

# ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY FOR PATIENTS – DAWLEY MEDICAL PRACTICE

Version	Author	Date	Review due	Approved	Comments
1.	DH/SH	09.06.2026	09.06.2027	DH	

**THIS Policy should be read by staff in conjunction with “Dealing with Unreasonable, Violent and Abusive Patients Policy” and “Zero Tolerance SOP and Template Text & Letter”.**

## 1. Introduction

### **Policy Statement**

Dawley Medical Practice is committed to providing high-quality care in a safe, friendly and respectful environment. Practice staff are expected to always show due respect and courtesy when dealing with patients and their representatives. It is respectfully requested that patients and their representatives do the same when dealing with members of the practice team.

To help us do this, we follow the **NHS Zero Tolerance Policy**.

This means Dawley Medical Practice does not tolerate any form of abuse, harassment or aggressive behaviour towards our staff, patients or visitors.

We understand that being unwell or worried can be stressful, but it is never acceptable to be rude, aggressive or threatening to our team.

### **Status**

In accordance with the [Equality Act 2010](#), we have considered how provisions within this policy might impact on different groups and individuals. This document and any procedures contained within it are non-contractual, which means they may be modified or withdrawn at any time. They apply to all employees and contractors working for Dawley Medical Practice.

## 2. Policy

### **What is unacceptable behaviour?**

Dawley Medical Practice consider the following behaviour to be unacceptable, but is not limited to:

- Shouting, swearing or using rude or aggressive language
- Threatening, intimidating or abusive words or actions

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- Actual or threatened physical violence or verbal abuse which leads to fear for a person's safety
- Discrimination of any kind (e.g. racism, sexism)
- Repeated complaints or unkind behaviour causing upset or distress to staff
- Misuse of social media to post malicious, defamatory or derogatory comments about the practice or individual staff online
- Unreasonable demands: Persistent aggressive behaviour, refusing to use proper booking channels or making unreasonable demands for same-day appointments.

Even if something doesn't seem serious at the time, repeated or targeted behaviour can have a significant impact on our team's wellbeing.

### 3. Procedure

#### **What if someone behaves unacceptably?**

Dawley Medical Practice takes all incidents of unacceptable behaviour seriously.

Our response may include: -

#### **i). Verbal or written warning**

- In most cases Dawley Medical Practice will send a Zero Tolerance Warning Letter or secure Text message to explain what happened, why it is unacceptable and what we expect going forward. A copy of this letter or Text message will be placed on the patient's medical record.
- This warning helps the practice act quickly to protect staff and may be sent before speaking to the patient directly. Patients can still respond or appeal (see below).

#### **ii). Immediate Action**

- In serious cases (e.g. Physical violence or extreme abuse) the person may be removed from the premises and the police involved.

#### **iii). Removal from the Practice List**

- If a patient continues to behave in an unacceptable manner after a warning, or if the behaviour is especially serious, the patient may be removed from the Dawley Medical Practice List and asked to register elsewhere.

### 4. Why we don't always speak to the patient first

Sometimes patients ask why they were not contacted before receiving a warning letter. Here is why:

- Dawley Medical's priority is to protect our staff and respond quickly when problems arise
- A warning is **not** a punishment; it is a formal reminder that behaviour was inappropriate.
- Patients are always given the chance to explain or appeal after receiving a warning.

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## **5. Disagreeing with a warning**

If a patient receives a Zero Tolerance Letter and disagrees with it, there is a right to appeal. This is done by:

- Writing to the Practice Manager within 14 days of the letter
- Include full name, date of birth and explanation of behaviour
- Request evidence where available (e.g. phone recording)
- Request a review by a GP partner or an objective senior manager who was not part of the original issue
  
- State the desired outcome (e.g. Request that the warning be removed or downgraded).

## **6. What happens next**

Once the Practice Manager receives the appeal, the case will be reviewed by a senior GP partner or an independent manager not involved in the original incident.

The appeal will be considered, and the warning may be quashed or varied as deemed necessary. The patient will be advised in writing of the outcome.

**Thank you for helping the team maintain a safe respectful and welcoming environment for everyone at Dawley Medical Practice. The staff are here to support your care, and we appreciate your kindness and cooperation.**