



Mobile Phones

1. Background

Abbeyfield the Dales Ltd (ATD) recognises the need for certain staff members to use mobile communications devices to carry out their duties. However, there is a need to clarify when it is necessary to issue a mobile device as well as formalise the user's responsibilities once they have taken delivery of their handset.

2. Objectives

ATD is committed to providing services that enhance the quality of life for older people and developing services that will meet the needs of future generations. This commitment is based on the Mission and Values of ATD. ATD will also comply with all relevant and current legislation.

This policy sets out ATD's policy and procedures in regards:

- Eligibility criteria.
- The process for ordering a mobile phone.
- Allowance.
- Usage monitoring, reporting and ongoing administration.
- Responsibilities and accountability.
- How to report loss, theft or damage.
- The impact of mobile phone use on Health & Safety.
- The position regarding mobile phone use while driving.
- Coverage and international roaming.
- The process for returning equipment; and
- Acceptable use of personal mobile and communication devices.

3. Scope

All ATD Staff and all those providing services to residents on our behalf such as volunteers, bank and agency workers.

4. Policy

4.1. Eligibility and Ordering

The following provides guidance on the categories of staff who can be considered eligible for a mobile telephone. One or more of the following must apply and authorising managers will be asked to state which at the point of ordering:

- Staff who regularly work from multiple sites and who have a business need to be contacted regularly by both internal and external parties.
- Staff who spend significant periods away from their main place of work and who do not have reasonable access to landline telephones or a PC but demonstrate a regular need to be contacted.
- Staff working in risk-assessed environments where the requirement for individuals to have access to mobile phones has been formally documented as part of the risk assessment.
- Office or fixed location-based staff with occasional need to visit multiple locations and must be contactable as part of their role.

Mobile devices represent a high cost to the organisation in both financial and administrative terms. Requests should be carefully considered by the relevant Authorising Manager prior to submission.

4.2. Responsibilities

Three parties have shared responsibilities in relation to ATD's mobile equipment. These parties are the Organisation, the authorising manager and the registered user. A summary of each party's respective responsibilities is below.

4.2.1. Responsibilities: Organisation

ATD will endeavour to provide equipment and services that are fit for purpose. We will endeavour to engage providers capable of delivering sufficient network coverage to allow most calls to be made and received with minimum disruption.

The Senior Leadership Team may monitor usage and provide regular reports to senior management, detailing both normal and exceptional use. Specific usage information is available to authorising managers at any time upon request to the Financial Controller.

ATD mobile phones are barred from making international calls as standard except those agreed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). In the event of overseas travel on company business, where a registered user can demonstrate a business need to be contacted regularly, ATD can remove this bar for the period of the travel if authorised by SLT or Chief Executive (CE).

Where international roaming is enabled, Registered Users should be aware that they are still responsible for any personal calls made and received during the period of travel and that these may incur higher charges depending upon the country of travel.

Should you receive calls from the provider offering promotions and supplementary services, these must be declined in all circumstances and referred to the Financial Controller.

4.2.2. Responsibilities: Registered User

All mobile devices remain the property of ATD. By accepting a mobile telephone and completing a user registration form, users agree to the following responsibilities:

- To be accountable for the handset and its attributed usage until the phone is returned.
- To exercise reasonable care for the handset, making every attempt to avoid damage or loss.
- To limit usage to business-critical calls, text and internet data usage, and only where an ATD landline or computer is not available.
- Under no circumstances should an employee use an ATD mobile phone as a hotspot for personal use. Any payment for usage which is not ATD business is the responsibility of the registered user.
- To use the phone in accordance with Health & Safety guidance.
- To refrain from using the phone for personal calls, texts and internet data usage other than in exceptional circumstances and to identify and pay for such usage.
- Under no circumstances should applications be downloaded and installed on the device without authorisation.
- Under no circumstances download or stream any copyrighted material such as MP3 files, film and video files. Full information regarding acceptable internet use on a company mobile can be found in ATD's Computer & Internet Usage (LG009P) policy.

- Unless for business purposes, no images or photos are to be used, taken or downloaded onto or with the device.
- Do not open suspicious email attachments or access personal email account on the device.
- To contact the Financial Controller if the phone is lost, stolen or damaged.
- Return the phone to the Financial Controller in good condition with all other equipment issued (batteries, chargers etc) upon ceasing employment with ATD, when requested by a senior staff member or under any other circumstances which warrant the phone's return; and
- No transfer of phones between employees is permitted.

4.2.3. Responsibilities: Authorising Manager

- To consider the financial and administrative implications to the organisation of purchasing and servicing mobile phones when commissioning new connections.
- To ensure that the eligibility criteria applies to all new connection requests they authorise.
- To act as a point of return for Registered Users returning handsets upon ceasing employment with ATD, when requested by the SLT or under any other circumstances which warrant the phone's return; and
- To ensure that phones are returned to the Financial Controller in good condition along with all other equipment issued upon the registered user ceasing employment with ATD, when requested by the SLT or any other circumstances which warrant the phone's return.

