

<b>POLICY TITLE:</b>	<b>Use of Mobile Phones/Smart Devices by Patients in Hospitals</b>
<b>Policy Number:</b>	H109
<b>Version Number:</b>	v05
<b>Date of Issue:</b>	08/09/2022
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<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Kris Irons, Specialist Director Paul Cowans, Specialist Director
<b>Ratified by:</b>	Colin Quick, Chief Quality Officer
<b>Responsible signatory:</b>	David Watts, Director of Risk Management
<b>Outcome:</b>	<p>This policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims to help colleagues understand the importance of ensuring that patients remain safe from harm and intrusion, that they are treated with dignity, and enjoy privacy and comfort during their stay in Priory by appropriate management of patients' mobile phones &amp; smart devices.</li> </ul>
<b>Cross Reference:</b>	<p>H35 <a href="#">Clinical Risk Assessment and Management</a>  IT06 <a href="#">Use of the Guest WI-FI Network</a>  OP08.6 <a href="#">Safeguarding Children and Adults</a>  OP08.3 <a href="#">Adult Support and Protection (Scotland)</a>  OP08.1 <a href="#">Responding to Suspected Radicalisation</a></p>

#### EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Priory Group is committed to the fair treatment of all in line with the Equality Act 2010. An equality impact assessment has been completed on this policy to ensure that it can be implemented consistently regardless of any protected characteristics and all will be treated with dignity and respect.

***Consideration must be given to the impact of Covid-19 on the requirements and actions outlined in this policy. Where necessary the policy must be considered in conjunction with prevailing guidance issued by regulators and public health bodies together with the relevant requirements outlined in Priory Group standard operating procedures.***

In order to ensure that this policy is relevant and up to date, comments and suggestions for additions or amendments are sought from users of this document. To contribute towards the process of review, email [LegalandComplianceHelpdesk@priorygroup.com](mailto:LegalandComplianceHelpdesk@priorygroup.com)

# USE OF MOBILE DEVICES/PHONES BY PATIENTS IN HOSPITALS

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## **1 SCOPE**

- 1.1 This policy applies to all Healthcare sites and services across England, Scotland and Wales. Where there are differences between nations, this will be clearly highlighted.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 Priory recognises that when a patient is in hospital, communication with family and friends is an essential element of support and comfort. Communication is made easier today with the widespread use of mobile phones, smart devices and their integrated functionality.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 All new policies relating to our patients take into account Deprivation of Liberty (DOL) and incorporate the principles of 'best interest' and 'least restrictive intervention' whenever possible as per the MHA Code of Practice (2015). However, incorporation of DOL guidance needs to be balanced against the potential risk of harm to vulnerable patients (and visitors) from the inappropriate use of mobile devices, e.g. access to detrimental material and/or taking unauthorised photographs or video recordings that could interfere with patient safety, dignity and privacy and compromise patient confidentiality.
- 2.4 In addition, the use of mobile phones/smart devices (any device that can connect to the internet) can be intrusive and impact adversely on the environment of others. Patients have a right to, and a need for, a peaceful environment, both day and night time, uninterrupted by a number of different ringtones. In addition, the mobile device/phone charging cables can pose a ligature risk.
- 2.5 Therefore it is important that we manage the use of mobile phones/smart devices and charging cables within our hospitals by taking the following factors into consideration:
- (a) Promoting positive contact with carers, friends and family.
  - (b) Providing a therapeutic environment.
  - (c) Promoting safety and recovery.
  - (d) Protecting confidentiality.
  - (e) Protecting people from abuse.
  - (f) Protecting the human rights of individuals (including DOL).

(g) Promoting socially acceptable standards of behaviour.

Information about use of mobile devices should be included in the ward welcome pack/patient information pack. Please also refer to Form H35 Welcome to Priory.

- 2.6 Throughout this policy, the term 'smart device' automatically includes mobile phones, camera phones, laptops, tablets, chargers, games consoles and any other device that connects to the internet or has capacity to record either sound or pictures.

### **3 AIM**

- 3.1 This Policy aims to help colleagues to understand the importance of ensuring that patients have the opportunity to make safe use of smart devices during their stay at Priory without causing difficulties for their peers, Priory colleagues and members of the public.

### **4 USE OF SMART DEVICES**

- 4.1 Patients will be permitted to keep smart devices and chargers subject to signing the smart device contract (H Form 135 for CAMHS patients and H Form 135A for Adults) and the satisfactory completion of an individual risk assessment by the multi-disciplinary team (MDT). Each request for a smart device will require a separate documented risk assessment by the MDT.

- 4.2 There must be a separate signed contract of use for each smart device.

