

**Standard Operating Procedure:**

**The use of iPads on inpatient wards to facilitate patient contact with family, friends and carers**

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| **See also:**  | **Located in the following policy folder on the Trust Intranet** |
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| **Service area** | **Issue date** | **Issue no.** | **Review date** | REGARDS Stamp v2 |
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| **Ratified by** | **Ratification date** | **Committee/Group responsible for review:** |
| Incident Management Group | April 2020 | Data Security and Protection Committee |

![MCj04326610000[1]]() **Did you print this document?**

Document published on the Trust Intranet under: Data Security and Protection Policies and Procedures

Please be advised that the Trust discourages retention of hard copies of policies and can only guarantee that the Policy on the Trust Intranet site is the most up-to date version

**ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION STANDARD**

The Accessible Information Standard directs and defines a specific, consistent approach to identifying, recording, flagging, sharing and meeting the information and communication support needs of service users.

Ensure you have considered an agreed process for: sending out correspondence in alternative formats and appointments for patients / service users with communication needs, where this is applicable.

**Standard Operating Procedure: The use of IPad on inpatient wards to facilitate patient contact with family, friends and carers**

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| **Summary (Plain English)** Summarise the main points of the policy below in a style that is clear and easy to understand. Ensure the whole policy is written in plain English, using simple language where possible and avoiding convoluted sentences and obscure words. The resulting policy should be easy to read, understand and use, |
| This policy sets out the governance and infection control principles in allowing patients to maintain contact with family members and carers via the wards IPad. IPads need to be securely stored along with other electronic equipment such as laptops and hand held devices. They are to be used solely for the purpose of enabling visual contact between patients and their family and carers. No recording is permitted on these devices.  |

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| **Name / Title of policy/procedure** | Standard Operating Procedure: The use of IPads on inpatient wards to facilitate patient contact with family, friends and carers |
| **Aim of Policy** | To enable patients to maintain contact with family and carers through the use of electronic devices, whilst adhering to GDPR and infection control principles.  |
| **Sponsor (Director lead)** | Chief Operating Officer  |
| **Author(s)** | Head of Nursing  |
| **Name of policy being replaced** | Not applicable  | **Version No of previous policy: 01** |

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| **Reason for document production:** | No existing guidance regarding the safe and appropriate use of iPads for patient and family contact.  |
| **Commissioning individual or group:** | Interim Assistant Director of Clinical and Professional Practice |

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| **Individuals or groups who have been consulted:** | **Date:** | **Response** |
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**Version control (for minor amendments)**

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| **Date**  | **Author** | **Comment** |
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**Standard Operating Procedure for the use of IPads on inpatient wards to facilitate patient contact with family, friends and carers**

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# 1. Purpose of Guideline

This guidance is to support staff working within Derbyshire Healthcare Foundation Trust in facilitating contact between patients and their family, friends and carers when they are unable to visit in person in line with the recent visiting restrictions linked to COVID-19. This guideline will set out the process in order to ensure that contact is maintained as much as possible, whilst ensuring that GDPR and infection control principles are adhered to.

# 2. Scope of the guidelines

This guideline applies to all inpatient services within Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

# 3. Background

The Coronavirus is a respiratory virus which spreads through droplets generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It can also be transmitted through saliva or discharge from the nose. It is highly contagious and as a new virus humans have no natural immunity. There is not yet a vaccine against Covid-19.

Due to the current Coronavirus pandemic the United Kingdom is currently experiencing a nationally imposed lockdown, restricting people’s movements and social interactions. Social distancing measures are also currently in place and are anticipated to remain for longer than the current lockdown measures.

This means that patients on any inpatient ward/unit within Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust can no longer receive non-essential visits, which includes those from family members and carers. However, it is recognised that social contact is important in promoting mental health recovery

# 4. Using iPads

The iPads are being provided in order to facilitate communication between patients and their family, friends and carers whilst visiting cannot be facilitated. It is important that access to the iPads is distributed fairly across all patients on the ward. Individual wards can determine what is the most appropriate means of doing this within their own area, a signing in and out sheet is suggested as this would also provide assurance as to the whereabouts of the iPad at all times.

The iPad is to be used to facilitate video calls/face time between patients and their family, friends or carers. Ward staff will need to individually assess the most appropriate way for a person to utilise the iPad, giving consideration to their mental state, safeguarding and privacy and dignity for example.

