

# ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

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The Practice takes it very seriously if any member of staff 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 of our staff aim to be polite, helpful, and sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of each patient. The Practice respectfully reminds patients that very often staff are confronted with a multitude of varying and sometimes difficult tasks and situations all at the same time. Our staff understand that ill patients do not always act in a reasonable manner and will take this into consideration when trying to deal with a misunderstanding or complaint. However, aggressive behaviour, be it violent or abusive, will not be tolerated and may result in the patient being removed from the Practice list, and in extreme cases the Police being contacted.

In order for the Practice to maintain a good relationship with their patients the Practice has agreed that the following types of behaviour will be found unacceptable, this list is neither exhaustive nor exclusive:

- Using bad language or swearing at Practice staff
- Any physical violence towards any member of the Primary Health Care Team or other patients
- Verbal abuse toward the staff in any form including shouting
- Racial abuse and sexual harassment
- Persistent or unrealistic demands that cause stress to staff
- Causing damage/stealing from the Practice's premises, staff or patients
- Obtaining drugs and/or medical services fraudulently

We ask patients to treat the GPs and their staff courteously at all times.

Should a member of staff experience unacceptable behaviour from a patient, that patient will be given a verbal warning in the first instance, the exception to this would be where the patient has occasioned violence and will be immediately removed from our Practice List. If the behaviour did not warrant instant removal but where the patient continued to display unacceptable behaviour they will be given a written warning and asked to sign an Acceptable Behaviour Contract. Upon a third incidence of unacceptable behaviour the patient will be automatically removed from the Practice list.

### **REMOVAL FROM THE PRACTICE LIST**

A good patient-doctor 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 the immediate removal on the grounds of violence e.g. when the Police are involved.

### **REMOVING OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD**

In rare cases, however, because of the possible need to visit patients at home it may be necessary to terminate responsibility for other members of the family or the entire household. The prospect of visiting patients where a relative who is no longer a patient of the Practice by virtue of their unacceptable behaviour resides, or being regularly confronted by the removed patient may make it too difficult for the Practice to continue to look after the whole family. This is particularly likely where the patient has been removed because of violence or threatening behaviour and keeping the other family members could put doctors or their staff at risk.