**WHITBY GROUP PRACTICE CHAPERONE POLICY**

Reviewed By: AW

Reviewed: 07.01.20

Review Due: January 2022

**Introduction**

This policy adheres to the “Guidance on the role and effective use of chaperones in primary and community care settings” published by the National Clinical Governance Support Team

Whitby Group Practice is committed to providing an environment where patients and staff follow best practice at all times.

Our chaperone policy is advertised on our website, our patient information screen and on notice boards in the practice.

Clinicians (male and female) should consider whether an intimate or personal examination of the patient (either male or female) is justified, or whether the nature of the consultation poses a risk of misunderstanding.

* The clinician should give the patient a clear explanation of what the examination will involve.
* Always adopt a professional and considerate manner - be careful with humour as a way of relaxing a nervous situation as it can easily be misinterpreted.
* Always ensure that the patient is provided with adequate privacy to undress and dress.

This should remove the potential for misunderstanding. However, there will still be times when either the clinician, or the patient, feels uncomfortable, and it would be appropriate to consider using a chaperone. Patients who request a chaperone should never be examined without a chaperone being present. If necessary, where a chaperone is not available, the consultation / examination should be rearranged for a mutually convenient time when a chaperone can be resent.

**Situations requiring consideration of a chaperone**

* Intimate examinations
* Breast examination
* Male and female genital examinations
* Rectal examination
* Examination in a darkened room

Some patients may decline the offer of a chaperone through embarrassment or misperception of the chaperones role.

If no chaperone is available the examination should be postponed, unless the clinical situation demands immediate action

**Role of the Chaperone**

In Whitby Group Practice the chaperone will normally be a practice nurse or health care assistant.  Their role is as follows

* Provide emotional support to the patient
* Assist in procedures
* Assist in undressing patients
* To provide protection to the doctor against unfounded allegations of improper behaviour
* To witness continuing consent for an examination or procedure and will be behind the curtain with the patient
* To support the patient against unacceptable treatment

**Training for chaperones**

All staff undertaking the role of the chaperone will be trained on induction such that they understand

Their role and responsibilities

The rights of the patient

What is meant by an intimate examination

The policy and mechanism for raising concerns

**Special Circumstances**

Careful consideration needs to be given to the following situations

* Issues specific to children
* Issues specific to religion, ethnicity or culture
* Situations where interpretation is required
* Issues raised by learning difficulties and mental health problems
* Violent and aggressive patients

**Procedure during an examination**

* Be courteous and reassuring
* Avoid unnecessary personal comments
* Encourage relevant feedback and discussion
* Remain alert to indication of distress from the patient

The chaperone template should be used for all intimate examinations

**SUMMARY**

1. Establish that there is a genuine need for an intimate examination and discuss this with the patient
2. Explain why the examination is necessary.  Give the patient the opportunity to ask questions
3. Offer a chaperone and make a record if declined\*
4. Obtain the patient’s informed consent and record it\*.  Discontinue the examination at any time at the patient’s request.
5. Give the patient privacy to dress and undress
6. Explain each stage of the examination, and what you propose to do next.  Keep the discussion relevant and avoid personal comments.
7. Record the presence and identity of the chaperone\*
8. Record any relevant issues or concerns at the time.

\* Use template to record

\*\* “Guidance on the role and effective use of chaperones in primary and community care settings” can be found at the following link (press Ctrl & click with mouse):-

[Chaperone\_model framework.pdf](Chaperone_model%20framework.pdf)

\*\* GMC Guidance March 2013 can be found at the following link (press Ctrl & click):-

[Chaperone - GMC advice - Intimate\_examinations\_and\_chaperones.pdf\_51449880.pdf](Chaperone%20-%20GMC%20advice%20-%20Intimate_examinations_and_chaperones.pdf_51449880.pdf)