



## F01 – Patients Property and Monies – Wards and Departments

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Staff should be discouraged from printing this document. This is to avoid the risk of out of date printed versions of the document. The Intranet should be referred to for the current version of the document.

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## 1. Introduction/Overview

Betsi Cadwaladr University Local Health Board recognises that it has a duty to take reasonable care of all patients' property on Health Board premises.

This procedure is designed to ensure that appropriate measures are in place for the secure management of patients' property in all areas where patients or residents are present, so that the risk of loss or damage is minimised.

This forms part of the Health Board's responsibility for delivering a safe and secure environment of care, in line with statutory and regulatory obligations.

## 2. Procedure Statement

The Health Board is committed to ensuring that:

- reasonable care is taken of all patients' property on Health Board premises;
- patients are made aware of the choices available to them in respect of management of their personal property.

## 3. Aims/Purpose

The purpose of the document is to ensure that staff have access to clear, robust guidance on the processes to be followed when dealing with patients' property and to ensure that patients are fully aware of the choices that are available to them.

## 4. Objectives

The correct application of this procedure will provide an environment where:

- the risk of loss or damage to patients' personal belongings is minimised;
- any such incidents that do occur can be dealt with quickly and effectively.

## 5. Scope

This procedure applies to all members of staff in clinical settings who are involved in any aspect of handling patients' personal property and should be read alongside financial procedure **F15 Patient Property and Monies – General Office**.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

Nursing staff working in clinical areas will be responsible for the operation of this procedure on a daily basis. Nursing and Finance teams will be responsible for monitoring compliance with the procedure and for updating any arrangements as necessary.

## 7. General Principles

Items of patients' personal property are broadly classified as either valuables or clothing, as follows:

- **Valuables:** including cash, credit/debit cards, portable electronic devices, jewellery, dentures and spectacles;
- **Clothing:** including shoes and handbags.

Patients who are admitted to a ward and who have the capacity to manage their own affairs should be encouraged, wherever possible, to return any valuables to the person accompanying them, or an appropriate family member/carer. This will minimise the risk of loss or damage to property and any subsequent potential claims against the Health Board.

Whilst this procedure refers to Hospital General Offices these may also be known as either Reception Offices or Administration Offices within community and Mental Health & Learning Disabilities settings. All three undertake the same functions and have the same responsibilities in respect of patients' personal property.

## 8. Disclaimer Notices

Each ward and department must display laminated disclaimer notices relating to patient's property in prominent locations. The disclaimer notices advise that the Health Board is unable to accept responsibility for the loss of cash, valuables or other personal possessions retained by patients and that, if required, any such property should be handed over to nursing staff and held in safekeeping custody.

A sample copy of the Health Board's disclaimer notice is included as Appendix A to this procedure with laminated copies being available from the General Office Manager, Finance Department, Abergele Hospital.

On admission to a ward, nursing staff should explain the disclaimer notice to each patient and ask them to confirm their understanding that the Health Board cannot accept responsibility for items of personal property unless they have been handed in for safekeeping. Please refer to Section 15 for guidance on patients who lack capacity.

## 9. Patients Property Books

Each ward and department should hold an official Patients Property Book, a copy of which is included as Appendix B to this procedure. The Patients Property Book is used to record all items of personal property that have been handed in for safekeeping and must be updated at each stage until property has been returned to the patient.

The Patients Property Book should be completed in four parts as follows:

- (i) **White copy:** patient's personal copy. If the patient is not able to receive this copy it should be retained with their medical records until such time as either they or a relative/carer is able to receive it.
- (ii) **Blue copy:** retained by General Office once property has been handed over for safekeeping.
- (iii) **Pink copy:** retained by General Office once property has been handed over for safekeeping.
- (iv) **Yellow copy:** retained as a permanent record in the Patients Property Book.

To ensure that the integrity of the audit trail is not compromised, completed documents should not be altered in any way. Spoiled copies should be retained in the Patients Property Book after they have been clearly marked with the reason for cancellation, and signed by the member of staff.

