

Bootle Village Surgery

Policy Name	Chaperone Policy
Date	15/01/20
Review Date	15/01/21
Reviewed By	Nikki Reid

Purpose

This policy is designed to protect both patients and staff from abuse or allegations of abuse, and to assist patients to make an informed choice about their examinations and consultations.

The purpose of the protocol is to set out the obligations for all working at Bootle Village Surgery, concerning the confidentiality of information held about patients and the Practice. The protocol is relevant to all employers and anyone who works at the practice, individuals on training placements and visitors/observers on the premises must also adhere to this.

This Protocol will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains effective and relevant.

A Chaperone may be require is the following situations:

1. Intimate examinations.

These are examinations of the rectal, genital or breast area.

2. For patients with certain cultural or religious beliefs.

Any examination requiring shelling of clothing, this alone may be apparent when dealing with such patients, GPs need to approach the subject with particular sensitivity.

3. Patients with disabilities.

A patient with severe mental or physical disability is unlikely to attend the surgery unaccompanied. GPs should endeavour to communicate with the patient, the assistance of the relative or the carer accompanying them. Particular care should be taken to ensure that the patient is not made to feel that their wishes are being ignored.

4. Examinations by a member of the opposite sex.

These may be taboo in some religions.

5. Examinations on patients with poor English.

It would be unwise to proceed with any examination unless the GP is satisfied that the patient understands and can give informed consent. If an urgent clinical need for an examination is evident, every effort should be made to communicate with the patient by whatever means are available before proceeding with the examination.

6. Examinations on children.

Children are expected to be accompanied by a parent or adult relative to whom the need for the examination will be explained and verbal consent obtained. They will be expected to remain with the child during the examination so a further chaperone will not normally be necessary. The GP will obviously see to reassure the child and explain the examination if appropriate to the child.

7. Teenagers aged 13 and upwards.

These teenagers can consent to examinations provided the GP is sure they have sufficient competence to understand the nature and purpose of the examination. It would be advised that a chaperone be present or in the case of a female patient with the examination to be carried out by a female doctor.

Under all these situations the doctor or nurse will:

1. Explain why the examination is needed and what it will involve.
2. Obtain verbal expression, permission before proceeding.
3. Give the patient privacy to dress and undress.
4. Allow the patient to postpone or decline to be examined.
5. If appropriate, offer a chaperone and document the fact that the patient has been offered a chaperone and that permission has been given or declined.

Who should act as a Chaperone?

Either a practice nurse or community nurse. If they are not available in the surgery then one of the administration staff may be acceptable, if the same sex as the patient and if the patient accepts this.

Examinations on Home Visits.

GPs are at an increased risk of their actions being misconstrued or misrepresented if they conduct intimate examinations at patients home and it would be better to encourage these to be done at the surgery where the facilities are better, if at all possible. If not possible, ensure appropriate documentation of who was present etc.

Notice for the Waiting Room.

It is the policy of this practice to respect the privacy, dignity, religious and cultural beliefs of our patients. If you feel you would like a chaperone to be present during a physical examination by a doctor or any other health professional you may be consulting at the surgery, or if you would prefer to be examined by a doctor or health professional of the same sex as yourself, please let us know and we will do our best to comply with your wishes.