# MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE BUSINESS RULE – SESLHDBR/027

**Name**
Consumer Personal Communication, Recording and Photographic Devices for NON-ACUTE Inpatient Mental Health Services

**What it is**
It is a guide to ensure the appropriate management of consumers’ personal electronic equipment while they are accommodated within non-acute inpatient mental health units, including rehabilitation units.

**Risk Rating**
Medium

**Review Date**
December 2017

**What it is not**
It is not a guide to clinical care for consumers accommodated within non-acute inpatient units.

**Who it applies to**
This business rule applies to all SESLHD Mental Health Service (MHS) staff including Registered Nurses, Clinical Nurse Consultants, Nurse Practitioners, Psychiatric Registrars and Consultant Psychiatrists, as well as other mental health clinicians involved in non-acute inpatient care.

**What to do**
- Should a consumer come to a non-acute inpatient unit with a mobile phone, personal computer, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) or other internet or camera device, staff should follow local protocols in documenting this in the consumer’s medical record and the facility register of valuables.
- The appropriateness of use of personal electronic equipment on the non-acute inpatient unit should be assessed by the treating team in collaboration with each consumer and reviewed at each formal review or as otherwise necessary.
- The use of such equipment may be indicated as part of the therapeutic rehabilitation plan to enable communication and social connections with family and friends, continuation with ongoing education, job seeking and other such activities. Should the treating team identify any significant risk to the consumer or others (including inpatients) in the unit because the consumer is keeping such equipment, permission for use is to be denied.
- As part of the admission procedure, consumers seeking to use these devices are to be asked to sign the Personal Use of Electronic Devices Agreement (see APPENDIX A). This document provides an explanation of the risks of having electronic devices on an inpatient unit, outlines the guidelines for use, the circumstances under which devices may be removed and includes a disclaimer releasing the SESLHD from responsibility for loss of, theft of or damage to equipment. For people under the NSW Mental Health Act (2007), the agreement must be signed by the next of
kin or legal guardian.

- In cases where staff, in consultation with the treating team, assess the use of personal electronic equipment by an individual on the non-acute inpatient unit to be unsafe, or the consumer does not consent to the Personal Use of Electronic Devices Agreement, the equipment is to be removed. Where possible in this instance, the equipment should be given to the consumer’s carer, with the consent of the consumer, and this is to be noted within the medical record.

- Should the consumer not consent, or not have a carer present at this time, then the item/s should be entered in the property register and stored securely by nursing staff according to local protocols until it can be released to a carer or the consumer at the time of discharge.

- The Personal Use of Electronic Devices Agreement is part of the risk management strategy to:
  - Protect all consumers’ right to privacy and confidentiality (e.g. from cameras/video phones/PDAs/personal computers).
  - Protect consumers from financial harm (e.g. excessive use of phone, purchasing items online, exploitation by others).
  - Protect consumers from harm to reputation (e.g. making inappropriate calls, emails, posts online).
  - Protect carers or significant others from potentially receiving numerous distressing calls or emails.
  - Prevent unnecessary calls to emergency or community services.
  - Prevent costly personal property from being broken, lost or stolen.
  - Promote safety of the environment by reducing risks from unchecked electronic equipment.

- The use of any personal electronic equipment on an inpatient unit must adhere to the SESIAHS Business Rule ‘Electrical devices – patients use of personal, non-biomedical devices’ PD135.

- All non-acute inpatient units should have access to a designated public telephone. Wherever possible this should be in an area that promotes and protects privacy.

- All non-acute units should also have access to an internet connected computer, which should be in an area enabling supervision by staff.

### How to use it

SESLHD takes responsibility to ensure that all consumers’ rights to privacy and confidentiality are addressed. A consumer should not be photographed or recorded outside clinical care requirements unless the consumer gives informed consent or agrees in writing (NSW Ministry of Health Privacy Manual Version 2 PD2005_593).

Consumers who are not given access to their mobile phone should be encouraged, if possible, to access important phone numbers and contacts from their phone before it is stored and
staff should assist consumers in keeping a record of these important contacts.

Consumers can make local calls to carers and significant others via the inpatient unit phone.

Consumers are permitted to make calls to mobile phones (without charge) if it is the only way to contact a carer or significant other. Staff are to use their clinical judgement and discretion when negotiating these calls.