- 4.3 All colleagues are subject to ongoing training on risk assessment processes and implementation of risk management plans in order to reduce the risk of harm to self and others. Controls may include the removal and / or supervision of all smart devices/chargers until any identified risks have reduced or are resolved.

- 4.4 Chargers may need to be removed on admission following individual risk assessment and stored by Nursing staff for safekeeping, due to the potential ligature risk of these items. Alternative charging arrangements should be considered by the unit, for those who have their charger removed.

- 4.5 Priory encourages all patients to leave their valuables at home. Priory will not be liable for loss/theft, except where the smart device is being stored by the unit in a locked safe place. In this case the property will be checked and details recorded by two members of staff using **H Form 53 Property List**.

- 4.6 All patients must agree to restrictions being placed on the use of their smart devices as follows:

- (a) No use of recording or photographing functionality while on hospital premises/grounds.
- (b) No 'ring tones' (phones set to silent/vibrate).
- (c) No lending of any smart device to other patients.
- (d) Appropriate use of social media, as breaches of confidentiality and accessing inappropriate / adult websites will cause offence and pose a risk to the patient and others.
- (e) Priory will accept no liability for damage or loss of mobile phones.

There may be site-specific exceptions to this and these will be outlined in the ward welcome pack/patient information pack.

- 4.7 Specific service lines, such as CAMHS or Forensic may have additional restrictions, which

need to be clearly stated in the ward welcome pack/information for patients and their visitors. These may include statements like 'phones should not be used during therapy/education time'. There may also be a statement about phones in relation to bed times, but hospitals must be careful about 'blanket' restrictions /restrictive practices, so there must always be a reasoned and clear rationale. To mitigate this, all patients should be offered the use of the ward phone if they want to phone home, their solicitor, advocate or external Social Worker. Please see **Appendix 1 & 2**

- 4.8 If a patient is observed using their smart device in breach of the contract of use, they will be asked to hand their smart device/mobile phone in to nursing staff for safekeeping. Clear explanations will be given as to why this policy is necessary within the ward environment.
- 4.9 If the patient 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 patients care plan and discussed with the patient and reviewed regularly. When patients are admitted, staff should assess the risk and appropriateness of patients having access to mobile phones and other electronic devices and any restrictions and the rationale should be detailed in the patient`s care plan, as recommended in the MHA Code of Practice (2015).
- 4.10 The patient`s use of their smart device/mobile phone may be closely monitored/supervised, if necessary. If however the patient is using their smart device/mobile phone for an illegal act or an act that is felt to be detrimental to their mental health it will be necessary for an MDT decision to be made as to whether to remove the smart device/mobile phone for an agreed period of time. Any such decisions must be clearly documented and communicated effectively to the patient and to colleagues.
- 4.11 Visitors are requested not to use mobile phones whilst in wards and asked to keep them on silent during the visit to avoid disturbing the peace and quiet of the ward environment.

## **5 CONTROL OF MOBILE PHONES/ SMART DEVICES**

- 5.1 Specific hospitals where stricter controls are necessary may choose to have an 'allowed' devices list for patients. Allowed devices would adhere to specific rules and reduce the chances of unauthorised internet access by Service Users.
- 5.2 Each ward must keep a log of all patient electronic devices using H form 135B Service User Asset Tracking Tool – Mobile Phones & SMART Devices. This would ensure that any device purchased or brought into the ward upon or during admission is identifiable to a patient.

## **6 ADDITIONAL POINTS**

- 6.1 (a) Where mobile phones cannot be used by patients, alternative arrangements (supervised or otherwise) are available through use of payphones or landline and technologies such as Zoom and Skype.
- (b) Mobile phone/smart device theft is commonplace in society. The Priory cannot take responsibility for loss or damage to privately owned equipment while on the premises except when the device has been submitted to staff for safekeeping.

## **7 REFERENCES**

- 7.1 Mental Capacity Act 2005  
DH (2015) Mental Health Act 1983: Code of Practice

**8 ASSOCIATED FORMS**

- 8.1 **H Form: 35** [Welcome to Priory](#)  
**H Form: 53** [Property List](#)  
**H Form: 135** [CAMHS Young People Agreement For Use Of Mobile Devices](#)  
**H Form: 135A** [Agreement For Use Of Mobile Devices in Adult Services](#)  
**H Form: 135B** [Service User Asset Tracking Tool – Mobile Phones & SMART Devices](#)

