

Disability Access Policy

The practice is committed to complying with the relevant regulations, legislation and the GDC Standards to provide caring and inclusive environment for all patients. For the purpose of this policy, the term 'disability' may include physical and sensory impairments, learning disabilities, chronic or terminal illness and use of mental health services. People are protected from unlawful discrimination through the application of our policies and procedures.

The practice has made reasonable adjustments to the facilities, policies, procedures, communication, signage and team members' training to provide access to our services. Guide and assistance dogs are welcome in practice surgeries, apart from during aseptic procedures such as implant placements. The practice will provide water for such dogs if requested. Practice information is available in alternative formats including large print [audiocassette, CD and in Braille]. [Patients with hearing aids are provided with an induction loop]. If the adjustments are not sufficient to treat a patient safely, they are referred to a practice that can provide this service.

This policy applies to all team members including: employees both full and part-time, self-employed personnel, trainees, subcontractors, casual and agency staff.

Team members receive training in procedures relevant and important to people with a disability and strive to use language that is easy to understand and meets the needs of all patients.

When communicating with patients who have a disability, team members:

- Ask everyone about their requirements in advance 'Please let me know if you require any particular assistance' and must be able to respond accordingly
- Do not patronise, make assumptions or think they know best
- Are ready to offer assistance, but never impose it
- Are prepared as necessary to :
 - Sit or bend down to talk to a person at his or her eye level
 - Offer a seat or help with doors
 - Let the person take their arm for guidance or support
 - Offer the use of equipment, e.g. a clipboard as an alternative writing surface
 - Use appropriate ways of communicating, e.g. writing notes if someone finds speech difficult to understand
 - Be courteous, patient and always talk to a disabled person directly, never through his or her companion; never shout or call attention to anyone; never compromise the person's right to privacy or confidentiality; check to make sure they have been understood

The practice always welcomes patients' views and suggestions on how services or access can be improved.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Equality, Dignity and Human Rights Policy (M 233-EQD), Disability Rights under the Equality Act (M 285) and The Human Rights Act and the Equality Act (M 236).