



**NORTHERN IRELAND PRACTICE AND EDUCATION
COUNCIL FOR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY**

**MOBILE and SMART PHONES
Policy on provision, usage and
security**

June 2018

Review date: April 2021

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1. Introduction

This policy has been drawn up to address a number of issues around the provision, usage and security of NIPEC mobile and smart¹ phones issued to NIPEC staff, including the:

- security of mobile phones
- ban on the use of hand-held mobile phones whilst driving introduced in December, 2003, and legislation introduced in February, 2007 which significantly tightened the penalties for misuse
- unauthorised and excessive personal use of mobile phones.

2. Provision of Mobile or Smart Phones

Mobile phones are issued to staff that NIPEC view as requiring a means of contacting or being contacted whilst away from their normal working office environment. The Chief Executive, in consultation with the appropriate senior officer, will agree who is to be provided with this facility.

Usage of a NIPEC mobile phone by an officer will be taken as acceptance of this NIPEC policy and the individual will be required to adhere to the contents of the policy. Breaches of the policy will be viewed as a serious organisational matter and may result in disciplinary action being taken.

As mobile phones are the property of NIPEC, all staff issued with a NIPEC mobile phone will be required to sign receipt for this (see Appendix A).

When a member of staff leaves the employment of NIPEC, either to take up another appointment or is seconded to another organisation for a medium or long term placement, they must hand in their mobile phone prior to leaving NIPEC.

All NIPEC mobile phones are on contracts which covers the monthly rental and call charges tariffs.

3. Usage

All NIPEC business call charges will be paid by NIPEC.

As with the use of NIPEC land lines, all personal (i.e. non-business) calls should be kept to as short a duration as possible within the circumstances prevailing. This privilege must not be abused.

All NIPEC phone accounts are monitored and users will be responsible for providing an explanation of call charges if requested.

NIPEC Mobile Phones are not to be used for private 'business' purposes.

¹ When mobile phones are referred to within this document, it relates to both a mobile or a smart phone (ie. Samsung J5)

Personal mobile phones should not normally be used to make business calls. NIPEC does not undertake to refund any business calls made unless they are authorised by the Chief Executive.

4. Security

Staff issued with a NIPEC mobile phone will be responsible for the security of the phone (and any allied equipment) at all times.

In the event that a mobile phone is lost or stolen, the user must report the matter at the earliest opportunity to the Head of Corporate Services. This will enable a block to be placed on the phone if it has not already been done and action to be taken with regard to a replacement.

Users must exercise due care and use mobile phones in their possession in a responsible manner to mitigate the incurrence of damage or loss of the equipment.

Users are required to keep the mobile phone clean, and in a serviceable condition to the best of their ability, and report all irregularities immediately to the Head of Corporate Services.

There are a number of security measures the user must apply in regard to the operation of the mobile phone:

- Activate the keypad lock to ensure it can not be accidentally activated
- Set up and use a PIN code to lock and unlock the phone so if the phone is subsequently stolen or lost this will prevent unauthorised use
- Do not share/disclose PIN numbers with other staff - however, the PIN number should be given to the Head of Corporate Services, who will store this in a secure location
- Secure the phone at home as if it was a personal possession
- Do not leave mobile phones in unattended vehicles
- While in the office, store the phone and associated equipment, with due care
- In view of the risk of downloading viruses or worms, which can embed within data transmissions and infect other systems, no phone apps should be downloaded without the prior approval of BSO ITS – their guidance can be found at ADM/16/02/02
- Documents, texts and e-mails from unknown sources should not be opened nor transfer known infected documents, links, images or any other source of information to work computers.

5. Courtesy

As a matter of professional courtesy, NIPEC expects mobile phone users to either turn their phone off, divert it to voicemail or another number, or set the phone into 'silent mode' when attending meetings, training course, seminars etc.

In exceptional circumstances, where it becomes necessary to take a business call, it is courteous to inform colleagues that an urgent call is expected.

When conducting business away from NIPEC premises users should endeavour to adhere with any local restrictions on the use of mobile phones.

6. Safe use of Mobile or Smart Phone whilst driving

Hand-held phones

NIPEC require all staff to adhere to legislation at all times. As from 1 December, 2003 it is illegal to use **hand-held** mobile phones whilst driving. This includes using the phone for calls, texts, emails or for any other reason. Under the 'Road Traffic Act 2006', which came into force on 27 February 2007, tighter penalties were introduced in the event of the law being breached. The penalty for using a **hand-held** mobile phone is a £200 fine and six penalty points.

It is also an offence for someone (eg. a manager) to 'cause or permit' a driver to use a **hand-held** mobile phone while driving. Therefore, employers can be held liable as well as the individual driver if they require employees to use a hand-held phone while driving.

Hands-free phones

Although using a **hands-free** phone while driving is not specifically illegal, drivers who do so could be charged with 'failing to have proper control of their vehicle'. The penalty is a fine of up to £1,000, three penalty points and a discretionary disqualification.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) advise that a substantial body of research now shows that using a mobile phone while driving is a significant distraction, and substantially increases the risk of an accident ("Driving for Work: Mobile Phones" 2017). A copy of this guidance can be found at ADM/16/02/02 or at www.rosipa.com/road-safety

Other distractions

It should also be noted that although using a mobile phone while driving is one of the most common distractions, many other activities, such as eating, drinking, smoking, reading a map, as well as in-vehicle technology, can distract a driver and create a crash risk. In such cases, drivers could also be charged with 'failing to have proper control of their vehicle'.

Good Practice

NIPEC staff are reminded that all NIPEC mobile phones have a voicemail facility that can be used when driving. In the event that a user absolutely has to use their mobile phone while on the road, the following safety tips should be kept in mind:

- Let your passenger handle phone calls
- Use message taking services or integrated answering systems and call back later
- Let someone else drive while you make or receive calls
- Pull over and stop your vehicle in a safe place before using your mobile phone.

Government guidelines state if you are the driver, you can only use your phone in a vehicle if you:

- need to call 999 or 112 in an emergency and it's unsafe or impractical to stop
- are safely parked.

7. Health Advice to Mobile and Smart Phone Users

There has been considerable speculation in the press regarding the possible dangerous effects on health, as a result of prolonged use of mobile telephones. However, to date there is no evidence to support these claims.

The World Health Organisation (Fact Sheet No. 304) May 2006 reported that:

‘... considering the very low exposure levels and research results collected to date, there is no convincing scientific evidence that the weak RF (Radio Frequency) signals from base stations and wireless networks cause adverse health effects.’

Signed: _____
Chief Executive

Date: _____

References

- ROSPA (2017): ‘Driving for Work: Mobile phones’
<https://www.rospa.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/road-safety/employers/work-mobile-phones.pdf>
- World Health Organisation (Fact Sheet 139, October 2014): ‘Electromagnetic fields and public health: mobile phones’
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs193/en/#>
- Gov.uk (2014) - <https://www.gov.uk/using-mobile-phones-when-driving-the-law>
- Royal College of Nursing (2012) - Guidance for nursing staff using personal mobile phones for work purposes

Receipt of NIPEC Mobile or Smart Phone

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a NIPEC mobile phone.

In accepting this mobile phone, I agree that whilst the phone is in my possession I will adhere to the conditions of usage and security as contained within NIPEC's policy on the provision, usage and security of NIPEC mobile and smart phones (NIPEC/18/15).

Mobile phone number: _____

Signed: _____

Print name: _____

Dated: _____