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Community
Legal Service



Help Point



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**“Working to Empower the Community”
in Lancashire and Cumbria**

Pamela Beswick - Chief Executive Officer

Signposts Mobile Telephone Policy

Signposts operates a system whereby it issues official mobile phones to staff and volunteers who work outside official signposts premises. This is to maintain good communications at all times and to ensure that the worker has emergency backup.

This policy is intended to clarify usage of mobile telephones issued for this purpose.

It also clarifies the usage of personal mobile phones whilst on duty.

1. Personal mobile phones should be kept on silent and should not be used when on duty. If you have a family emergency which you need to be contactable for, then you should suggest family use text messaging, and your phone should be on silent and you should check it regularly. Preferably, family should be given an office number to contact you on.
2. The Signposts mobile phone is for business use only – not for making personal calls.
3. In line with the Signposts’ Lone Working Policy, the user must ensure that the mobile phone is switched on when you are working away from the office to enable members of staff to contact you or for you to use in case of emergency – however:
 - a. The Mobile Phone should be kept on silent at all times – including when in the office to avoid disturbance to other workers.
 - b. If you are on a home visit you should ensure you can see the phone at all times – carefully consider where you place the phone to be as discreet as possible to the home visit, and to maintain the security of the phone. The phone should not be answered unless you have exceeded the planned length of time for your home visit to let the Emergency Base contact know you are safe. You may use the phone to contact other agencies on behalf of a client, but wherever possible an office phone should be used.
 - c. If you are engaged on face to face work with clients in group or crèche settings – your mobile phone should not be used to receive or make calls. If you need to contact your line manager – or make an official call – you need to ensure that this does not in any way jeopardise the work you are undertaking. You need to ensure

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that colleagues can cover whilst you leave the group work or crèche situation to make the call – the call must be one that cannot wait until the end of the session.

4. It is the users responsibility to ensure the safety of the 'phone - please do not leave the 'phone in your car, on your desk or any other place of risk. You are also responsible for the safe storage of the charger and other accessories supplied with the telephone.
5. From 1st December 2003 it became illegal to use a hand held mobile phone whilst driving a car. You must exercise full control of your vehicle at all times, therefore you should pull off the road and park the vehicle in a safe manner before making or receiving a call from a hand held mobile phone. You should not use a hands free kit if supplied with the phone.
6. The telephone should be left at the office during annual leave breaks.
7. Users are not allowed to tamper with the telephone in any way - eg change the SIM card.
8. Ensure that you have read the manual supplied with the telephone so that you are fully aware of all features. Any faults or problems should be reported as soon as possible.

Phone and Text Bullying and Misuse

Phone and Text bullying involves a number of behaviours including:

- Sending anonymous texts, making threats of violence
- Name-calling
- Giving out personal information that children, young people and vulnerable adults feel embarrassed about
- Sending frightening or obscene images with a threat
- Sharing obscene images
- Silent calls
- Stolen identify
- If there is a series of calls or the calls are part of a bigger picture of bullying then this may amount to harassment which is an offence under the 1997 Harassment Act

Making anonymous or abusive phone calls/texts is also a criminal offence under Section 43 of the Telecommunications Act 1984.

The team need to be aware of their own actions with respect to mobile phone use when communicating with anyone. Sending inappropriate texts or images will result in disciplinary action.

Chief Executive

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