



Conquest Equestrian Centre

Specialising in Riding for the Disabled
Improving Lives

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MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Introduction

Conquest Centre has not issued any mobile phones for employees, therefore the only mobile phones on site will be owned by staff, riders, volunteers and carers / helpers.

Conquest Centre facilities are used by many riders who are children or vulnerable adults, we therefore have a duty of care to protect their privacy and not compromise rider confidentiality. As such, the following points must be observed by staff, volunteers, riders, helpers and anyone else at Conquest Centre.

Some riders may be fitted with electrical or medical devices such as pacemakers or hearing aids. There have been significant advances in technology during the past few years, particularly in the area of wireless devices such as mobile phones (many of which now include camera/video capability and sound recording), laptop computers, palmtops and other devices fitted with GPRS and/or 3G Hiperlan).

It is recognised that the use of modern mobile phones has little or no effect on modern clinical equipment unless operated within close proximity, less than two metres (Device Bulletins DB9702 "Electromagnetic compatibility of medical devices with Mobile Communications", issued by MHRA in July 2004, together with updates, including @one liner issue 43 in July 2006 and Dept of Health update May 2007).

There are still significant numbers of older medical devices in use which do not conform to the modern immunity levels and are therefore, much more vulnerable to interference. Although the risk is not as great as first envisaged, there does remain an element of risk which must not be ignored when using mobile phones and other digital equipment within proximity to medical equipment.

All mobile phones and devices fitted with GPRS emit radio frequency signals in standby mode as well as when in use. Their power increases when an incoming call or other communication from the base station is received, whether the call is answered or not. The power radiated by these devices also increases when used in poor signal strength areas.

Considerations

A major development has been the widespread use of combined mobile phones and cameras, many of which have video recording capability and music players. It is the potential for anyone attending the Conquest Centre to use this functionality to take inappropriate photographs or videos that presents the greatest potential to interfere with dignity and privacy and thus compromise rider confidentiality.

Many swimming pools, sports centres and schools ban the use of mobiles because of the camera facility incorporated in them, recognising that it is very difficult to detect whether such devices are actually being used to take pictures and videos. Camera phones in particular are seen as a potential risk of inappropriate photographs being taken.

Overall, the control of camera phones may only be seen to be practically possible by preventing the use of mobile phones altogether at Conquest Centre, other than in the staff room.

In addition, mobile phone ring tones may startle horses and riders which may have a direct impact on rider safety.

The use of mobile phones can be intrusive, and impact adversely on the environment of others. Riders have a right to a calm and peaceful environment, uninterrupted by a number of different ring tones, the noise of which is disrespectful of their privacy and dignity.

Conquest Centre as an employer also has a legal responsibility to protect the Health and Safety of its employees. Therefore, staff should not use their mobile phone whilst driving or doing anything else where safety is important and where its use might interfere with concentration.

Recommendations:

In recognition of the need for rider confidentiality, privacy and dignity mobile phones with camera facilities must not be switched on in the vicinity of riders. It is very difficult to detect whether such devices are taking pictures. The taking of photos or videos in public areas should only be allowed when the subject rider has given specific consent. It is essential that only those who have given written consent on their medical consent forms are included in any photo. A member of staff must be present when pictures are taken.

Staff using their mobile telephones whether for personal use during a break period or in the course of their duties, must do so taking into consideration the location where they are making the call, whether or not it will distract colleagues and whether or not the nature of the telephone conversation is inappropriate in front of riders / visitors to Conquest Centre. It is common courtesy to take account of the fact that colleagues, riders or visitors may not wish to have the intrusion of your telephone conversations.

This policy reflects the Health and Safety Executive Guidance that as employers Conquest Centre has a legal responsibility to protect the health and safety of its employees.

Accordingly, staff should not use mobile telephones whilst driving or doing anything else where safety is important and where the use of a mobile telephone might interfere with concentration. In general, staff must refrain from using their mobile telephones during work times, unless required in the direct course of their duties. Use of mobile phones is permitted during allocated break times in the staff room. Conquest Centre recognises that some mobile phones receive poor service at Conquest Centre. Employees may use their mobile phones in other areas, providing they are not in the arena, gallery or in the vicinity of clients, providing permission has been attained from the management.

Last reviewed 22nd September 2010