

## **Zero Tolerance Policy**

The Surgery Comber fully supports the NHS “Zero tolerance” policy for Health Service Staff. The aim of this policy is to tackle the increasing problem of violence and aggression against staff working in the NHS. GP’s and their staff have a right to care for others without fear of being attacked or abused.

Violence in this context includes actual or threatened physical violence or verbal abuse which leads to fear for a person’s safety. In this situation we are obliged to notify the patient in writing of their removal from the list and record in the patients’ medical records the fact of removal and the circumstances leading to it. The South Eastern Health and Social Services Board is then responsible for providing further medical care for such patients. In extreme cases, we may need to inform the police.

In most cases, patients and their relatives are respectful towards surgery staff but unfortunately a minority of people are abusive or use threatening behaviour. The NHS operates a 'zero tolerance' attitude to all forms of abuse, therefore such behaviour or the use of inappropriate words causing distress and/or constituting harassment will not be tolerated.

Whilst it is not possible to provide a comprehensive list of this type of incident, some examples are provided below:

- Using offensive language or swearing at staff
- Verbally abusing or verbally insulting staff
- Racist or sexist language
- Loud and intrusive conversation
- Any physical violence towards any member of the Health Care Team, or any other patient, including pushing or shoving
- Threats or risk of injury to NHS staff or other patients
- Intimidation
- Persistent or unrealistic demands that cause stress to staff - requests will be met where possible and explanations given when they cannot
  - Causing damage to, or stealing from the practice premises, staff or patients
- Obtaining drugs and or medical services fraudulently
- Posting abusive or potentially defamatory comments on social media.

We ask that you treat all our surgery staff courteously and with respect