

Appendix 3

Best Practice Guidance for use of the Telephone in Communicating Significant News

Decide if this is an option in consultation with the patient

1. **Ask** the patient if they would find this of benefit, informing them of potential benefits and drawbacks.
2. **Obtain consent from the patient** that they wish to use this method **and document it**
3. **Discuss what support will be available** (family/professional)

Plan the call with the patient

4. **Arrange and record** an appropriate time and date for the telephone call
5. **Inform and Involve** relevant members of the Multi Disciplinary Team (i.e. Clinical Nurse Specialist)
6. **Inform the patient, “What happens next”**- may be the next appointment, part of the diagnostic or treatment process
7. **Advise** the patient that they may choose to ensure a family member is present
8. **Inform the patient** that waiting for the call will be an anxious time and that they may go through a range of emotions after the information has been given
9. **Inform the patient** what type and level of information they will be given
10. **Arrange the process** of how you will establish the patient’s identity
11. **Signpost** the patient to sources of support for after the phone call
12. **Inform** the patient what to do and who to contact if they do not receive the call at the arranged time

Making the phone call

1. **Establish the identity** of the recipient - you may choose to provide a password or similar
2. **Explain the process and what happens next**
3. **Ensure they have support, or contacts for support available**
4. **Provide the information and clarify understanding (as outlined in the main guidance)**
5. **Offer clear explanations to any queries**
6. **Confirm the next step(s)**

Following the phone call

1. **Record the content of the telephone** consultation in the patient’s notes, describing the words used where possible
2. **Inform relevant MDT members**
3. **Be prepared for any further questions** that the patient or their family will have
4. **Develop survey/audit tools to assess patient’s views on the service**