

Blaenavon Medical Practice

Violence and Aggression Policy

The NHS operate a zero tolerance policy with regard to violence and abuse and the practice has the right to remove violent patients from the list with immediate effect in order to safeguard practice staff, patients and other persons. Violence in this context includes actual or threatened physical violence or verbal abuse which leads to fear for a person's safety.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to address instances of unacceptable behaviour which may cause harm or the fear of harm to any person within the Practice. The scope of this policy is therefore:

Instances of violence or aggression committed by:

- Any person, whether patient, visitor or any other person working within the Practice

Against:

- Any patient, visitor, or other person working within the Practice

DEFINITION

Violence and aggression are defined as:

- Violence is the use of force against a person and has the same definition as "assault" in law (i.e. an attempt, offer or application of force against the person). This would cover any person unlawfully touching any other person forcefully, spitting at another person, raising fists or feet or verbally threatening to strike or otherwise apply force to any person.
- Aggression is regarded as threatening or abusive language or gestures, sexual gestures or behaviour, derogatory sexual or racial remarks, shouting at any person or applying force to any Practice property or the personal property of any person on the Practice. This would cover people banging on desks or counters or shouting loudly in an intimidating manner.

This policy applies throughout the premises, including any car park and grounds. It also applies to any employee or partner away from the Practice but only in so far as it relates to the business of the Practice.

This policy statement is designed to raise awareness on how we protect everyone who works here from the risks of violent or aggressive behaviour. It also helps to fulfil our obligations to provide a safe place of work and covers everyone who is engaged by the practice including self-employed contractors, temporary and casual workers.

- 1) Our philosophy is that violence or aggression is unacceptable in any form and for whatever reason.
- 2) We define violence and aggression on staff as:
 - a. Actual or threatened physical assaults;
 - b. Psychological abuse;
 - c. Verbal abuse, which includes shouting, swearing and gestures;
 - d. Threats against practice personnel which occur in the workplace.
- 3) It is everyone's responsibility to take reasonable care of his or her health and safety and that of other people who might be affected by his or her omissions at work.
- 4) The workplace is defined as our practice premises and all other premises where work is undertaken as part of our official duties. Travelling to and from the workplace other than practice premises is also included in this definition.
- 5) To minimise the risk of violence and aggression, we will:
 - a. Undertake risk assessments of our premises and work practices;
 - b. Ensure that the practice premises are secure;
 - c. Provide personnel who are required to stay on the premises after 9pm, where necessary, with the cost of a taxi home;
 - d. Aim to operate an effective appointment system and make the reception areas as relaxing as possible to minimise delays and tension;
- 6) Working with others to reduce violence and aggression, we will share information on violent and/or aggressive individuals with colleagues who may come into contact with them through the course of their work. We will also provide feedback to local police and/or Health Board Violence and Aggression Case Manager on a regular basis.
- 7) All incidents – however trivial – must be reported at once and a recording form completed. In the event of any actual or threatened violence, or if racial abuse is directed at staff, the police will be called. Injuries will be recorded in the accident book.
- 8) If you are subjected to a violent or aggressive incident, we will provide support, assistance and, if necessary, counselling. In some cases, a discretionary period of sick leave on full pay may be granted. Where appropriate, we will seek advice from the Health Board's Case manager on other support service which may be available

- 9) Where appropriate the practice will pursue sanctions against a perpetrator of violence or aggression. This may be criminal proceedings or other sanctions such as a Patient Undertaking.

