices to use their mobile phones with due consideration to others. All patients have a right to and a need for, a peaceful environment, both day and night, uninterrupted by a number of ring tones whose noise is disrespectful of their privacy and dignity. In addition some ring tones may be confused with Medical device alarms or be offensive. Therefore, mobile phones must be set to vibrate mode to restrict noise levels and calls should be made or taken outside patient areas.**

**Ward and department managers must assess the implications of this policy in their own area; carrying out a local risk assessment which will inform how best to manage this policy in their area. This assessment will include but not be limited to:**

**Patient Privacy and Dignity**  
**Patient Confidentiality**  
**Child protection**  
**Nuisance**  
**Potential for interference with Medical Devices**  
**All of the above have legal implications**

Further guidance is available from 'Using Mobile Phones in NHS Hospitals' - January 2009 published by the Department of Health.

#### 4.7 Camera Facility

The use of the camera facility available on most modern mobile phones is strictly forbidden on Trust premises, as this could inadvertently breach patient confidentiality. Please refer to PAT/PA 14 - Photography and Video Policy: to Govern Clinical and Non-clinical Recordings.

#### 4.8 Trust owned Equipment

Trust staff issued with mobile phones as part of their work, are reminded that it is against the law to use or operate these devices while driving, unless an approved 'hands free' kit has been installed. See Appendix 3.

### 5. TRAINING/SUPPORT

No formal training has been identified; however advice and support can be obtained from your line manager. For advice or guidance regarding specific applications or circumstances please contact the Medical Technical Services manager.

### 6. MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROCEDURAL DOCUMENT

What is being Monitored	Who will carry out the Monitoring	How often	How Reviewed/ Where Reported to
<b>Inappropriate use of mobile phones in ward areas</b>	All staff, reporting to Senior ward / department manager	This is an on-going requirement	Reported to senior ward/ department manager for addressing with the individual concerned. Adverse incident report if appropriate
<b>Inappropriate use of mobile phones in restricted areas</b>	All staff, reporting to Senior ward / department manager	This is an on-going requirement	Reported to senior ward/ department manager for addressing with the individual concerned. Adverse incident report if appropriate

## 7. DEFINITIONS

Mobile communication equipment can be grouped according to their potential to cause Electro Magnetic Interference (EM); the policy is related to the risk of interference of these different types of communication device:

<b>Risk of interference</b>	<b>Type of communication system</b>
<b>High</b>	Analogue emergency service radios Private business radios (PBRs) and PMR446, e.g. porters' and maintenance staff radios (two-way radios).
<b>Medium/Low</b>	Mobile phones TETRA (Terrestrial Trunked Radio System) Laptop computers, palmtops and gaming devices fitted with GPRS (General Packet Radio System) and/or 3G HIPERLAN (High Performance Radio Local Area Networks)
<b>Low</b>	Cordless telephones (including DECT, Digital European Cordless Technology), and computer radio network systems'. RLAN (Radio Local Area Networks) systems and Bluetooth®

## 8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted on this procedural document in line with the principles of the Equality Analysis Policy (CORP/EMP 27) and the Fair Treatment For All Policy (CORP/EMP 4).

The purpose of the EIA is to minimise and if possible remove any disproportionate impact on employees on the grounds of race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation or religious belief. No detriment was identified. (Appendix 4)

## 9. ASSOCIATED TRUST PROCEDURAL DOCUMENTS

**PAT/PA 14 - Photography and Video Policy: to Govern Clinical and Non-clinical Recordings**

**CORP/EMP 4 - Fair Treatment for All**

**PAT/PA 19 - Mental Capacity Act 2005**

**CORP/HSFS 1 - Health and Safety Policy**

## 10. REFERENCES

Device Bulletin DB 9702 - "Electromagnetic Compatibility of Medical Devices with Mobile Communications". Medical Devices Agency March 1997.

Information and Communications Technology Unit (ICTU) Guidance note HGN (p) 33 Issue 2 Radio Interference with Medical Devices.

Safety Notice SN 2001(06) – Update on electromagnetic compatibility of medical devices with mobile communications: TETRA (Terrestrial Trunked Radio System) and outside media broadcasts from hospital premises.

Safety Notice SN 9706 - "Mobile Communications: Interference with Medical Devices ". Medical Devices Agency April 1997.

The Stewart report- the Governments response to the report from the independent expert group on mobile phones.

