

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All conversations being conducted in the reception area, waiting area, surgeries or within hearing of any patient should be on strictly professional matters, never discussing a patient by name.

Similarly, if any mistake, misunderstanding or confusion has arisen, every effort must be made to prevent other patients being aware of the problem by dealing with it quietly and unobtrusively, rather than drawing attention to the problem by discussing it openly. Whenever possible, such a conversation with a patient should be in a private part of the Practice where you will not be overheard.

It should be pointed out that patient confidentiality applies to all patients; it is therefore NOT acceptable to discuss matters covered by these rules if, a spouse/ partner or anyone else from outside the practice is present, with the exception of children under 18 or if the patient has consented to have matters discussed in front of another (this should be noted on the patient record). Patients have the right to total confidentiality.

Conversations on non-professional matters should be reserved for the staff room.

Patients are attending the practice, and, as professionals, this should be respected at all times.

All matters relating to a patient's treatment are held in medical confidence and therefore must never be discussed outside the Practice or with other patients.

Matters relating to any patient must never be discussed within earshot of another patient.

**VIOLATION OF ANY OF THE ABOVE CONFIDENTIALITY RULES MAY RESULT IN DISMISSAL WITHOUT NOTICE.**

## **The Data Protection Act**

The Data Protection Act 1998 replaces the Data Protection Act 1984. The employer must follow prescribed procedures with data that is held and individuals have rights of access to data which is held on them. The employer will maintain all data in an open and fair fashion following the principles of the Act. Both patient and employee records are subject to the Data Protection Act and will be treated according to the Act.

The practice will only keep information that it is happy to share with the subject if requested to do so.

## **Sensitive Information**

The Act defines 'sensitive personal data' as personal information pertaining to:

Political opinions  
Racial or ethnic origin  
Membership of a trade union  
The sexual life of the individual  
Physical or mental health or condition  
Religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature

The Act prohibits the processing of sensitive data except in specified circumstances such as ethnic monitoring. The Employer will always seek informed consent from an Employee or a patient before sensitive data is recorded or processed.

Records will be kept in a secure place. Personnel records will only be seen by senior management, patients' records will only be seen by authorised personnel.

## **Access to Records**

An employee or a patient may request a copy of all records kept about them and copy of records will be provided within a reasonable time and at a reasonable cost. An employee or a patient may challenge information held on record and following investigation, should the information be inaccurate, the employer will correct the information and inform the patient or the employee of the change, in writing.

## **Data Protection for Patients**

Patients' personal information will be kept on file in order that appropriate dental treatment can be given. To facilitate patients' health care it may be necessary to pass information to a doctor or health care professional, a hospital or the NHS authorities. If an insurance plan or finance package is subscribed to by a patient, it may be necessary, with the patient's consent, to share certain information with the relevant company. In all cases the information shared will be only that which is relevant to the situation. Whenever there is a doubt about disclosure of confidential information, the patient's consent should be obtained at all times.

In very limited cases, such as for identification purposes, or if required by law, information may have to be shared with a party not involved in the patient's health care. In all other cases, information will not be disclosed to such a third party without the patient's written authority.

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