Only one property book should be in use in each area at any one time.

New Patients Property Books should be requested from the Patients Monies Officer, Finance Department, Ysbyty Gwynedd. The Patients Monies Officer will maintain an audit register of all issued Patients Property Books including the name of the requesting member of staff and the date on which the ward or department confirmed receipt of the new book.

Individual wards and departments should retain completed Patients Property Books for a period of six years, in accordance with Health Board's Corporate Retention and Disposal Schedule. Books should then be destroyed under confidential conditions.

Each Ward Manager is responsible for reviewing the Patients Property Book and the ward safe or secure designated location on a weekly basis to ensure that property is not being held for patients who have already been discharged or transferred.

## **10. Property handed in for safekeeping – valuables and clothing**

All property handed in for safekeeping should be examined and recorded in the Patients Property Book by two members of nursing staff who should sign the book as confirmation of receipt. A signature should also be obtained from the patient, where possible, to acknowledge that the list of property handed over for safekeeping is accurate and complete.

### **Valuable property**

When completing the property book, nursing staff should not use terms such as 'gold' or 'silver' to describe items of jewellery. Descriptions such as 'yellow metal' or 'white metal' should be used instead with stones in rings or other

jewellery being referred to as either 'white stone' or 'red stone' rather than 'diamond or 'ruby'.

All valuables should be placed in an official valuables bag with details of the contents and the date being recorded on the front. The two members of staff who have checked the contents should sign both the front of the bag and over the seal. The valuables bag reference number should then be recorded in the patient's notes. Further supplies of valuable bags are available from the General Office Manager, Finance Department, Abergele Hospital.

Nursing staff should transfer the patient's property and completed property book to their Hospital General Office for safekeeping as soon as possible. Property that is handed in for safekeeping outside of office hours should be either lodged in a night safe, where available, or held in a secure location on the ward until it can be transferred to the General Office. Patients should be advised that any property lodged with the General Office might not be accessible at weekends or outside of normal office hours.

Property must always be taken to the General Office by two members of staff who should ensure that valuable property is never on display whilst being transferred within the hospital. Any concerns regarding either the storage of items of valuable property or their transfer to the General Office should be referred to the General Office Manager.

A summary flowchart detailing the process to be followed when valuable property is either handed in for safekeeping or retained by the patient is included as Appendix C to this procedure.

### **Items of clothing**

Any items of clothing handed in for safekeeping should be placed in an appropriate bag that clearly identifies the patient's name, hospital number and ward. Where patients have their own bag then a label with their personal details can be attached instead.

All bags containing clothing should be stored in an appropriate secure area in the ward or department.

A Patients Property Checklist identifying the key actions to be taken for all property when either admitting or transferring patients is included as Appendix D to this procedure. A copy of this appendix should be retained with the Patients Property Book.

## **11. Transfer of patients between wards**

When patients are being transferred between wards and they have property that is held for safekeeping in the General Office, the transferring ward is responsible for informing both the General Office and the receiving ward.

The receiving ward must review and sign off the original ward's Patients Property Book and then complete a new Patients Property Book record in the same way as they would for a newly admitted patient.

It is not necessary for the receiving ward to confirm items of property with the Hospital General Office as this will have been undertaken when they were originally handed in for safekeeping.

## **12. Temporary Custody**

Staff should ensure that patients who are attending theatre or undergoing a procedure, for example x-ray or endoscopy, are not in possession of personal items that could be removed without their knowledge. Jewellery of personal or religious significance should be discussed on an individual basis and, if it is agreed that these are to remain with the patient this will be at their own risk and should be documented in their medical notes.

Temporary custody of property should only be undertaken on wards and departments as a short-term measure, for example patients attending procedures or theatre, until their property can be returned to them or their relative or carer. In all cases the property must be lodged in a designated secure location, for example the ward safe or a locked cupboard or drawer where this has been designated for the purpose. Valuables should be held for the shortest possible time and no longer than twenty-four hours.

