

Chaperone Policy

General considerations

We are committed to providing a safe, comfortable environment where clients and staff can be confident that best practice is being followed at all times and the safety of everyone is of paramount importance. All clients are entitled to have a chaperone present for any consultation, examination or procedure.

Clients are advised to request a chaperone by phone or email at the time of booking an appointment, this is so that arrangements can be made and the appointment is not delayed. Male and female chaperones are available at Gloster Aviation Medicals. Our doctors may also require a chaperone to be present for certain consultations.

All staff are aware of and have received appropriate information in relation to this Chaperone Policy. All trained chaperones understand their role and responsibilities which are as follows:

- Maintain client confidentiality.
- To acknowledge a client's vulnerability and to ensure a client's dignity is preserved at all times.
- Are familiar with the procedures involved in the relevant examination.
- Be prepared to raise concerns about a doctor if misconduct occurs.
- Provide emotional comfort and reassurance to clients.
- Assisting in the examination (for example during ECG recording).
- Assist in undressing if required.
- To act as interpreter if relevant.

The chaperone's presence adds a layer of protection for both the doctor and the client and it is rare for an allegation of assault to be made if a chaperone is present.

Consultations involving intimate examinations

Chaperones are most often required or requested where a male examiner is carrying out an intimate examination or procedure on a female client, but the designation of the chaperone will depend on the role expected of them, whether participating in the procedure or providing a supportive role. In this situation the healthcare professional will:

- Establish there is a genuine need for an intimate examination and discuss this with the client and whether a formal chaperone (such as a nurse) is needed.

- Explain to the client why an examination is necessary and give the client an opportunity to ask questions. The chaperone would normally be the same sex as the client and the client will have the opportunity to decline a particular person as a chaperone, if that person is considered not acceptable for any reason.
- Offer a chaperone or invite the client to have a family member or friend present.
- If the client does not want a chaperone, record that the offer was made and declined in the client's notes.
- Obtain the client's consent before the examination and be prepared to discontinue the examination at any stage at the client's request.
- Once the chaperone has entered the room, they should be introduced by name and the client allowed privacy to undress / dress. Use drapes / curtains where possible to maintain dignity. There should be no undue delay prior to examination once the client has removed any clothing.
- Explain what is being done at each stage of the examination, the outcome when it is complete and what is proposed to be done next. Keep discussion relevant and avoid personal comment.
- If a chaperone has been present, record that fact and the identity of the chaperone in the client's notes.
- During the examination, the chaperone may be needed to offer reassurance, remain alert to any indication of distress but should be courteous at all times.
- Record any other relevant issues or concerns in the client's notes, immediately following the consultation.
- Chaperones should only attend the part of the consultation that is necessary – other verbal communication should be carried out when the chaperone has left.
- Any request that the examination be discontinued should be respected.
- Healthcare professionals should note that they are at an increased risk of their actions being misconstrued or misrepresented, if they conduct intimate examinations where no other person is present.
- If the chaperone is not DBS trained then they must leave the room if the healthcare professional does, i.e. they must not be present in the room alone with the client.