



PATIENT DIGNITY AND EQUALITY POLICY

The Practice actively promotes the right of all patients to be treated respectfully whenever they have dealings with the Practice. This means:

- No patient will be discriminated against on the grounds of age, sex, gender, marital status, pregnancy, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief
- The Practice will provide the same treatment and services (including the ability to register with the Practice) to any visitor irrespective of age, sex, marital status, pregnancy, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief
- The diversity of patients will be recognised by all staff at the Practice, and will be taken into consideration when planning care
- All patients will be afforded privacy in all circumstances where there is the potential for embarrassment or for the patient to feel ill at ease
- The views of patients will always be central when planning care
- Patients will be allowed to behave independently as far as their medical condition allows
- At no time will the human rights of any patient be violated by staff at the Practice

The requirement to respect patients is the responsibility of all staff, not just those in direct clinical contact with the patient.

The practice actively promotes and supports the ethos and the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and all staff are bound by the Practice's Equality and Diversity Policy.

PROVISIONS

General

- The Practice will not stereotype patients based on actual or perceived characteristics
- Patients will be referred to with respect even in private discussions in the surgery
- Patients will be addressed by their preferred method, and titles (Mr, Mrs etc) will be used as a first preference by staff
- Communication with patients will be individual according to the needs of the patient (e.g. those with speech difficulties, hearing, or learning difficulties may need an individual approach)
- A sign will be available in reception to offer the facility of a private discussion with a receptionist if required
- Guide dogs will be permitted in all parts of the building
- A hearing loop will be installed and receptionists trained in its use annually

- Mothers are welcome to breastfeed their babies in the surgery and a private room will be made available on request
- Clinicians and staff will respect the "personal space" of patients
- Under no circumstances will staff enter through a closed consultation room / treatment room door without first knocking, and waiting for permission to enter (if occupied), or pausing to determine that the room is empty
- Patients will be allowed free choice of doctor and nurse, where available, and will be able to wait or delay an appointment to see their choice of clinician. Where clinically urgent patients will be encouraged to see a clinician appropriate for their "best care", however undue pressure will not be applied
- Patient confidentiality will be maintained at all times unless the patient has given express consent for information to be shared

During consultations

- Consultations will not be interrupted unless there is an emergency, in which case the room will be telephoned as a first step, before knocking at the door and awaiting specific permission from the clinician to enter
- Clinical staff will listen actively to patients, then explain their diagnosis clearly, ensuring that the patient is able to understand the implications of the diagnosis and the care plan
- Patients with difficulty in understanding may have a family member or friend available to interpret or assist
- Clinical staff will listen to the views of patients and will respect and incorporate those views when discussing options for treatment or care
- Clinical staff will be sensitive to the needs of the individual and will ensure that the patient is comfortable in complying with any requests with the potential to cause embarrassment
- Patients will be afforded as much time and privacy as is required to recover from the delivery of bad news, and the clinical staff will, where possible, anticipate this need and arrange their appointments accordingly
- A chaperone will be offered where an intimate examination is to take place. See Chaperone Policy
- Patients will be able to dress and undress privately behind a curtain or screen. Patients will be asked to tell the clinician when they are ready to be seen, and they will be given sufficient time to do this bearing in mind infirmity
- The area used for dressing / undressing will be equipped with clothes pegs for clothes, and will have a chair with arms at a suitable height and design available and suitable for the patient to use
- Patients will be allowed as much independence as possible. However, those who may have difficulty in undressing may be offered the services of a second (same gender) clinician or trained Chaperone to assist
- Patients will be requested only to remove a minimum of clothing necessary for an examination
- A clean single-use blanket, sheet or similar will be available in each examination / treatment room, changed after each patient, and the patient will be advised of its availability
- Washing facilities will be offered to the patient if required

- Any equipment that is required as part of a consultation or examination will be used in a way that meets manufacturer's guidance and minimises discomfort or unease for the patient; the clinician will explain exactly how they are using the equipment and what for
- Patients will be given adequate opportunity, time and privacy for the provision of samples on the premises without feeling under duress or time limitation
- Consultations in the patient's home will be sensitive to the location and any other people who may be present or may overhear

Any patient who feels at any time that the Practice has failed to live up to the standards set out in this policy should bring the matter to the attention of the Practice Manager, who will investigate the matter thoroughly and confidentially within 10 working days.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you should raise a formal complaint through the Practice's Complaints Procedure

Behaviour towards Practice staff

The Practice assumes that patients will extend similar respect towards Practice staff, and will not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment of our staff by any visitor. Any visitor who expresses any form of discrimination against, or harassment of, any member of our staff, will be required to leave the Practice's premises forthwith. If the visitor is a patient, he/she may be removed from the Practice's list if any such behaviour occurs on more than one occasion.