Supplies of plastic storage containers for the temporary safekeeping of dentures and hearing aids are available from the General Office Manager, Finance Department, Abergele Hospital.

## **13. Discharge of patients**

All personal property that has been handed in for safekeeping should be returned to the patient on either their discharge or transfer to another hospital. In any cases where the patient is unable to accept responsibility or sign for receipt of their property at the time of discharge the General Office should retain the items until the patient is able to give instructions as to their disposal.

Patients discharged from hospital can reclaim any property held for safekeeping by producing the white copy of the Patients Property Book which was they received at the time that their property was handed in.

Where property has been transferred to the General Office for safekeeping, the Ward Manager should, wherever possible, inform the General Office prior to the patient being discharged. The General Office will then arrange for the property to be taken to the ward, as near to the time of discharge as possible.

Where money is involved, the Ward Manager should inform the General Office how the patient wishes the money to be returned. It should be explained to the

patient that, depending on value of money involved, it may be advisable to accept a cheque rather than cash.

Where the patient insists on receiving cash, General Office staff will arrange for the cash to be taken to the ward, as near to the time of discharge as possible. The patient should be asked to produce their official receipt and sign a petty cash voucher, which will also need to be witnessed by a member of the ward staff.

Members of staff returning valuables to patients must ensure that the patient signs and dates the Patients Property Book to confirm receipt of all items.

Where it is known that a patient is due to be discharged at a weekend or a public holiday, the General Office should be contacted in advance to ensure that property can be transferred to the ward and temporarily stored in either the ward safe or designated secure location.

#### **14. Death of a patient**

It is the responsibility of nursing staff to inform the General Office as soon as possible following the death of a patient for whom valuables are being held so that the Bereavement Officer can be notified accordingly.

If a deceased patient has already lodged property with the General Office this will be released to the next of kin at the time that the death certificate is issued.

If a patient dies and valuables or cash have not been already lodged, these should be transferred to the General Office as soon as possible. Temporary safekeeping facilities may be used if the patient dies outside of normal office hours. All clothing belonging to the deceased patient should be taken to the Bereavement Office as soon as possible.

Ward staff must not dispose of any patient's property with the exception of soiled clothing and this must only be carried out with the explicit permission of relatives and documented in the nursing notes. Staff must be aware that relatives may have differing opinions on disposal or care of the deceased's property. Any concerns regarding infection prevention should be discussed with the Infection Prevention and Control Team.

Property remaining on a deceased person received into the Hospital Mortuary must be entered into the Patients Property Book and dealt with as per Section 10 above "Property handed in for safe-keeping".

#### **15. Patients who lack capacity**

The Health Board may assume responsibility for personal items without a formal handover where a patient lacks capacity to make decisions about their property. This could arise either on admission (for example if a patient is unconscious or has cognitive impairment) or at any time during their stay (for

example if a patient enters a coma or becomes increasingly confused). In these circumstances, the Health Board has a duty of care to assume responsibility for any property.

Where staff believe that a patient may lack mental capacity to make an informed decision about their personal property, they should consider whether everything has been done to support the patient. If it is not possible to wait until the patient may regain capacity, staff should assess the patient's mental capacity in relation to the decision and take appropriate action in their best interests.

Staff should ensure that patients who are assessed as lacking capacity to make a decision should always continue to be involved as fully as possible in the process.

Staff should also consider whether there is anyone with authority (usually a relative or friend) to make decisions on behalf of the patient.

## **16. Emergency Departments**

Due to the temporary nature of patient flow within Emergency Departments, staff are not required to complete a property book for all patients who present at the department.

Emergency Departments maintain a specific disclaimer form that should be completed for each patient within their area.

Property handed in for safekeeping should be stored in clothing or valuables bags and held in a safe area whilst the patient remains within the department.

