

HAMSTREET SURGERY

POLICY FOR REMOVAL OF PATIENTS FROM PRACTICE LIST

1. Purpose of this document

Hamstreet Surgery aims to provide the best possible healthcare for its patients. However, there may be circumstances when it would be considered reasonable or in the best interest of the patient and practice staff 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.

2. Responsibility

Responsibility for implementing and monitoring the policy rests with the senior partner and the practice manager.

Hamstreet Surgery is committed to do everything possible to protect staff, patients & visitors from unacceptable behaviour and the practice's zero tolerance of any incident that causes hurt, alarm, damage or distress.

3. SITUATIONS WHICH JUSTIFY REMOVAL

Violence or Unacceptable Behaviour

If a patient has displayed any violent, abusive or threatening behaviour towards the GP or any other member of Practice Staff that has required police intervention, that person can be removed without warning from the Practice patient list immediately.

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 another patients' property.
- Gives verbal abuse or makes threats towards the doctor, practice staff or other patients.
- Gives racist abuse, orally or physically.
- Sexual harassment of Practice staff or other patients.
- Stalking or inappropriate attachment to a GP or other member of staff.
- Is violent or uses or condones threatening behaviour to doctors (or some other members 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).*

**Removal can extend to any family living at the same address as any future visits may expose practice staff to harm if visiting the home, or if the perpetrator attends the Practice with a family member.*

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.

Irretrievable breakdown of the Doctor/Nurse-Patient relationship

Where the patients behaviour falls outside of that which is normally considered reasonable and leads to irretrievable breakdown of the Doctor/Nurse-Patient relationship.

4. PROCEDURE FOR REMOVAL

Violence / Crime and Deception

Any incident involving violence, crime or deception will be immediately reported to the practice manager, who will complete an incident report and bring it to the attention of the practice partners

Each case will be discussed at a senior management meeting to include the senior partner. If a decision is taken to either warn or remove the patient, the practice manager will write to the patient with an explanation of the reasons for the warning or removal

After careful consideration and advice from the MDDUS or other agency, where it is decided to remove a patient, the practice manager will also need to be explained to the patient that he/she will not be left without a GP and provide information to the patient on how to begin the process of registering with another GP. This also involves providing contact details of: Other GP Surgeries in the area, NHS Direct Telephone Advice Line & NHS Direct Online

The exception to this is if a patient has to be reported to the police for violent behaviour towards any member of the practice staff when she/he may be immediately removed. 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.

In such circumstances, the patient can be removed immediately by contacting the Commissioning Group / Registration Department/PCSE, advising them of the incident and giving them a log number that the police have given.

Distance

On notification that the patient is no longer living within the practice boundary, and if it is impractical for the patient to remain registered at the surgery, a letter will be sent to the patient advising of the need to re-register within 30 days elsewhere.

Notification will be sent to the Registration Department/PCSE after 30 days if the patient has not been deducted by the Registration Department as they have not registered elsewhere.

Embarkation

On notification that the patient has moved abroad the patient will be removed from the Practice list within 3 months of that notification.

Guidance on 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.
- 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 Organisation.

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 appropriate Registration Department/PCSE 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.

5. 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.

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.

6. Exceptional Circumstances

Where the practice manager and senior partner feels that a written explanation for the removal of a patient from the practice list could potentially endanger the safety of practice staff, a management meeting to include the senior partner will be held to decide whether the omission of a written explanation is justified.

Consider obtaining advice from MDU or other agency.

Following agreement, inform NHS England in writing of the decision.

7. Warning letter

It is essential that the patient be provided with reasons at the warning stage, along with details of the remedial action they should take if they wish to stay on the practice list. The purpose of the warning is to give the patient a chance to change their behaviour.