

THE ATRIUM HEALTH CENTRE & SANDFORD SURGERY
PATIENT POLICY

Title: Zero Tolerance Policy

Review Date: October 2028

Version: 1.4

Introduction:

The practice has a duty to provide a safe and secure environment for all patients, staff, and visitors. Violent or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated, and decisive action will be taken to protect staff, patients, and visitors. This policy has been developed in the context of the government's national Zero Tolerance initiative against violence in the NHS.

The purpose of this policy is to address instances of unacceptable behaviour which may cause harm or the fear of harm to any person within the Practice. The scope of this policy is therefore:

- Instances of violence or aggression committed by: - any person, whether patient, visitor or any other person working within the Practice
- Against: - any patient, visitor, or other person working within the Practice

Policy Details:

Violence and aggression are defined as: -

- Violence is the use of force against a person and has the same definition as "assault" in law (i.e. an attempt, offer or application of force against the person). This would cover any person unlawfully touching any other person forcefully, spitting at another person, raising fists or feet or verbally threatening to strike or otherwise apply force to any person.
- Aggression is regarded as threatening or abusive language or gestures, sexual gestures or behaviour, derogatory sexual or racial remarks, shouting at any person or applying force to any Practice property or the personal property of any person on the Practice. This would cover people banging on desks or counters or shouting loudly in an intimidating manner.

The following are examples of behaviour, which are not acceptable to the Practice:

- Excessive noise e.g., loud or intrusive conversation or shouting.
- Threatening or abusive language involving excessive swearing or offensive remarks.
- Derogatory racial or sexual remarks.
- Malicious allegations relating to members of staff, other patients or visitors.
- Offensive sexual gestures or behaviours, including those relating to transphobia (harmful behaviour towards someone because they are trans) and homophobia (harmful behaviour towards someone because of their sexual orientation).
- Abusing alcohol or drugs (all medically identified substance abuse problems will be treated appropriately).
- Drug dealing.
- Wilful damage to Practice property.
- Theft.
- Threats of violent behaviour.

This policy applies throughout the practice, including any car park and grounds. It also applies to any employee or partner away from the Practice but only in so far as it relates to the business of the Practice.

All instances of violence and/or aggression by a patient will be documented on the patients' medical record.

Following any incident by a patient, the patient may receive a letter explaining that their behaviour is unacceptable and their expected standards of behaviour, which must be observed in the future. If the behaviour continues, an informal warning will be given about the possible consequences of any further repetition. Failure to subsequently desist will result in the removal of the patient from the practice list.