Items should then either be released to the patient when they leave the department or transferred to the admitting ward area where a Patients Property Book should be completed.

## **17. Patients' Own Drugs (PODs)**

'Patients' Own Drugs' (PODs) refers to medicines that have been brought into the clinical area by the patient having been previously dispensed for that patient. This also includes over the counter (OTC) medication purchased by a patient.

PODs medicines should be dealt with in accordance with Paragraph 6.2.7 of the Health Board's Medicines Policy MM01 and should not be taken to General Office with other items of personal property.

## **18. Restricted Property Items**

Restricted property items refer to items or substances that could affect either the health, safety or welfare of patients, staff and others. Nursing staff should refer to the list of restricted items detailed in the Restricted Items Policy MHLD

0043 for further information on how to deal with such items should they be brought onto Health Board premises.

Staff should also be alert for any items of personal property that they suspect could relate to illegal activities. Any such suspicions should be immediately raised with the General Office Manager who will provide advice and arrange for the police to be notified where appropriate.

Nursing staff in MHLD Division to refer to clinical risk assessment if the return of property assessed to be a risk.

#### **19. Equality including Welsh Language**

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed for this procedure.

#### **20. Well-being of Future Generations**

Application of this procedure will ensure that the Health Board supports patients to make independent informed decisions about their personal property whilst they are receiving care.

This will ensure an environment exists where patients' personal views and decisions are respected at all times and that any decisions made on their behalf are in their best interests.

#### **21. Environmental impact**

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is not applicable to this procedure.

#### **22. Resources**

There are no additional financial resource implications arising from this procedure.

#### **23. Training**

Initial training on implementation of the Patients Property procedure will be provided by the Finance Department's General Office Manager. Subsequent staff training will usually be the responsibility of wards and departments.

Additional training and support will continue to be available from the Finance Department on request.

#### **24. Implementation**

This procedure will be implemented with immediate effect.

#### **25. Audit**

Compliance with this procedure will be reviewed by Internal Audit as required.

**26. Review**

This procedure will be reviewed as a minimum every three years.

**27. Contact details**

General Office Manager

Email: [REDACTED]

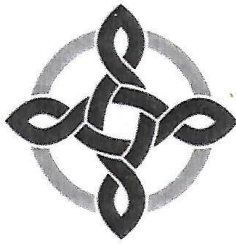
Phone: Abergele Hospital 2249

Patients Monies Officer

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: Ysbyty Gwynedd 851161

## **Appendix A**



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Betsi Cadwaladr  
University Health Board

## YMWADIAD EIDDO CLEIFION

### PATIENTS PROPERTY DISCLAIMER

Ni all Bwrdd Iechyd Lleol Prifysgol Betsi Cadwaladr **dderbyn cyfrifoldeb** am gollu arian, eitemau gwerthfawr neu eiddo personol arall a gedwir gan gleifion pan fyddant yn glaf mewnol/allanol yn yr ysbyty.

Os bydd angen, gallwch roi eiddo o'r fath i'r Nyrs mewn Gofal ar y ward/adran i'w warchod yn ddiogel, a bydd derbynneb swyddogol yn cael ei rhoi am arian ac eitemau gwerthfawr a dderbynnir.

Bydd eiddo yn cael ei ddychwelyd ar gais y claf neu gellir ei ddychwelyd i gynrychiolydd personol y claf sydd ag awdurdod gofynnol gan y claf.

The Betsi Cadwaladr University Local Health Board is **unable to accept responsibility** for the loss of cash, valuables or other personal possessions retained by patients whilst they are an inpatient/outpatient in the Hospital.

If required such property may be handed over to the Nurse in Charge of the Wards/Departments for safe custody and an official receipt will be given for cash and valuables received.

Property will be returned on request from the patient or alternatively returned to a personal representative of the patient with the required authority from the patient.

BWRDD IECHYD PRIFYSGOL  
**BETSI CADWALADR**  
 UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
 Betsi Cadwaladr  
 University Health Board

No.