RESPONSIBILITIES

What to do if violence and aggression is encountered:

- In the first instance a member of the staff should ask the perpetrator to stop behaving in an unacceptable way. Sometimes a calm and quiet approach will be all that is required. Staff should not in any circumstances respond in a like manner.
- Should the person not stop their behaviour the Practice Manager and/or GP Partner should be asked to attend and the member of staff should explain calmly what has taken place, preferably within hearing of the perpetrator.
- If the person is acting in an unlawful manner, causes damage or actually strikes another then the police should be called immediately.
- Should it prove necessary to remove the person from the Practice then the police should be called and staff should not, except in the most extreme occasions, attempt to manhandle the person from the premises.
- If such a course of action proves necessary then those members of staff involved must complete a written note of the incident, detailing in chronological order what has taken place and the exact words used prior to leaving the building at the end of their working day.
- It is the policy to press for charges against any person who damages or steals Practice property or assaults any member of staff or visitor/patient

PROCEDURE FOLLOWING AN INCIDENT

- Review the incident with the practice partners in order to determine severity
- Determine if the patient should be removed from the practice list forthwith
- Decide if a written warning should be given
- Decide whether to take further action if the matter has been sufficiently dealt with by the advice already given

The details of any incident other than no further action will be entered into the patient's permanent record or the employee's personal file.

Any employee or patient/visitor who receives any injury, no matter how small, should be the subject of an entry in the Practice Accident Book and should always be strongly advised to be examined by a doctor before they leave the premises

Every violent incident involving staff will be reasonably supported by the provision of medical or other treatment as necessary and all incidents should be brought to the attention of the Practice Manager, if not already involved.

The Practice re-affirms its commitment to do everything possible to protect staff, patients and visitors from unacceptable behaviour and their zero tolerance of any incident that causes hurt, alarm damage or distress.

SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES SUBJECTED TO ABUSE

The Practice takes a serious view of any incidents of physical and verbal abuse against its employees and will support them if assaulted, threatened or harassed.

The first concern of managers after an incident is to provide appropriate debriefing and counselling for affected employees. Depending on the severity of the incident this counselling may be undertaken by trained professionals.

The practice manager/line manager will assist victims of violence with the completion of the formal record of the incident and where appropriate will report the incident to the police.

In the event of serious physical and verbal abuse patients will be removed from the practice list.

Reviewed by/Changes	Date of review	Date for review
MP/None	October 2012	August 2017
MP/Information moved around	November 2017	January 2019

APPENDIX 1 - POSTER

OUR PRACTICE STAFF ARE HERE TO HELP YOU.
OUR AIM IS TO BE AS POLITE AND HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE TO ALL PATIENTS.

IF YOU CONSIDER THAT YOU HAVE BEEN TREATED UNFAIRLY OR INAPPROPRIATELY, PLEASE ASK THE RECEPTION STAFF TO CONTACT THE PRACTICE MANAGER, WHO WILL BE HAPPY TO ADDRESS YOUR CONCERNS.

HOWEVER, SHOUTING AND SWEARING AT PRACTICE STAFF WILL NOT BE TOLERATED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES AND PATIENTS WHO ARE ABUSIVE MAY BE REMOVED FROM THE PATIENT LIST.

PLEASE HELP US TO HELP YOU.
THANK YOU.

APPENDIX 2 - Do's and Don'ts when facing angry patients

Do	<u>Don't</u>
Recognise your own feelings	Meet anger with anger
Use calming body language	Raise your voice, point or stare
Put yourself in their shoes	Appear to lecture them
Be prepared to apologise if necessary	Threaten any intervention unless you are prepared to act on it
Assert yourself appropriately	Make them feel trapped or cornered
Allow people to get things off their chest	Feel that you have to win the argument

APPENDIX 4 - Draft warning letter to patient re abusive behaviour

Date

Dear

Created April 2010
Author Maria Potter
Review January 2019

This is to inform you that your abusive/aggressive behaviour on [*date*] at [*place*] is unacceptable to the Practice. Please treat this letter as a formal warning that any such behaviour in the future will not be tolerated. Any repetition of abusive/aggressive behaviour *may/will* result in you being removed from this Practice's patient list and you will be required to register elsewhere.

Yours sincerely,

Date	Reviewed By/Changes	For Review
28 th November 2011	MP. Points 1 – 9 added	January 2013