Cumbria Medical Services

NHS

ZERO TOLERANCE PATIENT BEHAVIOUR POLICY

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Document Path & Filename	Cumbria Medical Services/CMS Policies & Protocols/CMS Policies/Corporate/Zero Tolerance Patient Behaviour Policy
Document Reference	Zero Tolerance Policy – Patient Behaviour
Version	1
Status	Approved
Publication Date	September 2024
Related Policies	
Review Date	September 2026
Approved/Ratified by:	CMS Directors
Date Approved/Ratified	23 September 2024
Distribution Cumbria Medical Services Staff Please note that the version of this document contained with the Policy folder is the only version maintained.	

Version	Date	Comments	Author
01	July 2024		C Lightfoot

INTRODUCTION

The violence prevention and reduction programme aims to support NHS organisations and systems to embed a culture where our NHS colleagues feel supported, safe and secure at work.

As an employer, Cumbria Medical Services (CMS) has a duty of care for the health, safety and wellbeing of its staff. CMS also has a legal responsibility to provide a safe and secure working environment for staff. Staff mental health is as important as their physical health. Our staff are our greatest asset, and we will look after them, in order they can look after you, our patients.

The Practice supports the government's 'Zero Tolerance' campaign for Health Service Staff. This states that Doctors and their staff have a right to care for others without fear of being attacked or abused. To successfully provide these services a mutual respect between all staff and patients have to be in place. All patients and staff are expected to behave in an acceptable, respectful manner.

Patients are asked to treat CMS staff courteously at all times, and can expect the same treatment in return. Requests will be met wherever possible and explanations given when they cannot.

CMS staff aim to be polite, helpful and sensitive to all patients' individual needs and circumstances. Staff understand that patients who are unwell do not always act in a reasonable manner and will take this into consideration when trying to deal with a misunderstanding or complaint.

Any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work is unacceptable and not tolerated. Staff should not be left upset and distressed following an interaction with a patient. Aggressive behaviour, be it violent or abusive, will not be tolerated and may result in patients being removed from the service and, where necessary, the Police being contacted.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour

In order for CMS to maintain good relations with their patients, CMS would ask all its patients to read and take note of the types of behaviour that would be found unacceptable:

- Using bad language, excessive shouting or swearing at CMS staff.
- Verbal abuse of our staff.
- 'Trolling' or abuse on email or social media platforms.
- Any physical violence towards any member of CMS or other patients such as pushing or shoving.
- Threatening behaviour which staff makes staff or patients feel uncomfortable.
- Racial abuse.
- Sexual harassment, including physical, verbal or suggestive behaviour.
- Persistent or unrealistic demands that cause stress to staff will not be accepted.
- Causing damage/stealing from CMS premises, staff or patients.
- Stealing drugs or equipment.
- Using illegal drugs on CMS premises.
- Obtaining medical services fraudulently.

Physical and verbal abuse includes:

- Unreasonable and/or offensive remarks or behaviour/rude gestures/innuendo.
- Racial harassment.
- Sexual harassment.
- Aggressive, forceful tone and/or language that upsets staff.
- Malicious allegations relating to members of staff and other patients or visitors.
- Any form of abuse under the Equality Act 2010 to include but not limited to: homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, ageism or harassment or abuse on the basis of disability, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief.
- Threatening behaviour with or without a weapon.
- Actual physical assault (whether or not it results in actual injury) includes being pushed or shoved as well as being hit, punched or attacked with a weapon, or being intentionally struck with bodily fluids or excrement.
- Attacks on members of staff or the public.
- Discrimination of any kind.
- Damage to an employees' property.

CMS expects all patients to be responsible and avoid attending CMS clinics under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. Any alteration of prescriptions is illegal and will not be tolerated.

CMS will not tolerate unnecessarily persistent or unrealistic service demands that cause disruption. Examples of this include:

- Demanding to only speak to a specific team member.
- Refusing appointments with an appropriate clinician for the presenting care need.
- Contacting individuals directly via social media or personal email instead of through the practice contact channels.
- Persistently not attending appointments without prior notification.

This list is not exhaustive and there may be other occasions where CMS have cause to issue a warning or remove a patient from the patient list.

Actions we will take

In exceptional circumstances a breakdown may occur between a doctor and their patient. If the breakdown is of a serious nature the doctor may feel that the doctor/patient relationship has been compromised. Steps may be taken to have the patient removed immediately from CMS practice list however where possible conciliation would always be the preferred route. CMS value and respect good patient-doctor relationships based on mutual respect and trust.

Where CMS deems an incident is not serious enough to warrant immediate removal a first and final warning will be issued in writing.

You will be removed from CMS' patient list immediately when we have needed police assistance or have made a report to the police.

We trust that this policy is clear and supports a mutually respectful environment for patients and CMS staff to allow us to carry out our work.