

Mobile Phone & Portable Electronic Devices Policy

1. The Hamlet Charter

The Hamlet is aware that use of mobile phones /other portable and wearable technology are part of everyday life and tools for communication, learning and supporting health and fitness. At the same time we have to ensure that the safety of service users is paramount. This policy is in place to reduce the risk of mobile technology being used in a way that compromises the right of everyone at The Hamlet to be happy and safe. All references to "mobile phones" in this policy include any personal mobile phone or electronic device capable of remote communication, such as a smart phone.

2. Purpose of this policy and why we have it

There is the possibility that staff engaging in phone calls, texting, web surfing, accessing social media or taking photos whilst at work could compromise the health and safety of the vulnerable children and adults with whom we work.

The Hamlet acknowledges that there are benefits of wearable technology to support health and fitness and use of watch / stop watch facility.

The Hamlet will use this policy to:

- ensure the safety of everyone at The Hamlet through the promotion of safe and appropriate practice by establishing clear and robust guidelines for staff;
- ensure that service users are safe from being recorded without having given consent;
- define acceptable use of mobile devices that is understood and adhered to without exception;
- promote safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust guidelines;
- balance potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones and other electronic recording devices are effective communication tools.

3. Scope of this policy

This policy applies to:

- Staff at The Hamlet
- Volunteers at The Hamlet
- The parents/carers and extended families of service users whilst attending The Hamlet's premises

- Visiting professionals
- Students on work placements.

4. Policy

Our policy is to prohibit the use of their own personal mobile devices for all staff, volunteers, parents / carers, and visiting professionals while at The Hamlet, for service users' protection. This includes taking photographs or videos.

5. Implementation and monitoring

Unacceptable use of devices by anyone should be reported to the manager in charge at the earliest opportunity.

Staff / Volunteers

- Mobile devices belonging to staff / volunteers working in or visiting a service centre should be placed in a secure place (away from the children / adults in secure lockers) before the start of each shift. Messages or missed calls can then be retrieved during breaks. This will be communicated at reception / on induction.
- Mobile devices when working Out of Hours can be carried on the person, but must be turned off and stored in a secure place eg a bag.
- Staff / volunteers are permitted to use their mobile devices during breaks/periods when they are in a separate place to children or adult service users.
- Staff / volunteers are permitted to give out The Hamlet's main telephone line or City Breaks / OOH main mobile number as an emergency contact number should they need to.
- Where an employee is provided with a Hamlet mobile telephone for work purposes, the use of such a telephone, for business purposes only, is permitted. These mobile phones will not have a camera facility. Personal calls are not permitted on these telephones except for City Breaks / OOH mobile phone in an emergency.
- This policy is explained to staff and volunteers at induction and is included in the Handbook.

Service users, parents/carers, visiting professionals, other visitors

- Child and adult service users should only use their mobile devices for personal use and with guidance from staff.
- All visitors to The Hamlet will be asked to only use their mobile device in case of emergency and away from service users. A notice is in the reception at all sites alerting people to this effect.
- Professionals visiting The Hamlet for work purposes may use their device in relation to this work but only after consultation with the manager in charge at the time of the visit.
- Guest wi-fi must be used for this purpose

Holidays

- Staff will accompany students / members on holidays which involves being with students / members 24 hours a day.
- It will be accepted practice for staff to have their own devices with them, but these should be turned off.
- Staff are permitted to give out The Hamlet's main telephone line or City Breaks / OOH main mobile number as an emergency contact number should they need to.
- Usage should be limited to break times and times away from the students / members.
- In the event of a member of staff having to share accommodation with a student / member, it is accepted that there may be times when personal use of the phone is allowed. This does not extend to the taking of images / videos.

The use and effectiveness of the policy will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis and may be subject to change.

6. Link to any accompanying procedure(s)

None.

7. Legal references

Data Protection Act 2018

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant Hamlet policies and accompanying procedures.

Date approved by the Board: May 2020

Date of next review: May 2021

Post holder(s) responsible for this policy: Senior Management Children's and Adult's Service

Signed by Chair of the Board of Trustees: