

Mobile Telephones, Two-Way Radios, Wireless Routers and Wireless Computers within Healthcare Premises Guidance

Electromagnetic Interference

There may be a risk of electromagnetic interference to medical equipment when using certain types of electronic communication devices such as mobile telephones, radios and wireless computers etc. within sensitive areas found within our healthcare premises. The risk of interference is present when such devices are switched on and not just when they are being used. It is important to ensure that the risks from electronic interference to the safe working practices of our staff and specialist services are fully assessed and controls put in place.

Risk assessments for electromagnetic interference will be carried out by The Medical Equipment and Management Service of the Department of Clinical Physics and Bio-Engineering (DCPB). Service Directors/Managers must ensure the DCPB are consulted where there is doubt or uncertainty regarding interference that could have an affect on the continued safe use of equipment within clinics, wards or departments.

Camera phones

Most modern electronic communication devices have the capacity to take photographs and live recordings of digital sound and film. As such there is the potential for these devices to be used, either deliberately or unintentionally, to record images and sounds of vulnerable patients and others who use our services. To ensure the protection of privacy and confidentiality for staff, patients and others using our services restrictions will be placed on where such devices can be used. Service Directors/Managers must ensure that NHSGGC's policy on the use of cameras etc. is adhered to and that risk assessments have been carried out to determine where restrictions apply. If a request is made to use such a device then both the permission of the patient and Head of Service must be sought. Within the Women and Children's Directorate and Specialist Children's Services (including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) additional risk assessment responsibilities will be required to identify further controls required to safeguard the welfare of children using those services.

Mobile Communication/Camera Devices

Within NHSGGC's premises risk assessments have been carried out to determine whether mobile telephones, radios or wireless computers etc. can be used safely or not. When you see the following signs this will indicate whether their use is [permitted](#) or [not](#):



Restricted Areas

Will include, Intensive Care Units ~ Coronary Care Units ~ Renal Dialysis Units ~ Theatres ~ Recovery Areas ~ Ward Areas (including maternity and children's) ~ Out-patient Areas. This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other areas that use sensitive electro-medical equipment or where safety or patient and child privacy must be preserved (e.g. Mental Health/Forensic Directorates or Women's and Children's Directorate). Directors/Managers are responsible for ensuring that all restricted areas have been identified, appropriate signage is in place and that the prohibition of the use of any mobile communication device is strictly adhered to throughout all areas under their control.

Where medical staff or other identified staff groups require using mobile telephones for emergency communication purposes within clinical areas this should only be done on a risk basis and never within two meters of sensitive electro-medical equipment and agreed procedures for doing so must be complied with at all times. The Emergency Services when on NHSGGC's premises on routine business should be reminded to set their equipment to inhibit transmissions. During emergency situations the risk of interference will be considered a secondary concern to that of saving lives.

Non-restricted Areas

In general these will include, main entrances and reception areas ~ non-clinical communal areas ~ corridors and offices external to ward areas ~ catering and dining room areas ~ administration areas ~ support service areas such as Estates, Facilities, Finance and Records areas ~ staff changing areas ~ specially designated rooms/areas within hospital wards and clinics. Where the provision of a designated area within a ward cannot be accommodated staff will need to consider the provision of landline or cordless telephone access for certain groups (i.e. mobility restricted patients or those in isolation).

Health & Safety Management Manual

Implementation

All staff have a role to play in the implementation of this policy. Where they see the use of a mobile telephone or other electronic communication or gaming device in a restricted area - they should take polite but firm action in requesting that the device is switched off. Where such requests are ignored, the staff member should inform their line manager. The reporting of such incidents should follow NHSGGC's incident reporting procedures.

Further information can be found within - [The Safe Use of Mobile Telephones, Two-Way Radios, Wireless Routers and Wireless Computers within Healthcare Premises Policy](#). This policy and other similar policies are available on the [Health and Safety pages of HR Connect](#). All staff are required to make themselves aware of the policy and its contents.

Further help and advice is available from the Department of Clinical Physics and Bioengineering, Health and Safety Service, Health Physics Service and Telecoms Service.