

# SPA MEDICAL CENTRE

## Chaperone Policy

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This policy is designed to protect both patients and staff from abuse or allegations of abuse and to assist patients to make an informed choice about their examinations and consultations.

## **GUIDELINES**

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.
- Ensure that all examinations, internals, rectal, breast exams are all booked with a nurse being present

[\*] against an item denotes reference to another document in the Library

- If the doctor decides to conduct an examination and a nurse is not available, please ask the patient if they would not mind a receptionist being present in the room. All reception staff are CRB Checked and have undergone chaperone training.

Complaints and claims have not been limited to male doctors with female patients - there are many examples of alleged homosexual assault by female and male doctors. Consideration should also be given to the possibility of a malicious accusation by a patient.

There may be rare occasions when a chaperone is needed for a home visit. The following procedure should still be followed.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

- The chaperone should only be present for the examination itself, and most discussion with the patient should take place while the chaperone is not present.
- Patients should be reassured that all practice staff understand their responsibility not to divulge confidential information.

**A Clinician must never examine a child under the age of 16 without a parent or guardian being present, the clinician must explain the procedure to be carried out so that the child understands and in the case of an adult being absent there must always be a chaperone present. The chaperone must record the exact event as she witnessed it. If the child refuses chaperone try to obtain a signed consent, you will still have the choice of whether you feel comfortable to continue, if not please explain this to the patient and say that you feel a chaperone should be present, make sure everything is documented.**

## **PROCEDURE**

- The clinician will contact Reception to request a chaperone.
- The clinician will record in the notes that the chaperone is present and identify the chaperone.
- Where no chaperone is available the examination will not take place – the patient should not normally be permitted to dispense with the chaperone once a desire to have one present has been expressed.

- The chaperone will enter the room discreetly and remain in room until the clinician has finished the examination.
- To prevent embarrassment, the chaperone should not enter conversation with the patient or GP unless requested to do so or make any mention of the consultation afterwards.
- **The chaperone will make a record in the patient's notes after examination.** The record will state that there were no problems or give details of any concerns or incidents that occurred.
- The patient can refuse a chaperone, and if so, this **must** be recorded in the patient's medical record.