Consideration should be given as to where the iPad can be used, for example in a quiet room or the dining room, where visits would usually take place. It may be appropriate for the iPad to be used in a single bedroom; however, it would usually not be appropriate for a video call to take place within a shared bedroom (dormitory).

Where patients would struggle to use the iPad independently, staff will need to schedule time into ward routine to enable video calls to take place with their help.

# 5. Storage and charging

The iPad must be stored securely within a staff only area. The suggested location would be with other electronic devices such as laptops and handheld devices.

The iPad must be kept charged so that it is available for patient use at all times. It would be advisable that it is also routinely charged overnight when it would be unlikely to be used. Ward staff should monitor the battery life after each use and charge as required during the day.

The iPad must not be left unattended in communal areas at any time and should be returned to the storage area after each use.

#  6. Infection control

The iPad must be cleaned BEFORE and AFTER each use with a clinell wipe. It is the responsibility of the staff member who hands the iPad out and receives it back to ensure that it has been cleaned. It would be advisable to clean the iPad in front of the patient to provide them with reassurance that the iPad has been cleaned.

Patients should be advised to wash their hands BEFORE and AFTER using the iPad. Patients should also be reminded not to bring the iPad unnecessarily close to their faces, for example kissing the screen, etc.

Where a patient is unable to wash their hands themselves then the staff member should support them to do this prior to using the iPad.

#  7. Documentation and GDPR

It should be documented within each patient’s care plan how they can access the iPad for maintaining contact with family, friends and carers. For example, the care plan should contain the following:

* That they have been made aware of the availability of the iPad and its intended use
* Any local requirements or restrictions on its use
* Where and when the iPad can be used
* If access needs to be supervised, that this has been risk assessed and is the least restrictive option
* That family, friends and carers are also aware of the iPad and how they can access this.
* The care plans evaluation should document when the iPad has been offered/requested and whether this was facilitated.

In addition:-

* Calls to the iPad will need a degree of scheduling so that people do not call at the same time. Wards will need to discuss the best way of doing this with their patients where possible.
* The email address and/or phone number used to access the call should be confirmed prior to first use
* Where a patient does not wish to have contact with their relative this should be respected.  Alerts regarding family members and safeguarding concerns should be acknowledged and managed appropriately

(This list is not exhaustive)

It is essential that privacy and confidentiality is maintained at all times. A patient’s ability to use the iPad appropriately must be assessed and mitigations put in place so that those who may not be able to adhere to these guidelines are supported to still be able to access the iPad.

The iPad must not be used in areas that compromise other patient’s privacy, such as shared bedrooms (dormitory’s). If the iPad is being used in communal areas staff must be aware of where it is being used, in case the ward environment was to change and compromise patient’s privacy.

There is to be no recording or storing of any data on the iPad. Night staff should review this prior to charging the iPad and this should be reviewed prior to the iPad being given to one patient from the other.

The iPad is not to be used to access social media sites such as Facebook.

Patients who use the iPad independently must be made aware that the camera cannot be used to provide shots of other patients or the wider ward environment where other patients might be visible.

# REGARDS EIRA: Assessing Equality Relevance (Stage 1)

1. Name of the service / policy / project or proposal (give a brief description):

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| Standard Operating Procedure: The use of iPads for  |

2. Answer the questions in the table below to determine equality relevance:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes | No | Insufficient data / info to determine |
| Does the project / proposal affect service users, employees or the wider community, and potentially have a significant effect in terms of equality? | X |  |  |
| Is it a major project / proposal, significantly affecting how functions are delivered in terms of equality? |  | X |  |
| Will the project / proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?  |  | X |  |
| Does the decision/ proposal relate to functions that previous engagement has identified as being important to particular protected groups? |  | X |  |
| Does or could the decision / proposal affect different protected groups differently? |  | X |  |
| Does it relate to an area with known inequalities? |  | X |  |
| Does it relate to an area where equality objectives have been set by our organisation? |  | X |  |

1. On a scale of high, medium or low assess the policy in terms of equality relevance.

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|  | Tick below: | Notes: |
| High |  | If ticked all ‘Yes’ or ‘Insufficient data’ |
| Medium |  | If ticked some ‘Yes’ and / or ‘Insufficient data’ and some ‘No’ |
| Low | x | If ticked all ‘No’ |

**EIRA completed by: Head of Nursing**

**Date: 02/04/20**