



## Emotional Care and Support policy

The aim of this policy is to allow people who use the services at this practice and those close to them to receive the support they need to cope emotionally with their care and treatment. This policy applies to all of the team members who work at this practice.

The practice team members are kind and have a caring, compassionate attitude and build positive relationships with people using the services at this practice and those close to them. We spend time talking to people, or those close to them. We always respect people's individual preferences, habits, culture, faith and background.

### Managing pain, distress and discomfort

If a patient has pain, distress and discomfort, we respond in a timely and appropriate way to help them cope emotionally with their care, treatment or condition. To do so we:

- See emergencies during working hours
- Give assistance to patients who have an emergency outside of working hours, which includes
- Provide effective and comfortable local anaesthesia
- Provide post procedure and pain management advice where appropriate
- Respond appropriately if a patient is suffering from distress or discomfort before, during or after treatment
- Provide information on how patients can receive additional care and support outside of the practice if required

We welcome questions from patients about their care and treatment and will do our best to answer as quickly and thoroughly as we can. Questions can be asked during the visit to the practice, over the phone or by email.

### Support networks and advocacy

We empower and support patients where necessary to use and link with support networks so that it will have a positive impact on their health, care and wellbeing.

We make sure that people who use our services and those close to them are able to find further information, including community and advocacy services. Contact details for support services, handouts and leaflets are provided where possible.

### Supporting patients with additional needs

We work to identify patients with additional needs and offer extra support to those who need it, including:

- People in the last 12 months of their lives
- People at risk of developing a long-term condition
- People with learning difficulties or learning disabilities
- People with addictions
- Carers

We provide additional support for patients with special needs, to communicate effectively and assist them to have the treatment as required. The length of treatment appointments may be varied and other additional practical or emotional support will be offered as required.

We also provide emotional support and information to those people close to our patients, including carers, family and dependants.

### Treating children

When treating children, we consider their intellectual level and social-emotional maturity to maintain a child-centred compassionate approach. Parents or carers are actively included into this approach to keep



them fully informed and to provide optimal support for the children.

### **Supporting patients with anxiety**

If patients have anxiety, we provide additional emotional support, which includes:

- Giving more time for explanations about treatment and what to expect so that the patient does not feel hurried
- Gradually introducing the patient to more advanced and lengthy treatments if required
- Being prepared to stop appointments early if the patient is feeling overly anxious
- Giving the patient ways to feel in control of the appointment such as 'hold your hand up if you would like me to stop'
- Offering sedation options such as RA, oral sedation or IV sedation with an anaesthetist
- Teaching the patient about relaxation techniques
- If necessary referring for dental health psychology which can help patients to develop positive coping skills, such as achieving goals by breaking them down into small steps; replacing unhelpful thought patterns with helpful thoughts, improving their belief in the ability to cope learning how to control their anxiety levels

### **Support**

[Patient Advice and Liaison Service \(PALS\)](#)

[Healthwatch](#)

[NHS – Someone to speak up for you \(advocate\)](#)

### **Related policies**

Patient Care and Experience Policy (M 233-PCA), Equality, Dignity and Human Rights Policy (M 233-EQD)

