

## **D.13 Information and Communication Technology** (Correspondence, Telephone, Reception, Email, Computers)

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

Mercy Services is committed to high quality customer service. It is essential that communication with clients/carers from the first point of contact with Mercy Services is professional, calm, caring, uplifting and takes into account the needs and expectations of those who make contact with Mercy Services.

The reputation of Mercy Services among other services and their enthusiasm to work cooperatively with Mercy Services is also affected by their perception of the professionalism that they encounter in Mercy Services communications.

The equipment used and the way it is used is a major determinant in the professionalism that people experience in Mercy Services communications. Information and communication technology is constantly changing and a strategic approach is needed to ensure that funds are used wisely.

### **2.0 SCOPE**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff/volunteers are aware of the expected standard and use of information and communication technology.

Website and social media are covered by a separate policy.

### **3.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

All staff/volunteers will play a role in ensuring that all people making contact with Mercy Services are treated with dignity, honour, fairness and respect.

All staff/volunteers will act within the law and to a standard appropriate to their role when using communication systems and equipment.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will ensure that a four year Information and Communication Technology Plan will be developed to guide a strategic approach to purchasing, maintenance, use of and training for these technologies.

### **4.0 PROCEDURES**

#### **4.01 Reception at Mercy Services Centres**

Staff working at reception are expected to reflect Mercy Services values by consistently treating people with courtesy and by keeping the area clean and tidy at all times.

Food may not be consumed in the reception area. Staff may consume drinks in the reception area provided drinks are not placed near computers, electrical equipment or valuable documents or consumed while communicating with clients/visitors.

The reception area will always be attended during weekday office hours (Tighes Hill 8.30am to 5.00pm and West Wallsend 8.00am-4.30pm).

In order to protect private information in the Reception area:

- 1) documents should:
  - a. be placed face-down on the reception desk when non-staff may be able to read them; and/or
  - b. be kept in a locked cupboard when not being used.
- 2) clients and/or visitors must not see client details on computer systems;
- 3) information about clients, carers, staff, volunteers, donors must not be disclosed to unauthorised personnel or visitors;
- 4) computers should be logged-off when not in use to prevent unauthorised usage; and
- 5) sensitive conversations will take place where they cannot be heard by those who do not need to know the information.

#### **4.02 Telephone:**

Private calls are to be kept to an absolute minimum. If a staff/volunteer is expecting to receive or make a high number of or long duration personal calls their supervisor must be aware of the situation and have decided that the disruption is acceptable. Otherwise personal calls should be made during lunch breaks and on a personal mobile phone.

##### **a. Incoming Telephone Calls**

Answering the telephone: To answer the call, lift the receiver, press the flashing button and say "Mercy Services, Good morning/afternoon, (*name*) speaking, how can I help you?"

It is primarily the responsibility of the administrative staff to respond to all incoming calls. In the event that the call cannot be answered by the receptionist or other administrative staff, other available staff will respond to incoming calls.

Telephone conversations can only be recorded with the agreement of all parties on the call.

##### **b. Placing Callers on Hold**

To prevent the caller unintentionally overhearing conversations between people in the vicinity of the telephone, the "hold" facility is to be used whenever a caller is kept waiting for a response or for another person to take the call. The importance of using the "hold" facility cannot be over-stressed. Failure to do so could result in a breach of confidentiality.

Prior to utilising the "hold" option, ask the caller if:

- they would mind being placed on "hold", while you pursue their inquiry;  
OR
- they want to request that we/they call back; OR

- enquire if a message can be taken on their behalf; OR
- if they would like to be connected to a relevant message bank.

**c. Transferring calls**

If the caller wants to speak with an available employee or volunteer, find out the caller's name, phone the staff/volunteer and ask if they are able to speak to the person.

If a person needs instructions on how to transfer calls the reception/administration staff will assist.

**d. Telephone Messages**

Any staff/volunteer working in reception who answers an incoming call is responsible for any message that the caller leaves with them. This involves accurately recording the:

- 1) name of the caller ;
- 2) organisation or client the caller is representing;
- 3) any message the caller wants passed on; and
- 4) date and time of the call.

