

## Zero Tolerance on Violence and Aggression Policy

The practice is committed to providing a safe working environment by minimising the risk of violent and aggressive behaviour at work. The working environment is defined as the practice premises and other premises where work is undertaken as part of a person's official duties including, travelling to and from the other premises.

The practice defines violence and aggression as 'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work' including threats, verbal abuse (shouting, swearing, rude gestures), psychological abuse or physical attacks.

The practice carries out risk assessment, paying special attention the practice position, the patient's environment as well as the nature of the job. Based on the results of the risk assessment, the practice security arrangements are reviewed and team members are provided with information and regular training on how to deal with violence and aggression at work.

All team members are expected to take reasonable care of their health and safety as well as that of other persons who might be affected by their work. The reception team are expected to observe the following guidelines to minimise the risk of violence or aggression:

- Make eye contact in acknowledgement as soon as a patient approaches. If busy, smile and nod to let the patient know that they will be seen soon. (We recognise that being kept waiting without acknowledgement can cause a person to feel aggrieved.)
- Always answered the telephone politely and smile whilst talking
- Aim to answer the phone within 3 rings, state your name, ask for the patient's name and how you can help. Do not say 'please hold the line' before asking a patient for his/ her name and reason for calling.
- If a patient is kept waiting in reception, keep them informed of the reason for delay and expected time they will be seen. (We appreciate that anyone kept waiting without explanation is likely to feel aggrieved.)
- Handle cash carefully:
  - Empty the reception till/cashbox regularly out of site of the public
  - Undertake banking regularly at different times on different days, ideally with a varied route
- Always take complaints seriously and listen sympathetically

Report all incidents to the Practice Manager Ryan Earle immediately. In the case of actual or threatened violence contact the police. Record the incident on an Event Record. Ryan Earle will investigate and record any injuries in the Accident Treatment and Investigation Record.

The Practice takes it very seriously if a member of staff is treated in an abusive or violent way.

The Practice supports the government's 'Zero Tolerance' campaign for Health Service Staff. This states that GPs and their staff have a right to care for others without fear of being attacked or abused. To successfully provide these services a mutual respect between all the staff and patients has to be in place. All our staff aim to be polite, helpful, and sensitive to all patients' individual needs and circumstances. They would respectfully remind patients that very often staff could be confronted with a multitude of varying and sometimes difficult tasks and situations, all at the same time.

However, aggressive behaviour, be it violent or abusive, will not be tolerated and may result in you being removed from the Practice list and, in extreme cases, the Police being contacted.

In order for the practice to maintain good relations with their patients the practice would like to ask all patients to read and take note of the occasional types of behaviour that would be found unacceptable:

- Using bad language or swearing at practice staff

- Any physical violence towards any member of staff or other patients, such as pushing or shoving
- Verbal abuse towards the staff in any form including verbally insulting the staff
- Racial abuse and sexual harassment will not be tolerated within this practice
- Persistent or unrealistic demands that cause stress to staff will not be accepted. Requests will be met wherever possible and explanations given when they cannot
- Causing damage/stealing from the Practice's premises, staff or patients

We ask you to treat all staff courteously at all times.

### **Removal from the practice list**

A good relationship, based on mutual respect and trust, is the cornerstone of good patient care. The removal of patients from our list is an exceptional and rare event and is a last resort in an impaired patient-practice relationship. When trust has irretrievably broken down, it is in the patient's interest, just as much as that of the practice, that they should find a new practice. An exception to this is on immediate removal on the grounds of violence e.g. when the Police are involved.

