

Kumar Family Practice – Chaperone Policy

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the responsibilities and procedures related to the use of chaperones during clinical examinations at Kumar Family Practice. It aims to protect both patients and clinicians and to meet best practice guidelines from the General Medical Council (GMC) and NHS England.

2. Purpose

- To provide a safe environment for patients and staff during clinical consultations and examinations.
- To ensure that all patients are aware of their right to request a chaperone.
- To define the roles and responsibilities of a chaperone.

3. Definition of a Chaperone

A chaperone is a trained member of staff who acts as a witness during a clinical examination or procedure. Their role is to:

- Provide reassurance and emotional support to patients.
- Protect the patient and healthcare professional from allegations of inappropriate behavior.
- Assist in the examination if required (e.g., passing instruments, repositioning the patient).

4. When a Chaperone Should Be Offered

A chaperone should be offered:

- For all intimate examinations (e.g., breast, genital, rectal examinations).
- When either the patient or clinician feels it is appropriate.
- To vulnerable patients or those with a history of trauma or abuse.
- Whenever a clinician feels uncomfortable proceeding without one.

If a chaperone is declined, the refusal must be documented clearly in the patient's medical record.

5. Who Can Act as a Chaperone

- Clinical staff (nurses, HCAs, or other trained professionals).
- Non-clinical staff may act as chaperones only if they have received appropriate training and the patient consents.
- Family or friends may accompany the patient but are not a substitute for a trained chaperone.

Chaperone Policy reviewed and replaced June 25 BC

All chaperones must:

- Understand the nature of the examination.
- Be trained in confidentiality and safeguarding.
- Know how to raise concerns if necessary.

6. Patient Information

- Posters are displayed in all clinical areas informing patients of their right to a chaperone.
- The offer of a chaperone will be made before an examination begins.
- Where possible, the patient's preferences (e.g., gender of the chaperone) will be respected.

7. Documentation

- The presence or absence of a chaperone must be recorded in the clinical notes.
- The name of the chaperone should be documented.
- If the patient declines a chaperone, this should be recorded along with the reason if provided.

8. Training

All staff who may act as chaperones will receive appropriate training in:

- The role and responsibilities of a chaperone.
- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- Patient confidentiality and dignity.

9. Confidentiality

All chaperones must maintain patient confidentiality at all times. Breaches of confidentiality may lead to disciplinary action.

10. Raising Concerns

If a chaperone or patient feels uncomfortable or concerned during an examination, they should report this to the Safeguarding Lead or Practice Manager immediately. All concerns will be taken seriously and investigated in line with the practice's safeguarding procedures.

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