

**Falkland Islands Government**  
**Department of Health and Social Services**



**Chaperone Policy**

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## Chaperone Policy

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## **1 Introduction**

All medical consultations, examinations and investigations are potentially distressing for patients, however for most patients respect, explanation, consent and privacy will be all they need.

It is good practice to offer a chaperone to all patients. This is particularly important for patients who are having to undress for part of the consultation and especially when undergoing an intimate examination. The chaperone may only be required for the examination and not for the full consultation.

A patient's care should not be compromised while finding a chaperone, for instance in an emergency situation, where clinical care will become the imperative.

## **2 Aim**

To give guidance to all healthcare professionals on the use of chaperones, in particular during intimate examinations. The guidance is also for those being asked to be a chaperone.

## **3 Objectives**

- To ensure the safety, comfort, dignity and respect of patients;
- To enable healthcare professionals to safely carry out intimate examinations required whilst minimising the risk of their actions being misinterpreted
- To be able to provide effective health care to the patient
- To provide an independent objective view of the examination

## **4 Scope**

The policy is relevant to all healthcare professionals working within the Falkland Islands Government (FIG) Health and Social Services Department (H&SS)

## **5 Definitions**

Intimate examination

- Examination of breasts, genitalia, rectum or other intimate areas, particularly intrusive examinations;

- Could include close examination of the patient or examination of the patient in reduced lighting or following sedation

#### Healthcare Staff

- All members of the H&SS who provide care to patients

#### Healthcare Professionals

- All members of the H&SS who are qualified and registered with a professional body

#### Chaperone

- An impartial observer present during an intimate examination of a patient
- Anyone who is able to offer comfort to the patient;
- Is able to speak and advocate for the patient;
- Is able to be objective about the examination that has occurred;
- Unusually provide protection for the Healthcare Professional;
- Generally is the same sex as the patient defines themselves
- The chaperone is not necessarily an assistant to the healthcare professional
- The chaperone is not an interpreter
- The chaperone is rarely a family member as they will likely not be impartial

## 6 **Policy**

When a chaperone is offered, requested and accepted the healthcare professional should arrange for someone within the H&SS Department to act as chaperone and:

- Ensure that the patient understands the need for the examination and what is going to be done, what areas are to be examined including if both the normal and troublesome sides are to be checked and whether there may be pain or discomfort in terms that the patient will understand;
- Ensure that the patient knows the chaperone is going to be there and their role, and gain consent that this will happen;
- Ensure that all the equipment is available for the examination before it begins;
- Ensure that as far as reasonably practicable the examination will not be disturbed

If a chaperone is actually not available then the healthcare professional may re-arrange the examination to a time when one is available. In the unlikely event of no chaperone being available and there is a risk of deterioration of the patient's condition then discussion with the patient may result in the examination taking place, very clear documentation will be required including as to why no chaperone could be found.

Where it may result in any deterioration the healthcare professional needs to balance the need for examination with a chaperone against the need for the examination for the patients' health and the clinical need will be imperative.

Record on the patient's consultation record that a chaperone was offered, whether they were wanted and who acted as the chaperone. If the patient has refused to have a chaperone and the healthcare professional is content to continue with the consultation then this needs recording.

## **7. Duties and Responsibilities of Chaperone**

The chaperone will:

- Have an independent role from both the patient and the healthcare professional that nevertheless supports the investigation, examination or treatment being carried out;
- Be sensitive and respect the patient's dignity and confidentiality;
- Reassure the patient if they show signs of distress or discomfort and represent those signs to the healthcare professional;
- Be familiar with the procedures involved in a routine intimate examination so that they can be confident that it is being carried out effectively;
- Ensure that all the equipment needed is available by asking the healthcare professional if they have what they need;
- Stay for the whole of the examination and as far as reasonable be able to see what the healthcare professional is doing but not necessarily stay for the whole consultation;
- Be prepared to raise concerns if they feel that the healthcare professional's behaviour or actions are not compatible with good routine procedures and record their findings.

## **8 Training**

Attend training related to acting as a chaperone which will include:

- What is meant by the term chaperone
- What is an 'intimate examination';
- Why chaperones need to be present;
- The rights of the patient;
- The chaperone's own role and responsibility.

## **9 Auditable Standards**

Search on electronic records regarding use of chaperone

That chaperones have attended

- Mandatory Training
- Signed Code of Confidentiality
- Attended training on acting as a chaperone

If you would like a chaperone during your consultation, please just ask.

Kana murikuda kunge paine muperekedzi pamuri kuonekwa zivisai

Kung gusto mong may kasama ka/chaperone sa iyong konsultasyon, wag

Si desea tener un chaperon(a) con usted durante su consulta, por favor solo pidalo