4.3. Allowance

4.3.1. Calls & Texts

All mobile phones supplied by ATD have unlimited call and text allowance. Despite this you should not use your ATD mobile phone for personal calls unless an emergency.

4.3.2. Data Usage & Mobile Hotspots

Sufficient data allowance is provided for conducting ATD business on ATD mobile phones. As previously mentioned, these allowances are not for personal use, any costs incurred for personal use are the responsibility of the Registered User.

4.4. Health & Safety

4.4.1. Advice from an overview of mobile phone safety from the National Health Service (NHS) regarding radio waves:

"These radio waves are a type of low-energy, non-ionising electromagnetic radiation – a class of radiation that also includes visible light, ultraviolet (UV), and infrared radiation.

Concerns have been expressed that prolonged or frequent exposure to radio waves might increase a person's risk of health problems such as cancer.

However, most current research suggests it's unlikely that radio waves from mobile phones or base stations increase the risk of any health problems.

The researchers acknowledge this evidence is based on use of mobile phones over the last 20 years, and there's still some uncertainty about possible health effects from using a phone for longer than this."

ATD therefore advises employees to limit their use of mobile phones at work to essential calls only and to minimise their call duration. A copy of the leaflet "Mobile

Phones and Health” published jointly by the Department of Health, Scottish Executive, Northern Ireland Executive and the National Assembly for Wales in September 2011 is attached as appendix 1. All staff issued with mobile phones are required to familiarise themselves with the information in this leaflet.

4.4.2. Driving – Handheld Phones

It is an offence to use a hand-held phone or similar device when driving. Driving includes times when stopped at traffic lights or during other hold ups that may occur during a typical journey, when the vehicle can be expected to move off after a short period of time. Mobile phone users should never use a handheld mobile phone while driving.

4.4.3. Driving – Use of Hand Free Sets

ATD strongly discourages staff using hands-free devices for making or receiving calls and messages whilst driving. It is recommended to turn the device off and collect any messages when stopped at a suitable location in compliance with the Highway Code.

4.5. Returning Equipment

Where mobile phones are lost, stolen or damaged you must contact the Financial Controller to report it and arrange a replacement.

Upon ceasing employment with ATD or if the registered user can no longer demonstrate a business need to retain the phone, all equipment must be returned in person to the Financial Controller. Under no circumstances should mobile phone equipment be sent using mail services of any kind (unless prior agreement is obtained from the Financial Controller). If a registered user is unable to arrange for the delivery of equipment, their authorising manager will hold it and return it on their behalf.

4.5.1. Disciplinary Action

In instances where equipment cannot be accounted for, ATD will consider disciplinary action and reserves the right to reclaim costs from the registered user, irrespective of whether they continue to be employed by ATD.

4.5.2. Reallocation of ATD Mobile Phones

Where an authorising manager wishes to reallocate a specific phone, retaining its telephone number, to a person other than the registered user, this must be done by returning the equipment to the Financial Controller.

No transfer of phones between employees or projects is permitted. All handsets must be returned to the Financial Controller for reallocation who will inform the administration team to ensure all contact lists are updated accordingly. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in disciplinary action against the authorising manager.

4.6. Personal mobile phones & other personal devices

Other than by exception (see section 4.6.1) you are not permitted to use or have your personal mobile phone or other personal communication device on your person while on duty. For the purposes of this policy ‘on duty’ means any time other than designated break times whilst you are at your place of work. Such devices should be securely stored away. If you need a secure place to store your equipment, please speak to your manager.

You may use your personal mobile phone or other personal communication device while on a designated break (such as tea break or lunch break) in designated staff areas if onsite.

Employees are not permitted to use ATD Internet on their personal devices. Full information regarding use of ATD's internet can be found in ATD's Computer & Internet Usage (LG009P) policy.

In any event and at all times while at work, whether or not actually working (e.g. at designated break times or before or after a shift starts or finishes) you should be mindful of your surroundings to ensure your use of your personal mobile phone or other personal communication device does not cause ATD to be negatively portrayed, or risk safeguarding concerns to be made against us.

ATD recognises that you may need to be contacted while on duty in the event of an emergency. You should let relevant people know to contact ATD in such instances, and ATD will provide the appropriate assistance to you in the circumstances.

4.6.1. Storing and Recording Images and Video Footage

Regardless of any consent you may obtain, you are prohibited to use your personal mobile phones and other personal devices to record or store images, documents, or video footage of any ATD property, this includes:

- Any images or recordings of any part of all private and public areas both internally and externally of all ATD property and contents.
- Documents, information, posters, or any other recorded materials.
- You are not permitted to email any ATD documents, or details regarding any ATD business to your personal devices.
- Under no circumstances should you take images of any residents or their private accommodation and belongings, including any equipment, medication or any other possessions.
- Other staff, volunteers, visitors, or contractors.