Using Mobile phones in NHS Hospitals 2009 – Department of Health- (*This guidance replaces all previous Department of Health mobile phone usage guidance.*)

## APPENDIX 1 - RESTRICTED AREAS AND PERMITTED AREAS

### Restricted Areas

The following areas on all Trust owned sites have been designated as restricted areas and signs are in place to remind:

All Operating Theatres  
Day Surgery treatment areas  
Intensive Care Units/High Dependency Units  
Neonatal Units / Special Care Baby Units-  
treatment bays  
Coronary Care Units  
Maternity Units- delivery rooms  
Accident and Emergency Units/ Minor  
Injuries Units- Treatment rooms  
Endoscopy / Urology Units- Treatment  
rooms  
Outpatient Treatment Areas  
Rehabilitation Treatment areas  
Renal unit

Other areas may be added as appropriate as the Trust develops.

### Permitted Areas

These are areas where mobile phones maybe used with care and consideration to other hospital staff patients and visitors.

Coffee lounges and restaurants  
Stair wells and main corridors  
Foyers  
Main waiting areas  
Ward waiting areas and day rooms.

APPENDIX 2 - SIGN – SWITCH OFF ALL MOBILE TELEPHONES

Appendix A



**SWITCH OFF  
ALL MOBILE  
TELEPHONES**

## APPENDIX 3 - USE OF MOBILE PHONES WHILST DRIVING

### **Trust Policy - Use of Mobile Phones while Driving**

#### Government Legislation

Government legislation implemented on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2003 made it an offence to hold a mobile phone while driving - unless it can be operated without being held by hand.

The new law prohibits drivers from holding a mobile phone at any time even if they are using a Handsfree kit to talk and listen.

Drivers are still required to comply with existing legislation to "have proper control of the vehicle". Drivers can therefore be found guilty of careless or dangerous driving even if they are not holding the handset.

In order to be certain of not committing an offence, drivers should avoid holding or using a mobile device at anytime or for any purpose whatsoever whilst driving.

Anyone caught breaking the new legislation faces a fine and points on their licence. Causing death by careless driving carries a custodial sentence of up to 5 years.

#### **The Trusts policy is clear:**

- **Never use a handheld mobile phone when driving.**
- **Abide by the laws, including the Highway Code, governing the use of Mobile phones.**
- **It is the Drivers responsibility to drive safely.**




---

#### **Policy Acknowledgement**

#### **Trust Policy - Use of Mobile Phones while Driving**

I am aware of the Government Legislation effective from the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2003, and understand the Trust policy in relation to the use of mobile phones whilst driving.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: Switchboard Clerical Office, Doncaster Royal Infirmary

***Taken from MHRA website***

## APPENDIX 4 - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT PART 1 INITIAL SCREENING

Service/Function/Policy/ Project/Strategy	Division/Executive Directorate and Department	Assessor (s)	New or Existing Service or Policy?	Date of Assessment
Mobile communications	Facilities/Medical Technical Services	A. Leverton	Existing Policy	21/08/2019
1) Who is responsible for this policy? Name of Division/Directorate <b>Facilities</b>				
2) Describe the purpose of the service / function / policy / project/ strategy? All staff, awareness of issues surrounding Mobile communication use				
3) Are there any associated objectives? None identified				
4) What factors contribute or detract from achieving intended outcomes? – None identified				
5) Does the policy have an impact in terms of age, race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, maternity/pregnancy and religion/belief? Details: [see Equality Impact Assessment Guidance] – <b>No equality impact identified</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If yes, please describe current or planned activities to address the impact [e.g. Monitoring, consultation] –</li> </ul>				
6) Is there any scope for new measures which would promote equality? [any actions to be taken] <b>None noted</b>				
7) Are any of the following groups adversely affected by the policy?				
<b>Protected Characteristics</b>	<b>Affected?</b>	<b>Impact</b>		
a) Age	No			
b) Disability	No			
c) Gender	No			
d) Gender Reassignment	No			
e) Marriage/Civil Partnership	No			
f) Maternity/Pregnancy	No			
g) Race	No			
h) Religion/Belief	No			
i) Sexual Orientation	No			
8) Provide the Equality Rating of the service / function /policy / project / strategy – tick outcome box				
<b>Outcome 1</b> ✓	<b>Outcome 2</b>	<b>Outcome 3</b>	<b>Outcome 4</b>	
*If you have rated the policy as having an outcome of 2, 3 or 4, it is necessary to carry out a detailed assessment and complete a <b>Detailed Equality Analysis form in Appendix 4</b>				
Date for next review: <b>August 2021</b>				
Checked by: <b>A Leverton</b>		Date: <b>21/08/2019</b>		