DOLAN'S PODIATRY

Equality, Diversity and Accessibility Policy

Policy owner: Michelle Dolan, HCPC Registered Chiropodist/Podiatrist
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1. Purpose

Dolan's Podiatry is committed to providing fair, respectful and accessible care. Every patient should be treated with dignity and compassion, without discrimination or disadvantage.

This policy applies to all services provided at the main clinic, pop-up clinics, care homes and other locations where podiatry services are delivered.

2. Equality and non-discrimination

I will not discriminate unlawfully against patients on the basis of protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, including:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Race, including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender reassignment.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Marriage and civil partnership, where applicable under the Act.

I will also be mindful of barriers that may affect access to care, including language, literacy, financial circumstances, transport, communication needs, neurodivergence, anxiety and previous experiences of healthcare.

Every patient will be assessed and treated according to their individual needs and clinical circumstances.

3. Dignity, respect and individual needs

Patients will be treated respectfully, regardless of their background, appearance, behaviour, beliefs, disability or personal circumstances.

I will aim to:

- Respect privacy, dignity and personal boundaries.
- Listen to patients' concerns and preferences.
- Explain assessments and treatments in an understandable way.
- Avoid making assumptions about a person's abilities, wishes or understanding.
- Support patients to participate in decisions about their care.
- Respect cultural and religious needs wherever reasonably possible.

4. Reasonable adjustments and accessibility

Where a patient has a disability or other access requirement, I will consider reasonable adjustments to help them access care and participate in treatment.

Adjustments may include:

- Allowing additional appointment time where possible.
- Using clear, plain language or alternative communication methods.
- Providing written information where appropriate.
- Allowing breaks during an appointment.
- Accommodating a suitable support person.
- Considering sensory needs, including lighting, noise and the clinical environment.
- Making appropriate arrangements for mobility, positioning and transfers.

Where a venue is unsuitable for a patient's needs, I will consider whether a reasonable alternative arrangement can be made or whether referral to a more suitable service is necessary.

5. Communication and informed consent

I will take reasonable steps to ensure that patients understand the information needed to make decisions about their care.

Difficulty communicating, a learning disability, neurodivergence, dementia or a decision that appears unwise must not, by itself, be taken as evidence that a person lacks capacity.

Consent must be obtained before assessment or treatment, in accordance with applicable law and professional standards. Where there is concern about capacity, I will follow the relevant legal requirements and seek appropriate advice where necessary.

6. Accessibility at clinic venues

For appointments at pop-up clinics and other venues, I will consider relevant practical issues, including:

- Safe access and exit.
- Mobility and seating requirements.

- Privacy and confidentiality.
- Suitable lighting and space for treatment.
- Whether the environment supports the patient's communication and clinical needs.

If a venue cannot provide a safe or appropriate environment for a particular patient, I will explain the concern and consider an alternative arrangement.

7. Raising concerns

Patients are encouraged to raise any concerns about accessibility, discrimination or the way they have been treated. Concerns will be taken seriously and handled in accordance with the practice's Complaints and Patient Concerns Policy.

I will reflect on feedback and make reasonable improvements where appropriate.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, professional guidance or practice arrangements change.

Signed: _____

Date: _____