**EIDDO CLEIFION (AC EITHRO DILLAD) / PATIENT'S PROPERTY (EXCLUDING CLOTHING)**

.....YSBYTY/HOSPITAL ..... WARD

Claf/Patient ..... Y Perthynas Agosaf/Next of kin .....  
 Enw/Name ..... Enw/Name .....  
 Cyfeiriad/Address ..... Cyfeiriad/Address .....

DERBYNIWYD GAN Y CLAF UCHOD I'W CADW'N DDIOGEL -  
 RECEIVED FROM THE ABOVE PATIENT FOR SAFE CUSTODY:-

Arian Parod/Cash 1 ..... 6 .....  
 2 ..... 7 .....  
 3 ..... 8 .....  
 4 ..... 9 .....  
 5 ..... 10 .....

Derbyniwyd gan ..... (Statws) .....  
 Received by ..... (Status) .....  
 Tystiwyd gan ..... (Statws) .....  
 Witnessed by ..... (Status) .....  
 Llofnod y claf .....  
 Patient Signature .....  
 Dyddiad/Date .....

**AR GYFER DERNYDD SWYDDFA GYFFREDINOL YN UNIG  
 FOR GENERAL OFFICE USE ONLY**

Derbyniwyd gan: ..... Dyddiad: .....  
 Received by: ..... Date: .....  
 Tystiwyd gan: ..... Dyddiad: .....  
 Witnessed by: ..... Date: .....  
 Rhif Eiddo'r Claf: ..... Rhif Derbynneg .....  
 Patient's Property No. ..... Receipt No. ....

I'w gwblhau gan glaf / perthynas wrth dderbyn eiddo:  
 To be completed by patient / relative on return of property:

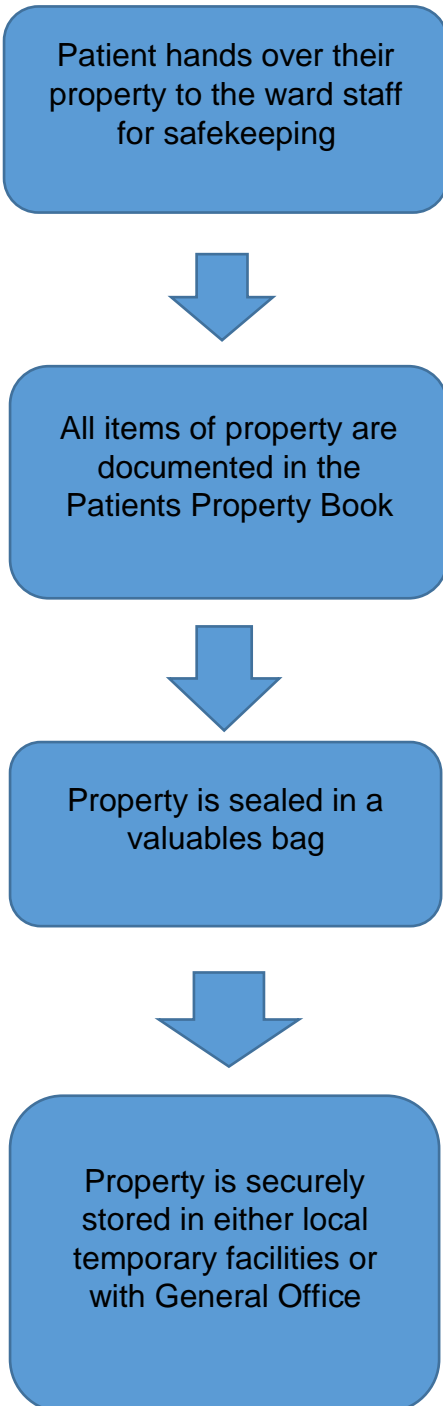
Dyddiad rhyddhau i glaf / perthynas ..... / ..... / .....  
 Date released to patient / relative ..... / ..... / .....  
 Enw / Name: ..... Llofnod / Signature: .....  
 Perthynas / Relationship: .....

