

Zero-Tolerance Policy

Document Detail	
Document name	Zero-Tolerance Policy
Version	Version 1
Effective from	08 November 2022
Reviewed date	
Next Review date	08 November 2025
Amended by	S. Ludford
Changes Approved by: (Sign and date)	Dr H C Barnes 04 January 2023

Changes made to document since last review	
Page No.	Detail
All	New policy document

Introduction

In the early 2000's the Government launched its Zero Tolerance campaign following an increase in violence against NHS staff. An organisation was established that was part of the NHS Business Services Authority called NHS Protect, which operated until 2017. NHS Protect took on a national role in England to reduce violence and aggression, set the strategy on violence and supported NHS organisations in prosecution of offenders.

Since 2017, there is no national body with the responsibility of protecting NHS staff. Therefore, it has been important for NHS organisations to ensure they have a clear Zero Tolerance policy in place to effectively handle any acts of aggression or violence to its staff.

All staff at Bennfield Surgery aim to be professional, polite, respectful and helpful to all patients, family members and visitors to the practice. Our aim is to have a mutual respect between patients and staff to ensure services can be delivered effectively. Our staff understand that people do not always act reasonably when they are ill, and they will take this into consideration when faced with difficult situations.

At Bennfield Surgery we operate a zero-tolerance policy on violence or verbal or physical abuse to any of its staff members. Anyone who becomes physically or verbally aggressive or violent will be asked to leave the premises immediately. Failure to do so will result in removal by the Police.

Responsibility

The Practice Manager will ensure all staff members receive the appropriate training in handling difficult situations, reporting incidents and will provide support to staff members following any incidents that occur.

It is the responsibility of each staff member to adhere to the policy and report any incidents or concerns as soon as possible to the Practice Manager.

It is the responsibility of the Practice Management team to review each reported case and where necessary, take appropriate action to remove the patient from the practice list. The Practice Manager will keep a record of reported incidents and will monitor inappropriate behaviour of patients where 'low-level' instances occur. The Practice Manager will write to the patient on repeat offences, reminding them of the zero-tolerance policy. If further offences occur after this letter, the practice has a right to remove the patient from the practice list.

It is the responsibility of the Office Manager to ensure adequate signage is displayed throughout the practice clearly informing patients, family members and visitors of the zero-tolerance policy in place.

What we expect from patients, family members and visitors

In order to maintain the mutual respect between staff members and visitors to the practice, we would ask that patients, family members and visitors are informed of the unacceptable behaviours listed below that may result in them being removed from the practice:

- The use of bad language, including swearing or derogatory language to practice staff.
- Physical violence towards staff or other visitors in the practice.
- Verbal abuse aimed towards staff or indirectly whilst in the practice.
- Racial abuse.
- Sexual harassment.
- Persistent or unrealistic demands that cause stress to staff.
- Causing damage to property or stealing from the practice premises.
- Obtaining drugs and/or medical services fraudulently.
- Written abuse received via text, email or via the website which include bad language or derogatory statements.

Removal from the practice

Removal of patients from our practice list is a rare occasion and is seen as the last resort when a Doctor/Patient relationship has broken down. The only exception is where there has been an act of violence or extreme aggression resulting in Police attendance to the practice; in this instance, immediate removal from the practice list will occur.

Removal of family member

In exceptional circumstances it may be relevant to remove the family members of the person who has been removed from the practice, particularly if there has been acts of violence or aggression against the Doctor. This is to protect the Doctor against any further abuse should a home visit be requested by the family member.

Risk assessment

The practice operates a lone working policy, and this is taken into consideration, in line with the zero-tolerance policy. This relates to consultations held within the practice and for home visits. If necessary, a chaperone will be present during the consultation, for the safety of the staff member.

Reviews are conducted following incidents with the Practice Manager, Partners and Safeguarding Lead to identify any changes to the policy or procedures to prevent an incident from reoccurring.

Where a patient has been verbally abusive, resulting in a zero-tolerance letter, a note/alert may be made on the clinical record to inform all staff and the incident will be recorded and monitored by the practice management team.