

Patients Removal Policy

1. Purpose of this document

Highbury Grange Medical Practice aims to provide the best possible health care for its patients. However, there may be circumstances when it would be considered reasonable, or in the best interests 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 when it is reasonable to remove a patient from the practice list and to ensure that the process is dealt with fairly.

2. Responsibility

Responsibility for implementing and monitoring the policy rests with the senior partner (Dr. A. Trosser) and the Practice Managers.

Highbury Grange Medical Practice re-affirm its commitment to do everything possible to protect staff, patients and 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:

3.1 Violence

- When a patient is physically violent or threatening towards a doctor, practice staff or other patients on the practice premises.
- When a patient causes physical damage to practice premises or other patient's property.
- When a patient gives verbal abuse or makes threats towards the doctor, practice staff or other patients.
- When a patient gives racist abuse, verbally or physically.
- When a patient 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).

3.2 Crime & Deception

- Where a patient fraudulently obtains drugs for non-medical reasons.
- Where a patient 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.
- Where a patient attempts to use the doctor to conceal or aid any criminal activity.
- Where a patient steals from practice premises.

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3.3 Distance

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

3.4 Embarkation

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

3.5 Failure to attend pre-booked appointments

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

3.6 Irretrievable Breakdown of the Doctor-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.

4. Procedure for Removal

The following procedures should be followed under each category when removal of a patient is being considered:

4.1 Violence / Crime and Deception

- ✓ Any incident involving violence, crime or deception must be reported to the practice manager, who will complete an incident report and bring to the attention of the senior partner (Dr. A. Trosser).
- ✓ Each case will be discussed at a senior management meeting to include the senior partner. If a decision is taken to either warn (see paragraph 7) 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 MDU 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
 - PALS (Patient Advice & Liaison Service)
 - NHS Direct Telephone Advice Line & NHS Direct Online

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- × *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.*

4.2 Distance

- ✓ On notification that the patient is no longer living within the practice catchment-area, a letter will be sent to the patient advising of the need to re-register with a doctor in their area of residence within the next 30 days.
- ✓ The Practice Manager will also 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
 - PALS (Patient Advice & Liaison Service)
 - NHS Direct Telephone Advice Line & NHS Direct Online
- ✓ If the patient has not re-registered, or contacted the surgery with a reasonable explanation, within the 30 day period, they will be removed from the practice list.

4.3 Embarkation

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

4.4 Failure to attend pre-booked appointments

- ✓ If a patient fails to attend a pre-booked appointment on more than one occasion in the last year, a warning letter (see paragraph 7) may be sent to the patient, advising them that a further occurrence could risk removal from the practice.
- ✓ If the patient fails to attend another appointment, the matter will be discussed at a management meeting to include the senior partner, and a decision will be taken 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, but also advising the patient that he or she will not be left without a GP.
- ✓ The practice manager will also 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
 - PALS (Patient Advice & Liaison Service)

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- NHS Direct Telephone Advice Line & NHS Direct Online

4.5 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.

The following steps promote good practice in such an event:

4.5.1 Steps to be taken within the practice

- ✓ Inform all appropriate members of the practice about the problem.
- ✓ discuss possible reasons for the patient's behaviour (e.g. disagreeableness, cultural differences, mental illness, personality disorder) and consider constructive steps which might avoid the need for removal
- ✓ Consider obtaining advice from MDU or other agency

4.5.2 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.

4.5.3 Steps to be taken if discussion fails to resolve the problem

- ✓ Suggest that another GP within the practice might be able to satisfy the patient's needs and expectations.

4.5.4 Steps to be taken in actually removing the patient

- ✓ Inform the PCT/Consortium in writing of the 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. This also involves providing contact details of:
 - Other GP Surgeries in the area
 - PALS (Patient Advice & Liaison Service)
 - NHS Direct Telephone Advice Line & NHS Direct Online

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 the PCT/Consortium 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.

8. Patient Removal Period

- ✓ The removal will not take effect until the eighth day after the request is received by the authority unless the patient is accepted by, allocated or assigned to another GP sooner than this. The patient is always notified by the PCO.