

Crown Street Surgery

2 Lombard Court, 1-23 Crown St, Acton, London W3 8SA

Tel: 020 8992 2010

www.crownstreetsurgery.nhs.uk

Zero Tolerance Policy

Introduction

As an employer, Crown Street Surgery has a duty of care for the health, safety and wellbeing of its staff. The surgery also has a legal responsibility to provide a safe and secure working environment for staff.

All staff, patients and visitors are expected to behave in an acceptable, respectful manner. To successfully provide these services a mutual respect between all the staff, patients and visitors has to be in place. Our Practice staff will remain polite, professional, helpful, and sensitive to all patients' individual needs and circumstances. We ask all patients to appreciate that very often staff could be confronted with a multitude of varying and sometimes difficult tasks and situations to deal with, all at the same time. The staff understand that ill patients do not always act in a reasonable manner and will take this into consideration when trying to deal with a misunderstanding or complaint.

The practice follows the NHS guidance concerning Zero Tolerance.

Any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work is unacceptable and not tolerated.

This includes the serious or persistent use of verbal abuse, aggressive tone and/or language and swearing/foul language.

Staff should not be left upset and distressed following an interaction with a patient, a colleague or a visitor.

All instances of actual physical abuse or threatening behaviour on any member of staff, a patient or visitor will be reported to the police as an assault.

Violence and aggression towards a person may be defined as:

"A physical contact with another person which may or may not result in pain or injury. The contact is uninvited and is an attempt to cause harm, injury or to intimidate. Non-physical aggression includes the use of language which causes offence or threatens the safety of a person".

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We expect all staff, patients and visitors to be responsible and avoid attending the surgery under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. Any alteration of prescriptions is illegal and will not be tolerated.

The following are examples of unacceptable behaviour:

- Any physical violence towards any member of the Team or other patients, such as pushing, shoving, slapping or hitting
- Threatening or abusive language involving swearing or offensive remarks.
- Racial or sexual remarks.
- Aggressive, forceful tone and/or language that upsets staff.
- Malicious allegations relating to members of staff, other patients or visitors.
- Offensive gestures or behaviours.
- Excessive noise e.g. recurrent loud or intrusive conversation or shouting.
- Abusing alcohol or drugs on practice premises.
- Drug dealing on practice premises.
- Obtaining drugs and/or medical services fraudulently.
- Wilful damage to practice property.
- Threats or threatening behaviour.
- Theft.
- Persistent and/or unrealistic demands on the service
- Repeated derogatory comments about the practice or individuals either verbally, in writing/digitally or on social media platforms – this applies to factual and false information as we have a process to feedback dissatisfaction.

This list is not exhaustive and there may be other occasions where the surgery has cause to issue a warning, terminate an employment or remove a patient from our patient list.

Registered Patients

The General Medical Council states In Good Medical Practice that: “In rare circumstances, the trust between you (the Practice) and a patient may break down, and you may find it necessary to end the professional relationship. For example, this may occur if a patient has been violent to you or a colleague, has stolen from the premises, or has persistently acted inconsiderately or unreasonably.”

This includes unnecessarily persistent or unrealistic service demands that cause disruption. Examples of this include, but are not limited to:

- Demanding to only speak to a specific team member
- Refusing appointments with an appropriate clinician for the presenting care need i.e. insisting on a GP appointment when seeing a pharmacist or nurse prescriber is most appropriate or refusing to see an available GP for your presenting care need when your preferred GP is unavailable

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- Refusing to access the service in the appropriate manner i.e. sending emails/texts instead of using the approved digital consultation service
- Demanding a same day appointment for a routine clinical need – this deprives access to urgent care services for those who genuinely need it
- Contacting individuals directly via social media or personal email instead of through the practice contact channels

If a patient is seriously unhappy with the quality of service they have the right to register with another practice without notifying the surgery and to utilise the complaints procedure. Similarly, on the occasion when a patient breaches this policy, Crown Street Surgery has the right to remove the patient from the Practice list.

In exceptional circumstances, a breakdown may occur between a doctor and their patient. If the breakdown is of a serious nature e.g. serious physical or verbal abuse to any member of the practice team, the doctors may feel that the doctor/patient relationship has been compromised. Steps may be taken to have the patient removed immediately from the practice list. Where possible, conciliation would always be the preferred route. Reasons for removal will be given in writing.

Where we deem an incident does not warrant immediate removal but is of a serious nature we will issue a first and final warning.

Patients will be removed from the patient list immediately when the surgery has needed police assistance or has made a report to the police.

The Practice has the right to refuse to register a patient who has previously been removed from the patient list. The patient will be informed in writing within 14 days of the reason for refusal to register.

The practice acknowledges that there may be instances where violence and / or aggression forms part of a patient's permanent or temporary medical condition. In these circumstances, the issue will be brought to the attention of management or a clinician if more appropriate and discussed with the patient to form part of their care planning.

This information will be recorded in the patient's medical record and flagged to ensure that members of staff are aware. In addition, where deemed necessary, appropriate support will be put in place, e.g. staff members do not see the patient alone.

Because of the possible need to visit patients at home, it may be necessary to terminate responsibility for other members of the family or the entire household to ensure the safety of practice staff.

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The prospect of visiting patients that is the residence of a relative who is no longer a patient of the practice, or the risk of being regularly confronted by the removed patient, may make it difficult for the practice to continue to look after the whole family. This is more likely where the removed patient has been violent or displayed threatening behaviour, and keeping the other family members could put doctors or their staff at risk.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the practice will also undertake the following measures to ensure a safe work environment:

- Carry out risk assessments to assess and review the duties of employees, identifying any "at risk" situations and taking appropriate steps to reduce or remove the risk to employees, particularly if they are working alone.
- Assess and review the layout of the premises to reduce the risk to employees where physically possible.
- Assess and review the provision of personal safety equipment, such as alarms.
- Develop surgery policies, procedures and guidelines for dealing with physical and verbal abuse.
- Provide support and counselling for victims, or refer to suitably qualified health professionals.
- Make employees aware of risks and ensure employee involvement in suitable training courses.
- Record any incidents on a Significant Event form and take any remedial action to ensure similar incidents are prevented in future.

We trust this policy is clear and supports a mutually respectful environment for patients, visitors and staff.