

PERSON SEARCH

CLPG75 – Search Procedure – Appendix 1

PROCEDURE

- **Personal** searches are to be undertaken by a member of staff of the same gender as the patient and witnessed by a second member of staff.
- All ward based **personal** searches must be recorded in the clinical notes.
- Person searches taking place in off ward clinical areas must be recorded in the relevant Person Search Record and entered into the electronic patient record

PROCEDURE

- Patient to be informed that a search of pocket items, hand luggage and a personal search of clothing is to be conducted. The patient's consent should be sought before a search is undertaken.
 - Prior to search all items to be removed from pockets (these may be checked by a second member of staff).
 - Patient to be asked to stand with legs apart, arms outstretched and raised to shoulder height.
 - Staff to observe patient's hair style, facial expression and to be alert to verbal or non-verbal cues of apprehension or anxiety.
 - Remove and search any headgear if worn.
 - Ask patient to remove jackets/coats etc. and search
 - Lift outer garment collar and firmly but carefully; feel around it. Move out from collar to shoulder area, then using both hands, check each arm in turn, searching down from axilla to wrist. Remember to check the cuffs and ensure that patient's hands are empty.
 - Ask patient to open outer garment, place both your arms around the patient under the jacket and with the fingers of both hands meeting at the patient's collar, the back to the waist. Then slide your hands down the patient's sides and front.
- (NB with female patients do not run your hands over the breasts but slide hands on the area below breasts to waist).
- Inspect waistband and belt by pressing with fingers either side of the waistband.
 - Check lower half of body by placing both hands around each leg in turn, and sliding down from waist to ankle remembering to check hems and turn-ups of trousers. For female patients wearing skirts or dresses, check each leg over the dress and then the hems. Hands should never be placed under the dress
 - If necessary, request patient to remove shoes and inspect same
 - Inspect all pocket items and hand luggage if this has not previously been done by a colleague.
 - Maintain good communication with the patient throughout the procedure.
 - Whilst it is difficult to discover small items during a personal search, large, bulky items or small items carelessly concealed should always be found. If you have any doubts or suspicions during or after completing a personal search, inform the nurse in charge or other senior person, remembering not to leave the patient unobserved

Patient's refusal to co-operate

- If consent is refused, the patient's RC (Responsible Clinician) should be contacted. If the patient's RC refuses consent, but the person empowered to search wishes to proceed, the matter should be referred to the Clinical Director for a decision. In making a decision on the matter referred, the Clinical Director shall take into account the RC's view and interests of security and safety of the individual and the hospital.
- If a patient refuses to co-operate with a personal search he/she should be kept under observation and isolated from other patients and the nurse in charge of the ward informed (if they are not on their ward they should be returned to their ward under separate escort.)
- The patient should be told what is happening and why, in terms appropriate to his/her understanding.
- Patients should not be allowed to avoid routine searches by refusing to co-operate.