

PATIENT CHARTER

These are the standards set within this practice for the benefit of our patients. It is our job to give you treatment and advice. Following discussion with you, you will receive the most appropriate care, given by suitably qualified people. No care or treatment will be given without your informed consent. In the interest of your health, it is important for you to understand all the information given to you. Please ask questions if you are unsure of anything.

Our Responsibilities to you:

We will endeavour to treat you with courtesy, respect and sensitivity at all times. Patients will be treated as individuals and partners in their health care, irrespective of their ethnic origin, religious and cultural beliefs, gender, social class, disability or age.

We strive to maintain the highest standards of medical practice at all times. The doctors and health professionals concerned maintain these standards through continuing audit of your care and through professional learning.

Complaints and Suggestions:

We shall give you a full and prompt reply to any complaints you make about the service we provide and try and change the way we work if this would improve care or standards to you and others. In the event of a complaint, patients have access to the Practice's Complaints' Procedure.

Waiting time:

We run an appointment system at this practice. You will be given a time at which the doctor or nurse hopes to be able to see you. You should not wait more than 30 minutes in the waiting room without receiving an explanation for the delay.

Access:

You will have access to a doctor rapidly in the case of an emergency. We will arrange a home visit as appropriate for those who are too ill or infirm to be brought to the surgery. We will try to offer all patients access to a doctor within 48 hours and a nurse within 24 hours for medical problems of any kind although it will not always be possible to offer an appointment with the doctor or nurse of your choice. You will be referred for appropriate investigations, consultant opinions and care at a hospital or clinic when both you and the doctor treating you agree it is necessary and would be of benefit.

Telephone:

We will try to answer the telephone promptly and ensure that there are sufficient staff members available to do this.

Test results:

If you have undergone tests or X-rays ordered by the practice we will follow up any abnormal results and treat as necessary.

Information:

We will give you full information about the services we offer. Every effort will be made to ensure that you receive the information which directly affects your health and the care being offered.

Health promotion:

The practice will offer patients advice and information on steps they can take to promote good health and avoid illness and self-help which can be undertaken without reference to a doctor in the case of minor ailments. The Nurses are happy to discuss health promotion with any interested patients.

Medical records:

Information contained in you health records is kept confidential at all times and only disclosed to others for purposes related to your

health care (except when you have given permission).

However, NHS auditors have a duty to carry out routine checks of practice records from time to time, to determine if claims for payment by the practice have been made correctly. In the course of these checks, it may be necessary to verify details from patient records. Such checks are undertaken in accordance with strict guidelines agreed with the Health Authority, the Local Medical Committee and the Community Health Council.

We belong to the local area network of research ready practices whereby research studies may be undertaken from time to time. All research is conducted under the auspices of the NHS Ethics and Vetting Regulations.

Everyone working in the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.

If you have any concerns or objections about your records being inspected for any purpose, please notify us. Your wishes will be respected.

How your medical records are used to help you:

Your records are important to help ensure that you receive the best possible care from us.

Your records are used in the following ways to guide and administer the care you receive:

- to ensure that your doctor or nurse has accurate and up to date information to assess your health and decide what care you need when you visit in the future
- to ensure that full information is available should you see another doctor, change doctors, or be referred to a specialist or another part of the NHS

- to ensure that there is a good basis for looking back and checking on the type and quality of care you have received

Whilst always preserving your confidentiality, your records can also help us to help you by:

- assisting with the teaching and training of health care professionals (but you can choose whether or not to be involved personally)
- assisting with health research (if you need to be personally involved with the research, you will be contacted to see if you are willing to participate. You will not be identified without your agreement).

If you do not want certain information recorded on your records, please talk to your doctor.

Keeping your records confidential:

Your doctors, their staff and everyone else working for the NHS have a legal duty to maintain the highest level of confidentiality about patient information.

In some instances, you may be receiving care from other people as well as the NHS. We may need to share some information about you with them, so that we can all work together for your benefit. Anyone who receives confidential information about you from us is also under a legal duty of confidence. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example, when the health or safety of others is at risk, we will not disclose your information to third parties without your permission.

We will only give your relatives, friends and carers information if you want us to.

In certain circumstances we are required by law to report information to the appropriate authorities. This information is only provided after

formal authority has been given by a qualified health professional. For example:

- notification of new births
- where we encounter infectious diseases which may endanger the safety of others (e.g. meningitis or measles, but not HIV/AIDS)
- where a formal court order has been issued

However, our guiding principle is that we are holding your records in strict confidence.

How you can arrange to see your own records:

Everyone has the right to see the information that is kept in their medical records. If you want to see them, you should make a request at reception. We are normally obliged to let you see the information and also to explain any part of the record which you do not understand.

You are also entitled to receive a copy of the information you have seen. Please note that a charge of £0.35 per copy will be made for the administration, copying and time involved.

Should your doctor decide that seeing your records might put your health at risk, you may only be shown part of them.

Copies of letters about you:

Please ask if you wish to have a copy of a letter written about you, by your GP, to another clinician (e.g. referral letter).

Your responsibilities to us:

All patients:

- Please remember, you are responsible for your own health and the health of any of your children. We will give you our professional help and advice. Please act upon it.
- We ask that you treat the doctors and practice staff with courtesy and respect. Abusive or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated and will result in removal from the service and if registered with one of our GP practices, removal from our list.

GP Practice Patients only:

- Please let us know if you change your name, address or telephone number.
- Please do everything you can to keep appointments. Tell us as soon as possible if you cannot; give 24 hours' notice if possible.
- If you are referred for a hospital outpatient appointment – please keep it or if you cannot, inform the hospital NOT the surgery as soon as possible. The NHS can ill afford to have appointments unused. It is also very important to tell the hospital of your new address if you are on a waiting list for an operation.
- Please ask for home visits by the doctor only when the person is too ill to visit surgery.
- Please keep your telephone call brief and avoid calling during peak morning time for non-urgent matters.
- Test results take time to reach us. The practice will contact you should any treatment or follow up be required. Enquiries about tests ordered by the hospital should be directed to that hospital, not to the practice.