Where images or videos need to be taken your line manager will be able to supply an appropriate ATD device.

Any breach of this Policy may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee.

4.6.2. Exceptions

Where exceptions apply, rules detailed in 4.6.1 continue to be followed.

4.6.2.1. Training

We encourage our employees to complete all mandatory training and access training courses that will assist their growth in the role. You can access your training portal from all company and personal devices, to complete training modules with ease at work or at home. If you are completing training on a personal device whilst at work, you will need to arrange time away from your duties in order to action this. This will need to be pre agreed with your line manager. Carrying any personal devices whilst in communal areas with residents is still prohibited.

4.6.2.2. Lone workers

If you are a lone worker, you are permitted to have your personal mobile phone or communications device on your person whilst at work although this should only be used for emergencies.

Other exceptions should be agreed in advance with your manager.

5. Finance, Value for Money & Social Value

N/A

6. Supported Appendices

Appendix 1: Mobile Phones and Health leaflet

7. Linked Policies

Expenses & Mileage Claims (S011P)

Computer and Internet Usage (LG009P)

Data Protection (LG013P)

8. Legislation/Regulation

N/A

9. Review

Every 2 years, subject to any regulatory or legislative updates.

10. Procedure/Guidance

N/A



So what is the best advice when using a mobile phone?

There is no immediate need for concern when using mobile phones or having a base station in your area. This is because, despite much research, there is no convincing evidence that either will cause harm. However, we have only been using mobile phones widely for the last decade or so and we need more research to look at the situation, particularly in the long term.

The body and nervous system are still developing into the teenage years. Therefore, as a precaution, the UK Chief Medical Officers advise that children and young people under 16 should be encouraged to use mobile phones for essential purposes only, and to keep calls short. If you are concerned, you can take steps to reduce your exposure such as using hands free kits or texting.

To see the evidence available so far, visit the websites given at the back of this leaflet.



Where can I find more information?

The Department of Health website www.dh.gov.uk/en/PublicHealth/Radiation has a list of places to find a whole range of information about:

- scientific research
- international guidelines
- radio wave measurement standards
- European regulations
- planning for base stations
- exposures from base stations
- the law on mobile phones and driving
- many other issues associated with mobile phone use.

Further information

World Health Organization – www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs193/en/index.html

Health Protection Agency – www.hpa.org.uk
Type 'mobile telephony and health' into the search bar

NHS Choices – www.nhs.uk/conditions/mobile-phone-safety/pages/introduction.aspx

Directgov – www.direct.gov.uk
Type 'mobile phones' into the search bar

Ofcom Sitefinder website about base station emissions – www.sitefinder.ofcom.org.uk

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NHS

Mobile phones and base stations



Health advice on using mobile phones



Around nine out of ten households in the UK have access to a mobile phone and they are now part of our way of life. This leaflet briefly outlines how mobile phones and networks work, provides some answers to the questions you might have about them and offers guidance on where to go for further information.

How do mobile phones work?

When you make a call on a mobile phone, the phone transmits radio waves to the antenna of a nearby base station. The base station then transmits the call using the mobile telecommunications network to the phone of the person you are calling.

In towns or cities, where there are many phone users, more base stations are needed than in the countryside. The antennas of base stations may be mounted on masts, buildings or other structures.

A useful animation of how mobile phone networks operate can be found here: www.mmfa.org/public/start.html

So how safe are base stations and mobile phones?

Radio waves from base stations in this country comply with international health and safety guidelines. The levels of radio waves emitted from base stations in places where the public have access are generally found to be hundreds or thousands of times below the health and safety guideline limits. And, although the levels of radio waves from mobile phones are higher than from base stations, all mobile phones comply with international and UK health and safety guidelines.

What does the science say about safety?

Research focusing on mobile telephony over the last ten years has shown no convincing evidence that the radio signals from mobile phones and base stations cause adverse health effects (refer to World Health Organization (WHO) website).

In the UK, the Health Protection Agency (HPA) closely monitors all mobile phone and health research. Apart from an accident risk when using a phone while driving, it states, '...there is no clear evidence of adverse health effects from the use of mobile phones or from phone masts.' However, as people have only been using mobile phones for relatively few years, the HPA advises that more research be carried out, especially to investigate whether there might be longer term effects.



Is it possible to get too close to base stations and their antennas?

Radio waves get weaker as you get further away from antennas. Many different structures are used to host base stations and measures are always put in place to ensure a safe distance between the public and the antennas.

Do radio waves cause cancer?

The UK Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research programme reported in 2007 that no association was found between mobile phone use of less than ten years and cancers of the brain and nervous system. However, as the situation for long-term exposures is less clear, the HPA continues to monitor the scientific evidence.

What about mobile phones heating up the brain?

Any increase in brain temperature that may occur from using a mobile phone close to the head is very small, well within the normal body heating from everyday activities such as exercise and is not considered by the WHO to be harmful to health.