

## Chaperone Policy

Lam Dental Care is committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for patients.

### Role of the Chaperone

There is no common definition of a chaperone and their role varies considerably depending on the needs of the patient, the healthcare professional and the examination or procedure being carried out. Broadly speaking their role can be considered in any of the following areas:

- Providing emotional comfort and reassurance to patients
- To act as an interpreter
- To provide protection to healthcare professionals against unfounded allegations of improper behaviour
- In very rare circumstances to protect the clinician against an attack
- An experienced chaperone will identify unusual or unacceptable
- Behaviour on the part of the health care professional

A chaperone is present as a safeguard for all parties (patient and practitioners) and is a witness to continuing consent of the procedure.

### Type of Chaperone

The designation of the chaperone will depend on the role expected of them and on the wishes of the patient. It is useful to consider whether the chaperone is required to carry out an active role – such as participation in the examination or procedure or have a passive role such as providing support to the patient during the procedure.

### Informal chaperone

A family member, friend, parent, legal guardian, non-clinical staff member or healthcare student.

Many patients feel reassured by the presence of a familiar person and this request in almost all cases should be accepted.

### Formal chaperone

A formal chaperone implies a clinical health professional, such as a dental nurse, or a specifically trained non-clinical staff member, such as a receptionist. This individual will have a specific role to play in terms of the consultation and this role should be made clear to both the patient and the person undertaking the chaperone role. This may include assisting in the procedure being carried out. In these situations staff should have had sufficient training to understand the role expected of them. Common sense would dictate that, in most cases, it is not appropriate for a non-clinical member of staff to comment on the appropriateness of the procedure or examination, nor would they feel able to do so.

### Treating patients alone without chairside support

GDC standard 6.2: You must be appropriately supported when treating patients and

GDC standard 6.2.1: You must not provide treatment if you feel that the circumstances make it unsafe for the patients.

Whilst all dental care professionals must be appropriately supported, the GDC does not necessarily require all dental care professionals to have direct access to chairside support at all times. Dental care professionals should assess the circumstances and make a clinical judgement about the level of support appropriate to treat the patient safely. However, they would need to justify their actions to the GDC if their decision was called into question in a fitness to practise hearing.

## Document Control

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0.2	Final	01/02/23	P Grieve	Re-write of the policy
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