

Aide Memoire – Granting Section 17 Leave

Section 17 leave is part of the MHA provision but is not an automatic patient right. Granting section 17 leave is the responsibility of the Responsible Clinician (RC).

When making decisions about granting Section 17 leave, for the purposes of risk management in reducing the spread of COVID19, the RC should consider the following:

Current UK Government instructions on the following:

- Social distancing
- Limited to up to a single hour of exercise once per day – the RC should carefully consider whether such exercise could be undertaken within the grounds of the hospital.
- Medicines and essential supplies – the RC should carefully consider what such items might be, given the availability of food, medicines and essential items in the hospital environment.
- We would recommend that home leave is not granted, where effectively this would be classed as a visit to a relative or other member of the public.

Other factors to consider include:

- The service user's capacity to comply with the UK Government instructions
- Consider the additional risks that might be associated with unescorted leave
- When escorted leave is considered, please assess the risk of infection to the member of staff as well as their availability to escort patient and to conduct relevant checks upon return
- MDT discussion – taking account of not only the clinical risks but also infection control risks and health and safety risks to staff and other patients.

Checks to be completed on Return

- Security checks, including security search
- Post leave evaluation
- Infection control measures such as hand washing on return; staff to get changed out of uniform prior to escorted leave and change back into their uniform on return.