

Policy for Removing Patients from Practice List

INTRODUCTION

The Surgery aims to provide the best possible health care for its patients. Removal of patients from the list will only be considered reasonable in:

- a. exceptional circumstances,
- b. the best interests of the patient

Purpose:

To define

- the practice guidelines for when it is reasonable to remove a patient from the practice list
- to ensure that any concerns about removing patients from the list are dealt with fairly.

SITUATIONS THAT JUSTIFY REMOVAL

Violence and aggressive behavior

When a patient:

- Is physically violent or threatening towards a doctor, practice staff or other patients on the practice premises.
- Causes physical damage to practice premises or other patient's property.
- Is abusive verbally or in writing, uses foul or derogatory language or makes threats towards the doctor, practice staff or other patients.
- Demonstrates racist behavior, orally or physically.
- Is violent or uses or condones threatening behavior to doctors or other members of the primary health care team while visiting the patient's home. Such behavior may involve the patient, a relative, a household member, or pets (such as unchained dogs).

Crime & Deception

Where a patient:

- Fraudulently obtains drugs for non-medical reasons.
- Deliberately lies to the doctor or other member of the primary health care team (e.g. by giving a false name or false medical history) in order to obtain a service or benefit by deception.
- Attempts to use the doctor to conceal or aid any criminal activity.
- Steals from practice premises.

Distance

Where a patient has moved out of the designated practice area and has failed to register with another GP.

Embarkation

Where a patient has moved abroad for a period of 3 months or more.

Failure to attend pre-booked appointments

Where a patient fails to attend pre-booked appointments on 3 occasions during a period of 6 months. A warning letter will be sent after 2 missed appointments advising that further abuse of our appointments system will result in removal.

Irretrievable Breakdown of the Doctor-Patient Relationship

Where a patient's behavior falls outside of that which is normally considered reasonable and leads to an irretrievable breakdown of the doctor-patient relationship.

PROCEDURE FOR REMOVAL

Violence / Crime and Deception

Any incident involving violence, crime or deception will be reported to the practice manager, who will complete an incident report and bring to the attention of the partners and a majority agreement reached.

Following agreement, the practice manager will write to the patient and explain the reasons for removal. The exception to this is if a patient has to be reported to the police when he/she will be immediately removed.

Removal to area outside practice boundary

On notification that the patient is no longer living within the practice boundary, a letter will be sent to the patient advising of the need to re-register with a GP nearer to their new address within the next 30 days.

If the patient has not re-registered, or contacted the surgery with a reasonable explanation, within the 30 day period, they will be removed from the practice list. The patient medical record/notes will be returned to Patient Services at Derwent Shared Services, Derby for re-allocation with a letter of explanation. See attached example letter.

Embarkation

On notification that the patient has moved abroad the patient will be removed from the practice list within 3 months of that notification.

Failure to attend pre-booked appointments

If a patient fails to attend a pre-booked appointment on more than two occasions in the last year, a warning letter will be sent to the patient, advising them that a further occurrence will result in removal from the practice.

If the patient fails to attend another appointment, the matter will be discussed at a practice meeting and a majority agreement will be reached as to whether the patient will be removed from the practice list.

Following agreement, the practice will write to the patient and explain the reasons for removal.

Guidance on removing patients due to irretrievable breakdown of the doctor-patient relationship

If a patient persistently acts inconsiderately and his/her behavior falls outside that which is normally considered to be reasonable, in such circumstances there may be a breakdown in the doctor-patient relationship.

Steps to be taken within the practice

- Inform appropriate members of the practice about the problem.
- The patient, and possible reasons for the patient's behavior e.g. disagreeableness, cultural differences, mental illness, personality disorder will be discussed at a Practice Meeting

Steps to be taken with the patient

- Inform the patient, either personally or in writing, that there is a problem
- Explain the nature of the problem to the patient
- Obtain the patient's perspective and interpretation of the situation.

- Obtain advice of a Medical Defence Society if appropriate

Steps to be taken if discussion fails to resolve the problem

Suggest that another GP within the practice might better fit with the patient's needs and expectations.

Steps to be taken in actually removing the patient

- Inform the PCT in writing of the decision.
- Inform the patient in writing of the decision and the reason for removal from the list.
- Explain to the patient that he or she will not be left without a GP.
- Give the patient information on how to begin the process of registering with another GP.

Family Members

When a decision is made to remove a patient from the practice list, the removal may well be extended to other members of the family or household.

The practice manager will write to the family / household offering an explanation for the removal. They will be allowed 4 weeks to re-register rather than being removed from the practice list immediately.

The partners re-affirm their commitment to do everything possible to protect staff, patients and visitors from unacceptable behavior and their zero tolerance of any incident that causes hurt, alarm, damage or distress.