Messages are to be written on the telephone message pads and left in the person's pigeon hole or transferred to the appropriate message bank.

Mercy Services staff and volunteers will respond to callers' requests appropriately. If the staff or volunteer is unable to fulfil the caller's request, it is the receiver's responsibility to provide the caller with options they may wish to pursue.

**e. Answering Machine**

On the occasions that the office is unattended, or if staff are engaged in other activities for any considerable time during working hours, the answering machine may be used.

The machine requests that the caller leave a name, telephone number and message. This is to enable staff from Mercy Services, to return their call as soon as practicable.

The receptionist will listen to recorded messages left on the reception switchboard as soon as the work day commences.

To listen to recorded messages on the reception switchboard press the Night MSG button, then Lstn, record message on Telephone Message pad, then press delete. Then press next to listen to next message.

**f. Outgoing Telephone Calls:**

To make a telephone call press 0 and you will hear a dial tone (unless all lines are being used).

Employees and volunteers are able to make local telephone calls for Mercy Services related activities. Telephone calls will be as brief as possible. Only

Coordinators or more senior staff may make STD and international telephone calls without their supervisor's approval.

Telephone conversations can only be recorded with the agreement of all parties on the call.

#### **g. Mobile Phones**

1) A pin number has been pre-set by the Senior Officer, Finance and Administration for security purposes. Staff are to always keep the information in the phone protected by maintaining a confidential PIN.

2) Senior Officer, Finance and Administration will add the following numbers to the mobile phone's contacts before the phone is given to staff:

- (Co-ordinator's mobile) .....
- Emergencies .....112
- CEO .....0412 593 595
- WHS Coordinator .....0419 974 954
- Mercy Services West Wallsend.....4944 1944
- Mercy Services Tighes Hill.....4961 2686
- Mercy Services NECC .....4926 2324
- Mercy Services Elermore Vale.....4951 8083
- Mercy Services Stockton .....4928 0854
- Mercy Services Singleton .....6572 2499
- NRMA non-Mercy Services car.....13 11 11
- NRMA Mercy Services car.....1300 369 349
- If relevant HACC after hours.....0427 455 948

3) The purpose of mobile phone use is to conduct Mercy Services business.

4) Staff are responsible and accountable for the use, safe keeping and security of mobile phones issued to them. Mobile phones remain the property of Mercy Services, and are on a loan basis only.

5) Staff are to care and maintain mobile phones as follows:

- a) Do not leave phone lying in direct sunlight or in hot cars;
- b) Do not allow metal objects to short circuit the battery contact. (E.g. keys, money);
- c) Leave the phone switched off at night and for long periods when you are not working;
- d) Store the phone in a clean, dust free place;
- e) Keep the phone away from heat and water;
- f) Charge the battery when it is at 25% or immediately when the warning signal flashes (this indicates that it is fully rundown). It is recommended that the battery is allowed to fully rundown from time to time;
- g) Do not leave the mobile phone unattended when plugged into recharger;
- h) Unplug mobile phone from recharger when battery is fully charged;
- i) Keep the phone dry and never use harsh chemicals – use damp cloth to clean it if necessary; and

- j) Do not let young children near the phone.
- 6) If you experience problems with the phone allocated to you, do not try to repair the phone. Please write down the problem you are experiencing and forward the phone to the Senior Officer, Finance and Administration as soon as possible. If the phone cannot be repaired then a replacement phone will be supplied.
- 7) Employees must abide by the Mercy Services Code of Conduct and all Commonwealth and State laws when using a mobile phone. Sending or downloading voice, text or images that could be interpreted as discriminatory, sexual harassment or pornographic are unacceptable.
- 8) Staff/volunteers using a mobile phone for Mercy Services business need to take precautions (such as not talking loudly or in public place) to protect the privacy of the person they are talking to and the content of the conversation.
- 9) If employees are on sick leave, annual leave or other leave for any length of time, the phone and all items mentioned on the receipt list must be returned to the office for redistribution to relief staff.