**9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

<b>How is the policy likely to affect the promotion of equality and the elimination of discrimination in each of the groups?</b>			
<b>Protected Characteristic</b> (Equality Act 20210)	<b>Impact</b> Positive/ Negative/ None	<b>Reason/ Evidence of Impact</b>	<b>Actions Taken</b> (if impact assessed as Negative)
Age	None		
Disability	None		
Gender re-assignment	None		
Marriage or civil partnership	None		
Pregnancy or maternity	None		
Race	None		
Religion or beliefs	None		
Sex	None		
Sexual orientation	None		
Other, please state:			
<b>EIA completed by:</b>			
<b>Name:</b>	Paul Cowans		
<b>Role/ Job Title:</b>	Specialist Director		
<b>Date completed:</b>	08/09/2022		

**10 APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1** – Guidance on the Use of Social Media, Mobile Phones / Internet Access in Priory CAMHS Services
- Appendix 2** – Guidance on the Use of Social Media, Mobile Phones / Internet Access in Priory Forensic Services

## Appendix 1

### **Guidance on the Use of Social Media, Mobile Phones / Internet Access in Priory CAMHS Services**

#### **AIM AND SCOPE:**

The aim of this guidance is to be as least restrictive as possible and to encourage and teach safe communication, internet and social media use to our young people.

#### **GENERAL GUIDELINES:**

- Parents / bill payer will be informed of the young person having access to their mobile devices on the unit. They should be informed that the unit is not responsible for costs incurred relating to data usage/purchases. This should also be stated in the young people's and parent / carer handbooks.
- All Young People will sign and be provided a copy of the Young Peoples Agreement for use of Mobile Devices (**H Form 135 CAMHS Young Peoples Agreement for Use of Mobile Devices**), to acknowledge that they understand the conditions and requirements of mobile device usage, whilst on a CAMHS inpatient ward
- Young People will have engaged in individualised discussion around the safe use of mobile devices in relation to social media (This is recorded on **H Form 135 CAMHS Young Peoples Agreement for Use of Mobile Devices**)
- Regular educational sessions on the safe use of social media, will be provided to young people
- Use of social media, mobile phones and tablets will be regularly discussed in community meetings and as part of mutual expectations.
- Using mobile devices for taking photographs / recording (visual or audio) is not permitted, for confidentiality and safeguarding reasons. Access to cameras may be disabled following individual risk assessment.
- Staff passcodes for disabling cameras on devices, will be changed on a regular basis (a minimum of weekly).

- Young people must agree to allowing staff to amend privacy and content restrictions. Any loss of data during this process, is not the responsibility of the Priory
- Young people are only permitted to have one mobile phone and one tablet device on the ward
- Mobile devices will only be charged in a staff area
- Young People must not be in possession of a charging cable at any time
- Mobile devices are only for use by the individual. They are not to be shared with other young people
- Contacting others on behalf of peers is not permitted
- Young people must not text/contact each other on the ward or when on home leave to prevent the risk of on ward cyber bullying
- Mobile devices are only available outside of the therapeutic day.
- Mobile phones should be put away during mealtimes and structured group activities.
- Where individual risk profiles make access to social media unsafe, or reduced or no access can be care planned, as part of the Keeping Safe Care Plan.
- During the weekend, access is allowed during the day
- In order to promote healthy sleep hygiene, phones must be handed in, in keeping with the unit's/young person's designated bed time.
- Young People are permitted to take their mobile phones on home leave, including the car journey following agreement by the MDT
- Unescorted Leave – a mobile phone, with the ward's contact details and available call time, must be taken on unescorted leave, due to our duty of care to provide the means to contact the unit. Where a young person does not have a mobile phone, one must be made available.
- Tablets may be used within the same time frame as mobile phones. The above restriction re cameras applies to tablets.
- Young people will be asked to sign an agreement re usage of mobile phones and tablets etc.
- If a young person takes photographs, recordings (audio or visual), or acts unsafely and/or does not comply with these guidelines, access to their electronic equipment may be further restricted. The management of this will be agreed by the MDT and recorded in the Keeping Connected Care Plan. However, if a young person is being coerced to break rules by another person they should feel able to tell staff and receive support, rather than being sanctioned.
- If the young people need to make, or receive a phone call, when they do not have access to their mobile phone, this can be facilitated with the ward based phone.
- Where Wi-Fi is available on the ward, details will be provided to service users.
- It is the role of the security nurse to collect and return the mobile phones to the charging station at the specified time.
- Spot checks of mobile phones and tablets, in the presence of the young person, may be undertaken. This is to ensure compliance and that inappropriate sites, apps or material e.g. Pro self-harm or Anorexia content is not being accessed.
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#### **DISABLING CAMERAS:**

##### **Disable iPhone and Ipad**

- Go to settings, general, restrictions. To turn restrictions on you have to enter a 4 digit code. If it is the first time you are doing this you can just enter a 4 digit code you would like then record this on Carenotes on core information for that patient.
- If you already have a code and want to change it, you will need to enter the original code, turn restrictions off then turn them back on and enter a new one. This will then be added to carenotes.

