



1. Policy

1.1 The Registered Manager, Terry Hook, supported by Miss Sasha McNeillis, have overall responsibility for this policy and procedure.

1.2 Sleep and Health Clinic understands that people with autism and/or a learning disability may take in and retain information in different ways. To support full understanding and engagement, this policy is available in accessible formats. The ReciteMe tool has various ways of making this policy accessible by providing this policy in:

- Audio
- Large print
- Multiple languages

This policy can also be made available in:

- Easy-read versions
- Simple-policy view to reduce navigation and complexity

The in-built QCS Lyra functionality also enables users to ask questions about this policy and receive a simply worded, yet comprehensive response.

These options are in place to help Sleep and Health Clinic staff members and Patients to understand and engage with this policy more easily.

1.3 A chaperone is a suitably trained member of staff who may be present during a Patient's examination, procedure or treatment. The role of the chaperone is to support both the Patient and the clinician, helping to ensure the Patient's comfort, safety and wellbeing.

The chaperone acts as an impartial observer and Patient advocate, remaining sensitive to the Patient's needs while promoting and maintaining privacy, dignity and respect at all times.

The core responsibilities of a chaperone are as follows:

- Receive appropriate and necessary training
- Be sensitive to the Patient's needs, respecting and maintaining their privacy and dignity
- Provide emotional comfort and reassurance
- Be courteous and professional at all times
- Encourage patients to ask questions and seek clarification
- Be alert to signs of Patient distress – both verbal and non-verbal
- Understand the clinical context and be able to appropriately observe the examination or procedure
- Act as the Patient's advocate when required
- Identify and raise concerns about any unusual or unacceptable behaviour by the healthcare practitioner
- Assist with undressing or dressing if requested by the Patient
- Help the Patient understand what is being communicated to them
- While chaperones may support clinicians, this is not their primary role
- Chaperones are not required to be registered clinicians. It is outside their remit to challenge the clinical decision to perform an examination or procedure. However, they have a duty of care to raise concerns about unsafe practices, in line with wider NHS policies

- The formal chaperone should document their presence in the clinical record, noting the date, time and nature of the examination or procedure

1.4 All team members at Sleep and Health Clinic will have an understanding of the role of a chaperone, why a chaperone is necessary and the procedure for raising concerns.

1.5 Healthcare professionals must offer the Patient the option of a chaperone before conducting an intimate examination and must be aware of the criteria that a chaperone must satisfy.

1.6 Each Patient may have different perceptions of what an intimate examination may mean (especially vulnerable Patients) and it may be appropriate to offer a chaperone during some or all of a consultation, especially when any physical examination or other touching may be indicated. The presence of a chaperone could prove reassuring for the vulnerable Patient as well as the healthcare professional in such circumstances. Cultural factors must be considered.

1.7 Sleep and Health Clinic must offer a chaperone for any intimate examination with a healthcare professional, or a chaperone may be requested by the Patient. The offer of a chaperone is without regard to the gender of the Patient and that of the healthcare professional involved. Anyone can ask for a chaperone to be present.

1.8 The chaperone will only be present for the examination itself and can leave the room following the examination so that the consultation can continue in private, unless the Patient requests otherwise.

1.9 Any conversations during the examination will be strictly professional and relevant only to the examination.

1.10 A family member or a friend of the Patient is not an impartial observer and so cannot, under any circumstances, act as a chaperone. This will be clear from the displayed and available chaperone information.

1.11 The availability of a chaperone is clear to the Patient before any consultation, ideally at the time of booking the appointment. The offer is reinforced at the time of the examination.

Patients may prefer to have a chaperone that they have arranged, but this cannot be a family member or friend. This choice will be supported by Sleep and Health Clinic if the person is suitable to be a chaperone.