Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Chaperone

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Patient Information

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Introduction

Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (WWL) is committed to developing a culture within the organisation that promotes and champions the privacy and dignity of all patients. It is recognised that the way in which care is delivered can directly influence a person's self-image.

Some health care interactions and treatments, particularly where they involve intimate parts of the body and states of undress, can make patients feel vulnerable or distressed.

The presence of a chaperone may assist in supporting and reassuring the patient during the healthcare interaction. The healthcare professional may also require a chaperone to be present for certain consultations in accordance with the WWL's Chaperone Policy.

The Trust believes respect, explanation, consent, and privacy are paramount to ensuring you receive a positive patient experience whilst visiting WWL.

What to expect

You should expect to be offered a chaperone for any intimate examinations that are requested as part of your treatment plan. You can request that a chaperone is present during any health interaction that you feel uncomfortable with, for example, assistance with personal care.

Expect the role of the chaperone to be clearly explained to you, the chaperone will be introduced to you by the health professional that is to undertake the health care interaction

or examination / procedure.

There is no common definition of a chaperone given by the Trust because the needs of the patient, health care practitioner and type of procedure will dictate the role.

Who can be a chaperone?

A member of staff or a paid / professional carer can be a chaperone.

Can a family member act as a chaperone?

Your family member cannot act as a chaperone, formally witness, or take part in a clinical examination or interaction. You can however request that a member of your family or a friend is present during the examination, procedure, or interaction.

Can I refuse a chaperone?

You have the right to refuse that a particular person is a chaperone; in this instance a member of staff will document the reasons for your refusal and your health interaction will be reviewed.

What is the chaperone’s responsibility?

To ensure that conduct is sensitive and respectful of your dignity and confidentiality

To reassure you if you are distressed or experiencing discomfort and to communicate this to the member of staff undertaking the episode of care

To ensure that they can communicate with you in a way that you can understand

To ensure they are aware of and able to access the Trust complaints process and mechanism for raising concerns

What if a chaperone cannot be offered?

If in the unlikely event a chaperone cannot be offered because of an emergency or staff unavailability, then you will be informed. You may be asked in this instance if you would consent to proceeding with the interaction in the absence of a chaperone or more appropriately offered an alternative appointment when a chaperone will be available.

Where you express a personal preference, every effort will be made to ensure that intimate procedures, including assistance with personal hygiene are carried out by a member of staff of the same gender. If this cannot be achieved because of the specialist nature of the procedure, a chaperone of a different gender may be offered. If this is not possible, the reasons will be documented in your notes and an incident form completed, which will be communicated to senior management.

Contact

Please speak to a member of staff on the ward or in the outpatient department if you have any questions regarding this leaflet.



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