DOLAN'S PODIATRY

Chaperone Policy

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

The purpose of this policy is to protect the privacy, dignity, safety and wellbeing of patients during assessment and treatment. It explains when a chaperone may be appropriate and how requests for a chaperone will be managed.

This policy applies to appointments at the main clinic, pop-up clinics, care homes and any other location where I provide podiatry services.

2. What is a chaperone?

A chaperone is an appropriate person who is present during an examination or treatment to support the patient's dignity, comfort and safety and, where appropriate, provide reassurance to both the patient and practitioner.

A formal chaperone is distinct from a friend, relative or carer who attends to provide personal support. A family member or carer will not automatically be treated as an independent chaperone.

3. When a chaperone may be appropriate

A chaperone may be offered or requested in circumstances including:

- Where the patient requests one.
- Where a child or young person is being examined or treated.
- Where a patient has communication difficulties or needs additional support.
- Where an examination or treatment may cause embarrassment or discomfort.
- Where the patient or practitioner feels that a chaperone would be helpful.
- Where there are particular safeguarding, vulnerability or professional-boundary concerns.

The need for a chaperone will be considered respectfully and without making assumptions about the patient.

4. Patient choice

Patients will be given the opportunity to request a chaperone where appropriate. Their wishes will be respected wherever reasonably possible.

If a patient requests a chaperone and an appropriate person is not available, a non-urgent examination or treatment may be rearranged where this is clinically appropriate. If delaying care could place the patient at risk, I will consider the safest appropriate alternative and explain the options.

A patient may decline a chaperone. This decision should be respected and documented where relevant.

5. Role and conduct of the chaperone

A chaperone should:

- Respect the patient's privacy, dignity and confidentiality.
- Behave professionally and remain within the agreed role.
- Avoid unnecessary involvement in the examination or treatment.
- Raise any immediate concerns about the patient's safety or wellbeing.
- Support clear communication where appropriate.

The presence of a chaperone does not replace the need to obtain valid consent from the patient or their appropriate representative where legally required.

6. Children and adults requiring additional support

Where a child or adult at risk is being treated, appropriate safeguarding procedures will be followed. A parent, carer or support person may be involved where suitable and appropriate, taking account of the patient's wishes, capacity, communication needs and safety.

The presence of a parent or carer does not remove the practitioner's safeguarding responsibilities.

7. Confidentiality

Chaperones must respect the confidentiality of information they hear or observe during an appointment. Relevant information may only be shared where there is an appropriate lawful reason, including a safeguarding concern or a need to protect someone from serious harm.

8. Documentation

Where a formal chaperone is present, the clinical record should include, as appropriate:

- The chaperone's name and role.
- Confirmation that the chaperone was present.

- The patient's request for, or agreement to, a chaperone.
- Any relevant decision to decline a chaperone or rearrange treatment.
- Any concerns or incidents arising during the appointment.

9. Review

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

Signed: _____

Date: _____