COP1 RHF 4  
 COPY NO 4

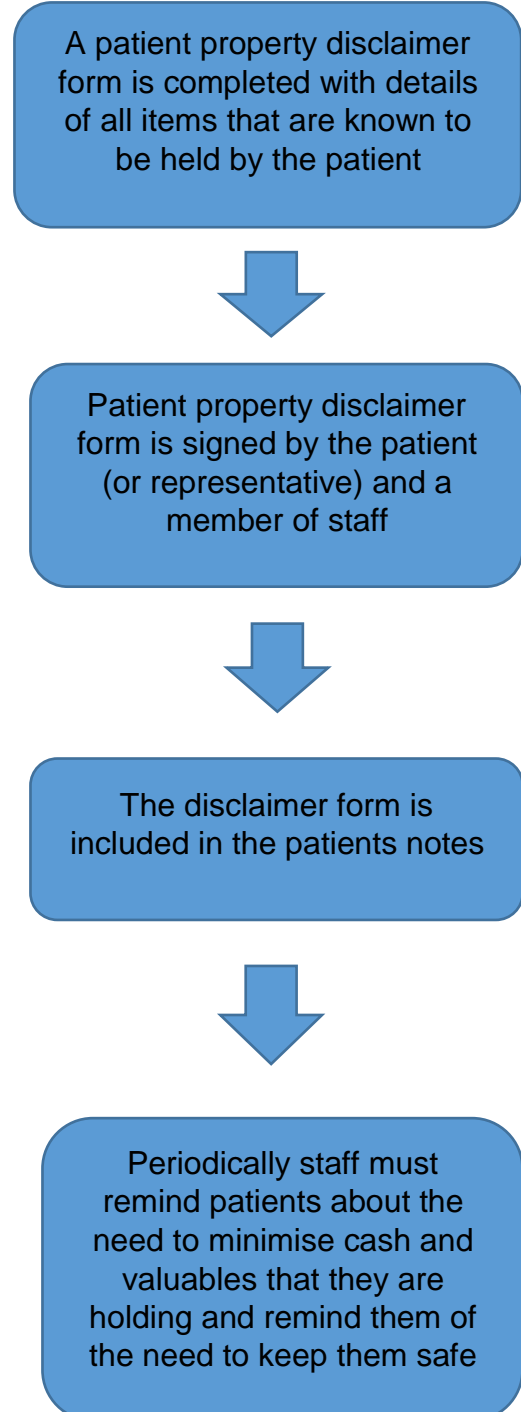
COP1 R WARD - I'W GADW YN Y LLYFR  
 WARD COPY - TO BE RETAINED IN BOOK  
 BCU 27  
 W.W.88

## Patients valuable property flowchart

### Valuables deposited for safekeeping



### Valuables retained by patients



## Patients Property Checklist

### When admitting or transferring patients



Ensure that property is documented following the correct procedure and in a timely way.



Ask patients to send property home with either a relative or carer wherever possible.



Ensure that every patient signs a disclaimer form if they wish to retain valuable property.



Ensure that property always follows the patient when they are transferred between wards.



Notify the General Office when patients who have valuables in safe storage are transferred between wards.



Place clothing in an appropriate bag labelled with the patient's name, number and ward where the patient is to be transferred to.

### When taking patients' property into safekeeping



Check valuables with another member of staff. (Ensure all signatures and designations are legible).



Place valuables in a valuables bag recording details of contents on the front and signing on the front and over the seal.



Record details in the patients' nursing notes as well as in the Patients Property Book.



Record the actual amounts of cash providing as much detail as possible.



Distribute the copies of the property book as follows:  
**White copy – retained by the patient/carer**  
**Blue and Pink copies – accompany valuable property to the General Office**  
**Yellow copy – retained as a permanent record in the Patients Property Book.**