Each non-acute inpatient unit should display signs to discourage visitors from using mobile phones when in the facility.

Why the rule is necessary

A high percentage of consumers own a mobile telephone, personal computer or PDA and use these items as part of a formal therapeutic rehabilitation program. Photographic images and voice recordings can be captured and shared within moments using this technology.

This business rule is to ensure that systems are in place for staff to appropriately and safely manage and monitor consumers’ use of mobile phones, personal computers and PDAs while they are patients in a non-acute inpatient unit.

Who is responsible

Responsible staff include all non-acute inpatient mental health unit staff, including those in rehabilitation units.

Definition

Throughout this document, the terms patient, client and consumer may be used interchangeably to acknowledge the varying preferences of people who give and receive services in the SESLHD MHS.

Ministry of Health/SESLLHD reference

- SESIAHS Business Rule ‘Electrical devices – patients use of personal, non-biomedical devices’ PD135
- NSW Ministry of Health Privacy Manual Version 2 PD2005_593

Executive Sponsor

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Revision and Approval History

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Revision Number</th>
<th>Author and Approval</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 2013</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Angela Karooz, SESLHD MHS Risk Manager.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2013</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Endorsed by SESLHD MHS Clinical Council.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2014</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Updated by Angela Karooz, SESLHD MHS Acting Clinical Nurse Manager. Consultation with Clinical Nurse Consultants, Nursing Unit Managers, MHS Older Persons Clinical Coordinator and Essentials of Care and Practice Development Project Officer.</td>
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<td>November 2014</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Endorsed by SESLHD MHS Clinical Council.</td>
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APPENDIX A:

Mental Health Service NON-ACUTE Inpatient Unit

PERSONAL USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES AGREEMENT
Release of Liability

Purpose
This agreement provides guidelines for the use of mobile phones, personal computers, personal digital assistants (PDAs) and other personal electronic equipment to protect the dignity, confidentiality and rights of individuals, maintain security and safety, and minimise disruption to care delivery whilst in the Unit.

Process of Consent
The appropriateness of use of personal electronic equipment on the Unit is assessed by the treating team in collaboration with each consumer and his/her next of kin. This agreement will then be reviewed at each formal clinical case review or as otherwise necessary. The use of such equipment may be indicated as part of the consumer’s rehabilitation plan to enable communication and social connections with family and friends, continuation with ongoing education, job seeking and other such activities.

Guidelines
When using personal electronic equipment on the Unit, I agree to:

- Protect all consumers’ right to privacy and confidentiality i.e. not use a camera/video phone/PDA/personal computer to take photos, make videos or make recordings.
- Protect consumers from harm to reputation i.e. not make inappropriate calls, emails or posts online.
- Protect carers or significant others from potentially receiving numerous distressing calls or emails.
- Not make calls to emergency services.
- Promote the safety of the environment by ensuring equipment meets the requirements outlined in the SESIAHS Business Rule ‘Electrical devices – patients use of personal, non-biomedical devices’ PD135

Should this agreement not be adhered to, or should staff assess the use of personal electronic equipment by an individual on the Unit to pose a risk to self or others, the equipment will be removed.

Property Disclaimer
Although your personal property is of importance to us, the primary concern of the Mental Health Service is your health care needs and therefore the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District Mental Health Service does not bear liability for the loss of, theft of, or damage to, patients’ personal electronic equipment.

I, ______________________________, understand and agree to the guidelines for use and safe keeping of electronic equipment on the Unit. I also agree that the SESLHD shall not be liable for loss of, theft of, or damage to, personal property. I accept full responsibility for all personal property including valuables, monies, jewellery and personal communication, recording and electronic devices.

I HAVE READ THIS STATEMENT AND IT HAS BEEN FULLY EXPLAINED TO ME. I CERTIFY THAT I UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENTS.

Signature of Consumer ____________________________ Signature of Witness ____________________________ Date ____________________________

IF CONSUMER IS UNDER THE NSW MENTAL HEALTH ACT (2007), RELEASE MUST BE GIVEN BY NEXT OF KIN OR LEGAL GUARDIAN.

Signature of Consenting Party ____________________________ Signature of Witness ____________________________ Date ____________________________

Signature of Clinician ____________________________