



Mobile Phone Policy

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Reviewed By	Policy & Resources Committee



Mobile Phone Policy

1. Aim

The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to promote safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robustly acceptable-use guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools - which in turn can contribute to safeguarding practice and protection.

2. Scope

~~This policy applies to all staff who have access to personal or work-related mobile phones during working hours.~~

This policy applies to all staff, councillors, contractors, volunteers and visitors who have access to personal or work-related mobile phones whilst on Council premises or engaged in Council business.

3. Policy statement

3.1 It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern, and which are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying.

3.2 It is also recognised that mobile phones can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others. When mobile phones are misused, it can impact on an individual's dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality. This use and misuse include texting and accessing/using social media.

3.3 It is appreciated that it can be very difficult to detect when such devices are present or being used, particularly in relation to enhanced functions, such as cameras. Use of all mobile phones is therefore limited, regardless of their capabilities. The aim is to avoid distraction and disruption of the working day.

3.4 Data Protection and Privacy

All use of mobile phones must comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. No images, recordings or personal data relating to Council business, staff, councillors or members of the public may be captured, stored or shared without a lawful basis and appropriate consent.

4. Code of conduct

A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a co-operative workforce, where staff work as a team, have high values and respect each other; thus creating a strong morale and sense of commitment leading to increased productivity. It is therefore ensured that all staff:

- understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use.
- are responsible for self-moderation of their own behaviours.



- have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse (calls/texts/messaging).
- are vigilant and alert to any potential warning signs.
- know how to minimise risk.
- avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations.
- are aware of the importance of reporting concerns.

~~It is fully recognised that studies consistently indicate that imposing rigid regulations and/or 'bans' on the actions of others can be counterproductive, leading to a culture of suspicion, uncertainty and secrecy. The imposition of rigorous, inflexible rules is therefore avoided, unless the potential risks of not enforcing them far outweigh the benefits. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within the setting environment, which is agreed to by all staff.~~

The Council adopts a proportionate and trust-based approach to mobile phone use. However, where risks outweigh benefits, appropriate restrictions will be applied.

5. Procedures

5.1 Personal mobiles - Avoid the use of mobile phones causing unnecessary disruptions or distractions within the workplace, and ~~ensure effective~~ safeguarding practices ~~is promoted to protect against potential misuse~~ **must be upheld at all times.**

~~Staff are permitted to have their mobile phones about their person; however, there is a clear expectation that all personal use (calls/texting/messaging) is limited to allocated lunch breaks. Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, phones must be switched to silent and calls and texts/messaging must not be taken or made during work time, unless a safeguarding concern is suspected. The phone however must be switched on silent and not used during the course of the day, except with express permission.~~

Staff are permitted to carry their personal mobile phones; however, personal use (including calls, texts and messaging) should be restricted to designated break times. Except in agreed exceptional circumstances, phones must be switched to silent during working hours and should not be used during work time without express permission.

~~Should phone calls and/or texts/messages need to be taken or made, use is restricted to suitable areas to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or disruption to others. Under no circumstances is any individual permitted to take images or make recordings on a mobile phone without the agreement of those involved.~~

Where calls or messages must be taken, this should occur in an appropriate area so as not to disturb others.

Under no circumstances may images, audio or video recordings be taken without the explicit consent of all parties involved and appropriate managerial approval.



5.2 Work mobile/ work use mobile - The use of a designated work mobile (or personal mobile) is promoted as an essential part of the emergency toolkit which is taken on off-site trips:

- an effective communication aid, enabling text, email messages and calls to be made and received.
- a back-up facility should problems be experienced with the landline – or where contact needs to be made outside of work hours.

5.3 Driving - ~~If any member of staff is required to drive in a working capacity, and has responsibility for the work mobile, the phone must not be used whilst driving. It is strongly recommended that staff follow the same procedures regarding their own personal mobile phones. Under no circumstances should staff drive whilst taking a phone call or texting. This also applies to hands-free and wireless connections, which are considered a distraction rather than a safer alternative.~~

~~If any individual is required to drive on Council business, mobile phones must not be used whilst driving.~~

~~This includes both handheld and hands-free devices, in accordance with the Road Traffic Act 1988 and the Highway Code.~~

5.4 Emergency contact - ~~It is recognised that mobile phones provide direct contact to others, and at times provide a necessary reassurance due to their ease of access, particularly at stressful times. Staff, therefore, in agreed exceptional circumstances are permitted to keep the volume of their phone switched on. This is to enhance their own wellbeing and peace of mind, to reduce stress and worry and to enable them to concentrate more effectively on their work. Such use will be for an agreed limited period only, until any concerns or issues leading to the exceptional circumstance request have been resolved. It is ensured at all times that the landline telephone remains connected and operational, except in circumstances beyond control. This means that it is available for emergency/urgent contact at all times. The reliance on an answer phone is avoided except for times outside of the setting operating hours. The answer phone is always checked promptly on opening or return.~~

~~It is recognised that mobile phones may provide reassurance in exceptional or emergency situations. In such circumstances, individuals may be permitted to keep their phone switched on with volume enabled for a limited period.~~

6. Breach of Policy

~~Failure to comply with this policy may result in action being taken in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure. Safeguarding or data protection breaches will be dealt with as a priority.~~