

Zero Tolerance Policy



We are here to help you

Our staff have the right to be treated with dignity and respect at all times without the risk of threatening behaviour or violence.

This behaviour will not be tolerated towards staff, and may result in offenders being asked to leave, and could be removed from our patient list.

For more information, please go to:

Introduction

CountryHealth takes it very seriously if a member of staff is treated in an abusive or violent way.

Our practice supports the government's '**Zero Tolerance**' campaign for Health Service Staff. This states that Doctors and their staff have a right to care for others without fear of being attacked or abused. To successfully provide these services a mutual respect between all the staff and patients has to be in place.

Our staff aim to be polite, helpful, and sensitive to all patients' individual needs and circumstances. We respectfully remind patients that our staff could be confronted with a multitude of varying and sometimes difficult tasks and situations, all at the same time. We understand that ill patients do not always act in a reasonable manner and will take this into consideration when trying to deal with a misunderstanding or complaint.

However, aggressive behaviour, be it violent or abusive, will not be tolerated and may result in you being removed from the Practice list and, in extreme cases, the Police being contacted.

In order for us to maintain good relations with our patients we would like you to read and take note of the occasional types of behaviour that would be find unacceptable:

- Using bad language or swearing at practice staff
- Verbal abuse towards the staff in any form including verbally insulting the staff
- Racial abuse and sexual harassment
- Persistent or unrealistic demands that cause stress to staff
- Obtaining drugs and/or medical services fraudulently

The Legal Position

As a responsible employer, CountryHealth has a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of our staff under the Health & Safety at Work Act. This includes a risk assessment of violence towards staff and taking steps to mitigate this under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Definition of Physical and Verbal Abuse and Violence:

Physical and verbal abuse includes:

- Unreasonable and / or offensive remarks or behaviour / rude gestures / innuendoes
- Sexual and racial harassment
- Threatening behaviour (with or without a weapon)
- Discrimination of any kind
- Damage to an employee's or employer's property

The Practice supports the Zero Tolerance stance adopted by the NHS.

The HSE (Health and Safety Executive) defines work-related violence as:

“Any incident, in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work”.

Violence and aggression towards a person may also be defined as:

“A physical contact with another person which may or may not result in pain or injury. The contact is uninvited and is an attempt to cause harm, injury or to intimidate. Non-physical aggression includes the use of language which causes offence or threatens the safety of a member of staff”.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, CountryHealth will undertake the following measures to ensure a safe work environment:

- Carry out risk assessments to assess and review the duties of employees, identifying any “at risk” situations and taking appropriate steps to reduce or remove the risk to employees, particularly if they are working alone.
- Develop surgery policies, procedures and guidelines for dealing with physical and verbal abuse.
- Provide support and counselling for victims, or refer to suitably qualified health professionals.
- Make employees aware of risks and ensure employee involvement in suitable training courses.
- Record any incidents on a Significant Event form and take any remedial action to ensure similar incidents are prevented in future.

Removal from the Practice List

We value and respect good patient-doctor relationships based on mutual respect and trust. When trust has irretrievably broken down, the practice will consider all factors before removing a patient from their list, and communicate to them that it is in the patient’s best interest that they should find a new practice.