

CENTRAL SURGERY

POLICY FOR REMOVAL OF PATIENTS FROM PRACTICE LIST

INTRODUCTION

There may be circumstances when it would be considered reasonable, or in the best interests of the patient, to remove patients from the list.

The purpose of this policy, therefore, is to define the Practice guidelines for removal of a patient from the Practice list and to ensure that any concerns about removing patients from the list are dealt with fairly.

SITUATIONS WHICH JUSTIFY REMOVAL

Violence

When a patient:-

- Is physically violent or threatening towards a doctor, Practice staff or other patients on the Practice premises.
- Causes physical damage to Practice premises or other patient's property.
- Gives verbal abuse or makes threats towards the doctor, Practice staff or other patients.
- Gives racist abuse, orally or physically.
- Is violent or uses or condones threatening behaviour towards any member of the primary health care team while visiting the patient's home. Such behaviour may involve the patient, a relative, a household member, or pets (such as unchained dogs).

Crime & Deception

Where a patient:-

- Fraudulently obtains drugs for non-medical reasons.
- Deliberately lies to the doctor or other member of the primary health care team (e.g. by giving a false name or false medical history) in order to obtain a service or benefit by deception.
- Attempts to use the doctor to conceal or aid any criminal activity.
- Steals from Practice premises.

Distance

- Where a patient has moved out of the designated Practice area and has failed to register with another GP.

Embarkation

- Where a patient has moved abroad for a period of 3 months or more.

Failure to attend pre-booked appointments.

- Where a patient fails to attend pre-booked appointments on a number of occasions during a given period.

Irretrievable Breakdown of the Doctor/Nurse-Patient Relationship.

- Where a patient's behaviour falls outside of that which is normally considered reasonable and leads to an irretrievable breakdown of the doctor-patient relationship

PROCEDURE FOR REMOVAL

Violence / Crime and Deception

Any incident involving violence, crime or deception will be immediately reported to *[Insert nominated person]*, who will complete an incident report and bring to the attention of the Practice Partners. Staff involved should also make a written statement at the time as further evidence. It may be so serious that the police may need to be contacted.

If it is that serious then the patient can be removed immediately by contacting the Health Authority advising them of the incident and giving them a Log number that the police have given. The Health authority will usually send a courier to the surgery to collect the notes and that will be the end of the matter unless the Health Authority require a written statement.

For less serious Matters, each case will be discussed with all involved in the surgery and a partner and a majority agreement will be reached. If it is to remove the patient it can be done under the 8 day rule.

PCSE will need to be contacted and a brief outline given.

Following that agreement, the Practice Manager will write to the patient and explain the reasons for removal. PCSE should then deduct the patient in the normal way.

Distance

On notification that the patient is no longer living within the Practice boundary, PCSE will be informed and patient will be sent letter from PCSE advising of the need to re-register with another surgery within 28 days.

Embarkation

On notification that the patient has moved abroad the patient will be removed from the Practice list within 1 month of that notification.

Failure to attend pre-booked appointments

If a patient fails to attend a pre-booked appointment on more than two occasions in the last 6 months or if they fail to attend an appointment after receiving a phone call reminding them of their appointment, a warning letter will be sent to the patient advising them that a further occurrence could risk removal from the Practice List.

Warning letters are valid for a period of six months. Removal based on warnings greater than 6 months old will be invalid – in this case a further formal warning and period of grace will be required.

If the patient fails to attend two further pre-booked appointments, the matter will be discussed at a Practice Meeting and a majority agreement will be reached as to whether the patient will be removed from the Practice list.

Following agreement, the Practice Manager will write to the patient and explain the reasons for removal.

PCSE will need to be contacted and a brief outline given and patient will be removed under the 8 day rule. PCSE will write to the patient advising them how to find another GP practice.

Removing patients due to irretrievable breakdown of the doctor - patient relationship

Occasionally patients persistently act inconsiderately and their behaviour falls outside that which is normally considered to be reasonable. In such circumstances there may be a complete breakdown in the doctor-patient relationship.

Steps to be taken within the Practice

- Inform all appropriate members of the Practice about the problem.
- The patient and possible reasons for the patient's behaviour (e.g. disagreeableness, cultural differences, mental illness, and personality disorder) will be discussed at a Practice Meeting.

Steps to be taken with the patient

- Inform the patient, either personally or in writing, that there is a problem.
- Explain the nature of the problem to the patient.
- Obtain the patient's perspective and interpretation of the situation.
- Obtain advice of a Medical Defence Society.

Steps to be taken if discussion fails to resolve the problem

- Suggest that another GP within the Practice might better fit with the patient's needs and expectations.
- Steps to be taken in actually removing the patient.
- Inform the Primary Care Trust in writing of your decision.
- Inform the patient in writing of the decision and the reason for removal from the list.
- Explain to the patient that he or she will not be left without a GP.
- Give the patient information on how to begin the process of registering with another GP.

Family Members

When a decision is made to remove a patient from the Practice list, the removal may well be extended to other members of the family or household.

Removing other members of the household

If the behavior of one member of a household or family has led to their removal, this does not mean that the removal of other family members should automatically follow. An explicit discussion, whilst protecting the confidentiality of the removed patient, with other family members about the problem and the doctor's concerns will often obviate the need for any further action.

In rare cases, however, 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. The prospect of visiting patients where a relative who is no longer a patient of the practice by virtue of their unacceptable behavior resides, or being regularly confronted by the removed patient, may make it too difficult for the practice to continue to look after the whole family.

This is particularly likely where the patient has been removed because of violence or threatening behavior and keeping the other family members could put doctors or their staff at risk.

The practice should always consider how it would look to outside observers if a family were to be summarily removed from the list, in haste, without explanation, for a single misdemeanor or disagreement with one family member.

The practice Manager will write to the family / household offering an explanation for the removal. They will be allowed 4 weeks to re-register rather than being removed from the Practice list immediately.

Responsibility

Responsibility for implementing and monitoring the policy rests with the Partners and Practice Manager.

The Practice re-affirm 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.