##### **Disable Samsung phone**

- For newer models you go to application manager, then to the application you want to disable and click on it, there should be a disable button. In older models this disable button is dimmed (so you can't click on it) and we can't disable the phone.

#### **Generic tablets**

- Go on to settings, apps, camera, disable. To enable it then you go on to disabled apps and press enable.

For all phones / tablets that we have not seen before, the local team will use the internet to search for the method to disable the camera. If the team cannot disable the camera the team will discuss with the young person and their parents/ carers about using the following app:

- AppLocker. Once downloaded you can set up both a code and a pattern (a line that connects 4 digits). Then enter into the app settings and enable permissions. At this point go back on the app and you can enable/disable whatever app is needed.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Guidance on the Use of Social Media, Mobile Phones / Internet Access in Priory Forensic Services**

#### **Aim and Scope:**

The aim of this guidance is to be as least restrictive as possible and to encourage and teach safe communication, internet and social media use to our patients.

#### **General Guidelines:**

- All patients will sign and be provided a copy of the Agreement for use of Smart Devices Contract (H Form 135A Agreement for Use of Smart Devices/Mobile Phones), to acknowledge that that they understand the conditions and requirements of smart device usage, whilst on an inpatient ward
- Patients will have engaged in individual discussion around the safe use of smart devices in relation to social media (This is recorded on H Form 135A Agreement for Use of Mobile Devices)
- Educational sessions on the safe use of social media, will be provided to patients as necessary.



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- Use of social media, mobile phones, and smart devices will be regularly discussed in community meetings and as part of mutual expectations.
- Using mobile phones/smart devices for taking photographs/recording (visual or audio) is not permitted, for confidentiality and safeguarding reasons. Access to cameras may be disabled following individual risk assessment.
- Staff passcodes for disabling cameras on devices, will be changed on a regular basis (a minimum of weekly).
- Patients must agree to allow staff to amend privacy and content restrictions. Any loss of data during this process, is not the responsibility of the Priory.
- Patients are only permitted to have one mobile phone, one tablet device and one other smart device in their possession.
- Mobile devices will only be charged in a staff area.
- Mobile devices are only for use by the individual. They are not to be shared with other patients.
- Contacting others on behalf of peers is not permitted.
- Patients must not text/contact each other on the ward or when on home leave to prevent the risk of on-ward cyber bullying.
- Mobile devices should only available outside of the therapeutic day or while on Section 17 Leave.
- Mobile phones should be put away during mealtimes and structured group activities.
- Where individual risk profiles make access to social media unsafe then reduced or no access arrangements can be care planned, as part of the Keeping Safe Care Plan.
- Unescorted Leave – a mobile phone, with the ward's contact details and available call time, must be taken on unescorted leave, due to our duty of care to provide the means to contact the unit. Where a patient does not have a mobile phone, one must be made available.
- Tablets may be used within the same time frame as mobile phones. The above restriction re cameras applies to tablets.
- Patients will be asked to sign an agreement re usage of mobile phones, tablets etc.
- If a patient takes photographs, recordings (audio or visual), or acts unsafely and/or does not comply with these guidelines, access to their smart devices may be further restricted. The management of this will be agreed by the MDT and recorded in the Keeping Connected Care Plan. However, if a patient is being coerced to break rules by another person they should feel able to tell staff and receive support, rather than being sanctioned.
- Where Wi-Fi is available on the ward, details will be provided to service users.
- It is the role of the security nurse to collect and return the mobile phones to the charging station at the specified time.
- Colleagues must be alert to the risk of patients grooming or being groomed on-line and take this risk into account as part of the clinical risk assessment and clinical risk management process.
- Consideration must be given as part of the clinical risk assessment and clinical risk management process to required arrangements arising from probation restrictions and the Prevent duty etc. as to whether patients are restricted / prevented from having access to particular websites and / or contact with individuals.
- Spot checks of mobile phones and tablets, in the presence of the patient, may be undertaken. This is to ensure compliance and check whether inappropriate sites, apps or material e.g. child pornography or illegal internet content have been accessed.

### Disabling Cameras

#### Disable iPhone and Ipad

- Go to settings, general, restrictions. To turn restrictions on you have to enter a 4-digit code. If it is the first time, you are doing this you can just enter a 4-digit code you would like then record this on Carenotes on core information for that patient.

- If you already have a code and want to change it, you will need to enter the original code, turn restrictions off then turn them back on and enter a new one. This will then be added to carenotes.

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