



Chaperone Policy and Procedure

Purpose

- To aid patients to make an informed choice about their consultations and examinations.
- To protect patients from mistreatment.
- To protect staff from allegations of mistreatment.
- To respect patients privacy and dignity.

Scope

- All clinical staff.

Policy

- All clinicians, both male and female, must consider whether an intimate examination of the patient is necessary.
- The offer of a chaperone is given, if required, whether or not the clinician is the same gender as the patient.
- Patients who request a chaperone are not examined without the chaperone present.
- If either the clinician or the patient does not want the examination to go ahead without a chaperone present, or if either party is uncomfortable with the choice of chaperone, the offer to delay the examination to a later date when a suitable chaperone will be available will be made, as long as the delay would not adversely affect the patient's health.
- The formal chaperone will usually be a receptionist who has been trained as a medical chaperone and who is familiar with the procedures involved in a routine intimate examination.
- The chaperone will only be present for the examination itself and the remainder of the consultation will be conducted without the chaperone, unless the patient requests otherwise.
- Conversations during the examination are professional and considerate at all times and relevant only to the examination.
- Suitable notices are clearly visible in the patient folder and the consulting room, offering a chaperone if required.
- Consideration is given that a chaperone may be requested during a home visit.
- A relative or friend of the patient is not an impartial observer and so would not usually be a suitable chaperone, but clinicians will comply with a reasonable request to have such a person present as well as a chaperone.

Procedure

- Before conducting an intimate examination the clinician:
 - Explains to the patient why an examination is necessary and gives the patient an opportunity to ask questions.
 - Explains what the examination will involve in a way the patient can understand so that the patient has a clear idea of what to expect, including any pain or discomfort.
- Obtains the patient's permission before the examination and documents that the patient has given it.
 - Offers the patient a chaperone.
 - Ensures that the patient's privacy and dignity is respected, providing adequate privacy to undress and dress.
- At any time during the examination the clinician will stop if the patient asks them to.
- Clinicians must record any discussions about chaperones and the outcome in the patient's medical record. If a chaperone is present, it is recorded and a note made of their identity.