#### IMPORTANT

- Do not answer the phone whilst driving, as it is illegal to do so. Pull off to the side of the road and take the keys out of the ignition before using a mobile phone.
- It was noted that talking on a handsfree mobile phone while driving is legal but it is not desirable from a safety perspective. Mercy Services allows people to use a cars inbuilt Bluetooth technology or a sun visor Bluetooth device to answer short mobile phone calls. Making calls and taking longer calls should take place when the car is not moving.
- As a means of reducing the length of time staff use a mobile phone, it is preferable for field staff to contact Coordinators via the office landline rather than calling the Coordinator's mobile phone as a first option.
- Field staff are not to give out their mobile numbers to clients and/ or carers/relatives. Please direct all calls to the office or your Coordinator/Manager.
- Although Mercy Services mobile phones are to be used for Mercy Services activities only, there may be occasions on which it is necessary for you to make urgent personal calls. You are required to pay for any private phone calls made from the mobile phones. Please assist us by keeping a record and forwarding it to the Administration Assistant.

#### **4.03 Facsimile Machine (Fax)**

The purpose of the facsimile machine is to conduct Mercy Services business.

Fax coversheet templates are on the server <..\\..\\Shared\\Forms & Letterhead\\Fax & Letterhead>

#### **4.04 Two-Way Radio System**

The purpose of the two-way radio system is to conduct Mercy Services business.

Mercy Services has installed a two way radio system in some motor-vehicles. This communication system is an 'open' system, meaning communications between

base station and vehicles may be monitored or overheard by others. All staff using either base station or mobile transmitter/receivers are to comply with the laminated directions present in all relevant vehicles and at base station, relating to the operation of two way equipment.

Staff are further required to comply with the conditions of Mercy Services Radio Licensing Agreement which states Communications Permitted: *Communications relating to the directions and control of field personnel engaged in the business of the license i.e. no swearing, no playing of music, no personal message receipt or transmission.*

The base station is further limited by the lack of detailed information that they for reasons of client confidentiality, can transmit e.g. Base Station cannot transmit full names and addresses, phone numbers or particularly graphic or sensitive information. Field staff are to be mindful of these constraints when receiving messages via the two way and at all times comply with the request or direction given. If clarification is required, staff are requested to return to Mercy Services or conversely telephone Mercy Services, whichever is more appropriate or convenient.

#### **4.05 Mail**

##### Incoming Mail

Mercy Services' letterbox is situated at the front right hand side of the Tighes Hill facility. It is padlocked for security purposes and is only accessible via keys kept in the key cabinet.

All incoming correspondence to Mercy Services, unless specifically labelled Private and Confidential, shall be collected each day and opened by an Administration Assistant.

In the absence of an Administration Assistant the Senior Officer, Finance and Administration or Manager shall collect, date and distribute all incoming correspondence.

##### Outgoing Mail

All official letters on Mercy Services letterhead should be approved and signed by a Mercy Services Manager or the CEO. This applies especially to the following: Letters regarding Guardianship or anything of a legal nature; Court reports; references; support letters to other organisations and Publicity. The exceptions only would be: standard template letters to GPs; acceptance etc of referrals; and welcome packs.

See D.14 Document Management Policy which states that The Management Team has the authority to approve Mercy Services letterheads, forms and brochures for internal and external use. Mercy Services staff and volunteers will not use unapproved Mercy Services letterheads, forms and brochures (see also E.09 Client Records). Only use official hardcopy printed letterhead. Do not use electronic versions of letterhead nor amended nor photocopies of letterhead.

Staff/volunteers posting any publicity material or any material that may cause conflict must have that material sighted and approved by their Manager or by the CEO.

Staff/volunteers requiring personal correspondence to be posted can place with outgoing Mercy Services mail. If a stamp is needed it can be purchased from Mercy Services via an Administration Assistant.

#### **4.06 Accessing the computers**

##### Username and password

1. Each person that uses Mercy Services computers at West Wallsend, Tighes Terrace or Tighes Hill will be given a username and password that they will need to use to be able them to access the files.
2. A username is usually the first part of a person's Mercy Services email address e.g., joan.citizen. Some teams share an email address and they will also share a network logon.
3. Each person selects their own password. Passwords must be:
  - 7 characters long;
  - Contain both upper and lower case letters and numbers; and
  - Only be used for one three month period in each year.
4. A person must keep their password secret. If someone discovers a person's password the person should change the password.
5. The passwords will only allow a log on to the network. Other passwords may be needed for databases (e.g. TCM) or other programs.
6. A person's username and password allows them to read only or read and write to certain files on the computer network. This means when a person logs on they will only see the folders to which they have access.
7. Mercy Services staff that are doing computer-based work off-site must have adequate virus protection software installed on the computers if they intend transferring this work to a Mercy Services computer.
8. If a student needs to access our network their supervisor will need to request a logon from the CEO or Manager: Tighes Hill who will authorise SOS to establish access.

##### Changing and forgotten passwords

9. Every three months the computer will require users to change their password. If a user is away from work during the three month changeover the network will still recognise them but will require them to change their password and will calculate their next three month changeover from the date of this change of password.
10. A user can change their password at anytime by simultaneously pressing the Ctrl, Alt, Del keys and selecting the Change Password option.
11. If a user has not used their computer for 30 minutes the computer will require them to put in their password to move from screensaver to active desktop. If the computer has not been used for two hours the user will be logged off automatically and any unsaved work will be lost.
12. If a user has not logged off and another person needs to use it, a network administrator can log off the user. Network administrators are SOS Computer Services, Christine Hopkins, Karen Ireland, Lawrie Hallinan and Roy Hambly – if any of these people log off a user any unsaved work on the computer will be lost.

13. If a user forgets their password SOS Computer Services can give them a temporary password which will need to be changed when the user next logs on.

#### **4.07 Electronic Mail (email)**

##### **1) Establishment**

- a) Email addresses are allocated to staff/ volunteers on the basis that their role requires sending and receiving information via email.
- b) Email addresses are approved by the CEO or Manager: Tighes Hill

##### **2) Conditions of use**

- a) Messages that are created, sent or received using the Mercy Services email system are the property of Mercy Services.
- b) Mercy Services reserves the right to access and disclose the contents of all messages created, sent or received using its email system.
- c) All email communication must be handled in the same manner as a letter, fax, memo or other business communication.
- d) No Mercy Services material that is not already publicly available or Mercy Services sensitive information is to be distributed by company email unless approval has been granted by the CEO.
- e) No commercial messages, employee solicitations, or messages of a political nature are to be distributed using Mercy Services email.
- f) Email messages may not contain content that may be considered offensive or disruptive. Offensive content includes but is not limited to obscene or harassing language or images, racial, ethnic, sexual or gender specific comments or images or other comments or images that would offend someone on the basis of their religious or political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin or age.
- g) Incidental and occasional personal use of email is permitted. Such messages become the property of Mercy Services and are subject to the same conditions as Mercy Services email.
- h) Emails will be checked each work day. If staff are on leave they will give their network password to a delegate for their email to be checked by this person (once they return from leave they must change their password).
- i) Email messages will be responded to quickly and briefly.
- j) Outgoing emails that are to be publicity available or containing information that may be cause conflict need to be sighted by the writer's supervisor.
- k) All junk email and suspect email will be deleted immediately.

##### **3) Saving/deleting email**

- a) Emails relating to clients will be printed and placed in the client file or saved in the relevant programs folder.



- b) Staff will delete all emails within 3-months of receipt or sending. Important emails must be saved to a relevant place on the server prior to deletion.
- 4) Email backgrounds  
Emails are communications to people inside and outside Mercy Services and reflect upon the professionalism of the organisation. Therefore email content and backgrounds need to be professional in appearance and visually clear to read.
- 5) Email signature  
All email accounts must have an automated email signature which includes:  
(1) Mercy Services program (2) Mercy Services (3) phone number of sender (4) disclaimer (5) reminder on consider need for printing. For example:

**Joan Citizen**

Coordinator – Staff Pampering Service  
Mercy Services

☎: (02) 49441944

📞: 0000 000 0N0

📠: (02) 49554218

✉ email :[joan.citizen@mercyservices.org.au](mailto:joan.citizen@mercyservices.org.au)

*This email is intended for the named recipients only. It may contain copyright protected, privileged and/or confidential information. Named recipients may only communicate this message to third parties if authorised to do so. If you are not the intended recipient of this communication please delete all copies and kindly notify the sender by reply email or telephone Mercy Services on 4961 2686. The views expressed are those of the individual sender, and not necessarily those of Mercy Services. It is your responsibility to ensure that this message and any attachments are scanned for viruses.*

 Please consider the environment before printing my email.

#### 4.08 Internet

1. The purpose of internet use is to conduct Mercy Services business only.
2. It is unacceptable to use Mercy Services computers to access pornography, gambling, MSN messaging, and/or for private purchasing/selling on eBay or similar online systems.
3. Mercy Services may monitor all internet use, including specific websites visited.

#### 4.09 Style Guide

See D.14 Document Management Policy for more information

#### 4.10 Computer maintenance

1. All Mercy Services computers at all sites perform their maintenance (*Download updates, Disk clean, Defrag, and Disk Scan*) on Friday nights with shutdown by 5.30am on Saturday.
2. All Mercy Services computers will be numbered for ease maintenance

#### 4.11 Turning computers on/off

Each night each computer will automatically shut down/turn itself off at 7pm. This means users will need to turn their computer on in the morning using the button on the front. If a computer is on in the morning this could mean there is a fault

with its shutdown or maintenance and the user needs to contact SOS (via the “Blue Spot” at the bottom right hand side of the computer screen).

The auto shutdown of PCs will not affect the availability of the server for the after hours on-call service.

#### 4.12 File sharing

There is a specific way that users can share a file with other users who have access rights to different folders. The user cannot just copy/cut/move the file (or folder) as it takes with it the access restrictions it had in the original location. The original access rights might mean the person cannot see the file or cannot open it. *For example if a HCP Coordinator wanted to share a file with a DMS Coordinator and they copied it to M drive the DMS person would not be able to see it as the network still treats the file as a ‘CACP only’ object.*

A user can share a file by opening the file and using the “save as” option to specify either the M drive, Shared folder or another common location. Once the user has exited the file the other person will be able to open it (*Bearing in mind that there can be a gap of up to 15 minutes in the updating of the servers at our three sites*).

Another way of sharing a file is by attaching the file to an email. If users do email a file they should come to an arrangement that prevents unnecessary duplication of files across the network and that clarifies who will keep the file up-to-date.

#### 4.13 Terminal computers (thin/client computers)

As a means of reducing the cost in replacing and maintaining computers, as many computers as possible will be “thin” computers operating as clients of the terminal server. These computers will function almost identically to stand alone personal computers. The main difference is that thin/client computers cannot read or write to CDs, memory sticks and other portable devices. Mercy Services will ensure there are adequate numbers of “fat” computers for staff who need the additional functions.

#### 4.14 Compliance

Compliance with this policy will be assessed on:

- a) Monthly network report indicating adequate patch score and spare memory on computers;
- b) Administrative staff when conducting archiving of computer files will check folder/file naming and the person’s normal template settings; and
- c) The IT support service (SOS) will regularly check that scripts requiring password changes, automatic log off are in force.

#### 4.15 Evaluation

The performance indicator for the evaluation of this Policy is:

- a) 90% positive rating by Mercy Services staff in the biennial ICT survey
- b) Greater than 95% network health rating in monthly report by IT support service.

