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Bomb Threat or Suspect Packages Procedure

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Bomb Threat or Suspect Packages Procedure

1. Introduction

Public Health Wales NHS Trust is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for their service users, visitors, staff and all workers engaged within the Trust and the population we serve and also protect the property, assets, service delivery and the reputation of the Trust.

The Trust recognises that there are very real risks associated with receiving bomb threats and suspect packages. These risks encompass both the physical and psychological effects upon the person receiving the threat, or discovering the package, and the associated disruption that may occur to the provision of the services.

The majority of such incidents are either harmless or a hoax, but it is the policy of the trust on receiving an implied threat or on finding a suspect device to take the threat seriously.

2. Staff Awareness

Whenever a member of staff observes a person(s) behaving in a manner that is considered suspicious or observes an unusual object that could give rise to concern, this must be reported to their line manager and to reception (if applicable). Where appropriate and safe to do so, staff should challenge strangers or make them aware of staff presence.

Staff should exercise their judgement as to whether they should challenge the stranger on their own. If in doubt staff members should seek support from a colleague.

3. Deliveries

3.1 Local procedures should specify:

- Any personal packages delivered to Public Health Wales premises must not be opened on site.
- If staff receive packages they are not expecting, they should contact the sender and/or courier to establish its origin prior to the package being opened.
- Who is authorised to receive and sign for goods (reception).
- What checks must be in place prior to accepting (item from, type of packaging, protruding wires, unsealed or broken seals).
- Control over access to delivery personnel (all to report to reception).

3.2. The Trust will implement measures to mitigate these effects as far as it is practicable. To do this, staff must be aware of the procedure to follow in the event that they receive a bomb threat or discover a suspicious package. The Trust will also ensure that there is an

adequate level of security, both physical, and as part of the infrastructure of the Trust estate, to be effective.

4. **Vigilance**

The Trust requires all members of staff to maintain a high level of awareness and vigilance, and to report to their line managers or supervisors any incidents, whether tangible, or otherwise, which they believe have the potential to threaten the security of the Trust, its staff, its partner organisations, or service users.

This procedure is to be operated across all sites that form a part of the Trust.

5. **Telephone Calls**

With direct dialling into the Trust, potentially any person can be on the receiving end of a bomb threat. In such circumstances staff should be mindful of the actions to be taken to help them deal with such a call. A list of questions is contained in the checklist in the Bomb threat checklist at Appendix 1.

6. **Letter Bombs/Contaminated Letters and Suspect Packages**

Devices of this sort can take many forms and are designed to maim or kill the person opening them.

Possible indications of this type of device are:

- Grease marks on the envelope or wrapping
- An unusual odour, such as almonds or machine oil
- An unknown powder or liquid substance is leaking from package
- Visible wiring or tin foil, especially if the wrapping has been damaged
- The envelope or package is heavy for its size
- The distribution of weight may be uneven, a flexible envelope may have rigid contents
- The package has been excessively wrapped
- There may be poor handwriting, spelling or typing
- The name and, or address may be misspelled or incorrect.
- The package may come from an unexpected source. Does the postmark agree with the sender's address if shown?
- There may be too many stamps for the weight of the package
- The package may be hand delivered from an unknown source

If you are suspicious about a package or receive a suspicious package, the following actions should be taken:

- Call the police on 999

- Only if you believe it is safe to do so, immediately place the package or letter in isolation and away from water, sand, chemicals, heated surfaces, naked flames and gaseous substances. It is more likely to be an incendiary device than a bomb; i.e. it is designed to start a fire;
- Do not shake it, squeeze, or open the letter or package;
- Items of mail should be placed in a transparent, sealed plastic bag or container – if a bag or container is not available then cover it with anything to hand e.g., waste bin and do not remove this cover;
- Do not tamper with or move any suspect item elsewhere;
- Turn off all air conditioners, fans, photocopiers, printers, computers and heaters within the room where the letter/package is located;
- Close all windows and evacuate the room, lock all doors and leave the keys in the lock;
- Place a clearly visible warning on the door;
- Inform your immediate manager and the Facilities Department of the situation as soon as the room is vacated;
- Go to an isolated room and avoid other people if you can. It is vitally important that you segregate yourself and others who may have come into contact with the suspicious package. REASSURE YOUR STAFF OR COLLEAGUES. It is unlikely that they are contaminated and they will get medical treatment if required;
- Do not rub your eyes; touch your face or other people; thoroughly wash your hands in soap and water as soon as possible.

6.1 Other Suspect Packages

A suspicious object is an item, which might contain a bomb, which is out of place and which cannot be accounted for. Any suspicious package or box found must be treated with extreme caution, and must be reported immediately.

Unidentified parcels, packages, bags and other items left unattended for some time must be considered as suspicious and reported to the Line Manager or Facilities.

Packages of this nature must not be touched or tampered with in any way.

Attempts must be made to identify the owner of the package. Where this fails and cause for concern remains, the Police must be called upon to advise the next possible course of action.

7. Evacuation and Assembly Points

Should there be a requirement to leave the building, this will be initiated via telephone communication to each team and any visitors in the designated areas must also vacate the area/building in an orderly fashion. Assembly points are situated in Callaghan Square as it is recommended the assembly point be located at least 400 meters from the suspected bomb site. Safe assembly points are best situated behind a solid building at a distance away from the blast site.

A check must be initiated to account for all evacuated personnel including visitors. A senior manager/officer/member of staff should instruct everyone not to re-enter until the building is declared safe.

7.1 **Stand-Down**

Where the outcome of a threat is assessed as a hoax, it is expected that the all clear will be given to the most senior person co-ordinating the incident on behalf of the Trust. The information will be relayed to all parties who have responded to the alert. Where the all clear is given to a different member of the response team it must be passed on to the most senior person without delay.

Where the outcome is realised to be of a serious nature eventual stand down and the all clear will be given to the Police from the operatives called to deal with the device.

8. **Training**

There are no specific training needs in relation to this procedure, but the following staff will need to be familiar with its contents: All Managers and Staff, **in particular switchboard and reception staff**, and any other individual or group with a responsibility for implementing the contents of this procedure.

9. **DEFINITIONS**

Bomb Threat

A threat to detonate an explosive or incendiary device to cause property damage or injuries, whether or not such a device actually exists. Bomb threats are usually made verbally over the phone.

Suspect Package

A package believed to contain a potentially harmful device or substance.

PROCEDURE/IMPLEMENTATION

Notification of a Bomb Threat

Notification of a bomb threat can be made at any time and can be made and delivered by several means, usually anonymous, but all must be considered seriously.

Appendix 1.

Bomb threat checklist

This checklist is designed to help your staff to deal with a telephoned bomb threat effectively and to record the necessary information.

Visit www.cpni.gov.uk to download a PDF and print it out.

Actions to be taken on receipt of a bomb threat:

Switch on tape recorder/voicemail (if connected)

Tell the caller which town/district you are answering from

Record the exact wording of the threat:

Ask the following questions:

Where is the bomb right now? _____

When is it going to explode? _____

What does it look like? _____

What kind of bomb is it? _____

What will cause it to explode? _____

Did you place the bomb? _____

Why? _____

What is your name? _____

What is your address? _____

What is your telephone number?

(Record time call completed :)

Where automatic number reveal equipment is available, record number shown:

Inform the premises/line manager of name and telephone number of the person informed:

Contact the police on 999. Time informed: _____

The following part should be completed once the caller has hung up and the premises manager has been informed.

Time and date of call: _____

Length of call: _____

Number at which call was received (i.e. your extension number):

ABOUT THE CALLER

Sex of caller: _____

Nationality: _____

Age: _____

THREAT LANGUAGE (tick)

- Well spoken?
- Irrational?
- Taped message?
- Offensive?
- Incoherent?
- Message read by threat-maker?

CALLER'S VOICE (tick)

- Calm?
- Crying?
- Clearing throat?
- Angry?
- Nasal?
- Slurred?
- Excited?

BACKGROUND SOUNDS (tick)

- Street noises?
- House noises?
- Motor?
- Animal noises?
- Voice?
- Crockery?
- Clear?
- Static?
- PA system?
- Booth?
- Music?
- Factory machinery?
- Office machinery?
- Other? (specify) _____

- Stutter?
- Disguised?
- Slow?
- Lisp?
- Accent? If so, what type?
- Rapid?
- Deep?
- Hoarse?
- Laughter?
- Familiar? If so, whose voice did it sound like? _____

OTHER REMARKS

Signature

Date _____

Print name

Acknowledgements

This procedure also utilises guidance obtained from the Security Service MI5 booklet namely "Protecting Against Terrorism" 2nd Edition.