

Chaperone Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect patients and clinicians from abuse or allegations of abuse.

Policy

The clinician conducting the examination will be responsible for offering a chaperone when they deem it to be appropriate. Any explicit offer of a chaperone and response will be recorded in the patient's notes.

The patient has the right to request that a chaperone be provided for any part of the consultation, or to bring a friend or family member with them to act as an informal chaperone. This should be accepted by the clinician unless there is a particular reason for objecting to the chaperone. This should be documented in the patient's notes.

The patient must be made aware of their right to request a chaperone. This will be done by leaflets and posters displayed prominently in the waiting room as well as in each consulting room.

If the offer of a chaperone is declined but the clinician does not feel it appropriate to continue the examination without a chaperone to protect their own position the patient should be offered an appointment with a different clinician or at a time when a chaperone would be available as soon as possible, so far as this will not put the patient at risk. This should be documented in the patient's notes.

If a chaperone is requested but is not available the patient should be offered an appointment at a time when a chaperone will be available. If this would put the patient at risk this should be explained to the patient.

The chaperone will be one of the practice nurses or, in the case of male patients, one of the male GPs. The chaperone should be of the same gender as the patient.

The patient has the right to object to the individual acting as chaperone. If possible a replacement chaperone should be provided or the examination delayed until an appropriate chaperone can be provided.

If a nurse or other GP is used as a chaperone they should place themselves so that they can clearly observe the examination. They must be able to observe the procedure, so should be inside the curtain.

It is important that children and young people are provided with chaperones. GMC guidance states that a relative or friend of the patient is not an impartial observer and so would not usually be a suitable chaperone.