## 5.0 REFERENCES

<b>1. Australian Standards</b>	a) nil
<b>2. Legislation</b>	a) Health Records and Information Privacy Act, 2002 (NSW) b) Privacy Act, 1988 (Cth) c) Work Health Safety Act, 2011 (NSW) and Work Health Safety Regulation, 2011 (NSW) d) Workplace Injury Management & Workers Compensation Act, 1998 (& Workers Compensation Act Legislation Amendment Act 2001) (NSW) e) Privacy Act, 1988 (Cth)
<b>3. Professional guidelines</b>	a) nil
<b>4. Codes of Practice</b>	a) NSW Department of Services, Technology and Administration (DSTA): Archives and Record Management Authority of NSW "Guideline 18 - How to take control of your records" <a href="http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/recordkeeping/government-recordkeeping-manual/guidance/guidelines/guideline-18">http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/recordkeeping/government-recordkeeping-manual/guidance/guidelines/guideline-18</a>
<b>5. Codes of Ethics</b>	a) Australian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics <a href="http://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/1201">http://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/1201</a> b) Australian Psychological Association Code of Ethics <a href="http://www.psychology.org.au/Assets/Files/Code_Ethics_2007.pdf">http://www.psychology.org.au/Assets/Files/Code_Ethics_2007.pdf</a> c) The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. Registration Requirements <a href="http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx">http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx</a> d) Integrity in the Service of the Church <a href="https://www.catholic.org.au/media-centre/media-releases/cat_view/10-organisations/38-national-committee-for-professional-standards">https://www.catholic.org.au/media-centre/media-releases/cat_view/10-organisations/38-national-committee-for-professional-standards</a> e) Mercy Services Code of Conduct
<b>6. Evidence</b>	a) nil
<b>7. Mercy Services Values</b>	a) Justice, Respect, Care, Unity, Service

## 6.0 OTHER RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- A.03 Code of Conduct – Staff/Volunteers
- D.02 Fundraising
- D.04 Payments
- D.05 Incoming monies
- D.11 Insurance
- D.14 Document Management
- E.09 Client Records
- E.17 Privacy Policy
- F.03 Recruitment
- F.04 Learning and Development
- F.08 Employee Records
- F10 Volunteers
- G.02 WHS Management System
- G.18 Return to Work
- G.24 Plant/Equipment

## 7.0 RELATIONSHIP WITH STANDARDS

<b><i>Aged Care Accreditation Standards</i></b>	<b><i>Home Care Standards</i></b>	<b><i>NSW Disability Standards</i></b>	<b><i>EQUIP Standards</i></b>
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1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5,	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 2.1, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3,	1.6.2, 1.6.3,
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**8.0 DOCUMENT CHANGES RECORD**

<b>Dates of change</b>	<b>Section altered</b>	<b>Natures of changes made</b>
09/12/2003	Section 15 Administration and Office Procedures	First record of administration in Policy
09/02/2010	All sections	Major revision
19/07/2010	Appendix 1	deleted
23/03/2011	7.0 Relationship to Standards	Replace HACC Standards and CACP Standards with Community Care Common Standards and update to EQUIP 5 Standards
02/11/2011	a) 4.02e b) 4.02 a and f c) 4.14 Compliance and 4.15 Evaluation d) 6.0 Related Policies	a) Updated instructions for retrieval of messages b) Include sentence on all parties needing to consent to the recording of a phone call c) New sections d) Added G.24 Plant\Equipment
09/01/2012	a) 4.02 g mobile phones (bullet points 2 and 3 – under heading important)	a) Restrictions on use of mobile phones while driving and while in office
10/06/2014	a) All sections b) 4.02.g Mobile phones c) 4.09 Social media d) 4.16 Evaluation e) 5.0 References	a) Change OHS to WHS and MCS to Mercy Services b) Add more phone numbers to phone. Specify that staff must maintain a confidential PIN. Specifying what constitutes unlawful and unacceptable use. Requiring precautions be taken to protect privacy. Add that use must comply with Mercy Services Code of Conduct c) New section. d) Add evaluation measure for website e) Replace CCC Standards with Home Care Standards. Also add Aged Care Standards.
24/11/2015	a) 4.09 Social media b) 5.0 References c) 7.0 Relationship to Standards	a) Deleted (moved to new D.16 Social Media Policy) b) Update Codes of Ethics c) Disability Standards updated
02/09/2016	d) 4.05 Mail: Outgoing Mail	d) Restrict versions of letterhead correspondence and add requirement for a Management Team member to authorise
Review due 24/11/2018		