HSC Health and Social Care

HSC Public Health Agency

GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF FALLS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY – INPATIENT SETTING ONLY

Types of Falls Assistive Technology

The following are common types of assistive technology that are often used within inpatient settings.
Most companies will supply wired and wireless versions:

- Clip and cord
- Chair exit alarm
- Bed exit alarm
- Floor exit alarm
- Infra-red beams

Many of these devices have different methods of raising an alert such as:

- Audible alarm
- Silent alarm with patient - staff carry a pager which can be set to audible or vibrate
- Voice recorded alarms
- Display panels / screens

Use of Falls Assistive Technology and Deprivation of Liberty (DoL)

When a registered member of staff is considering the use of falls assistive technology, they must consider if it constitutes a 'Deprivation of Library (DoL)' as per statement below:

- Is the person under continual supervision and control?
- Is the person prevented from leaving?

If a member of staff requires further clarification regarding DoL, they should liaise with appropriate staff within their Trust, i.e. Trust Mental Capacity Act Implementation Lead or equivalent.

Assessment and Documentation Relating to Use of Assistive Technology

- ▶ Assess the person regarding suitability for use of falls assistive technology.

- ▶ Discuss use of falls assistive technology with the person / next of kin / first contact and document in the person's **P**erson **A**ssessment Plan of **C**are **E**valuation **(PACE)** record.

- ▶ A timeline regarding the person's use of assistive technology should be maintained and include:

  - ✓ Date and time commenced
  - ✓ Type of assistive technology in use
  - ✓ Any concerns regarding use
  - ✓ Any changes in type of assistive technology used
  - ✓ Date and time use of assistive technology was discontinued

- ▶ A rationale for all decisions should be recorded in the person's **P**erson **A**ssessment Plan of **C**are **E**valuation **(PACE)** record.

- ▶ Ensure that any decisions regarding assistive technology are communicated to all relevant staff at pivotal times throughout the day, such as handover and safety briefings / huddles.

- ▶ Reassess regarding ongoing suitability for falls assistive technology according to individual person's needs/changes in condition, i.e. improvement / worsening.

Using Assistive Technology

- ▶ Staff must have training regarding the use of assistive technology provided by the manufacturer of the equipment.

- ▶ Staff members MUST respond to alerts immediately and always attend to the person's needs / reasons for getting up, and not just return the person to the bed or chair.

  *Appropriate intervention should be put in place addressing the reason why the person was mobilising without assistance.

Installing and Daily Monitoring of Falls Assistive Technology

- ▶ Ensure that the falls assistive technology equipment is in good working order. *If faulty, remove from use, label appropriately and contact local estates department/manufacturer.

- ▶ Test all systems, including battery life, before use - this is to ensure that they are working correctly, and the equipment does not malfunction or fail to alarm.

- ▶ Daily inspections of the assistive technology should be carried out and documented, to ensure it is still safe and working effectively.

Further Considerations

▶ On occasions, use of audible sensor mats may cause distress. Specific consideration must be given to persons with dementia or cognitive issues were the alarm sounding could increase the risk of falls.

▶ Ensure that a person's weight is adequate to activate the system. If a person has a low body weight, the alarm may not activate when pressure has been removed

▶ Assistive technology is unsuitable for persons who have poor standing balance, and would be likely to have fallen before staff could respond to the alarm.

After Use Care

▶ Ensure that after every use, systems are cleaned following manufacturer's instructions and relevant Trust policies / guidance.

▶ After use ensure systems are stored as per manufacturer's instructions, e.g. some systems are not meant to be bent / folded.

Maintenance

▶ Equipment will always have a limited lifespan.
The date of first use / disposal should be recorded on the equipment / Trust systems - do not use equipment if it is past the lifespan date.

▶ Check manufacturer's instructions, or if necessary, contact the company regarding weight limits, and calibration of equipment.