

# Chaperone

## Patient Information

Professional Practice Team

Author ID: EF  
Leaflet Number: Corp 015  
Version: 7  
Name of Leaflet: Chaperone  
Last reviewed: June 2020  
Next Review Date: June 2022



## Introduction

Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust is committed to developing a culture within the organisation that promotes and champions the privacy and dignity of all patients. It is recognised that the way in which care is delivered can directly influence a person's self-image.

Some health care interactions and treatments, particularly where they involve intimate parts of the body and states of undress, can make patients feel vulnerable or distressed.

The presence of a chaperone may assist in supporting and reassuring the patient during the healthcare interaction. The healthcare professional may also require a chaperone to be present for certain consultations in accordance with the Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust's Chaperone Policy, which can be found on the trust intranet.

The Trust believes respect, explanation, consent and privacy are paramount to ensuring you receive a positive patient experience whilst visiting Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust.

## What to expect

You should expect to be offered a chaperone for any intimate examinations that are requested as part of your treatment plan. You can request that a chaperone is present during any health interaction that you feel uncomfortable with, for example, assistance with personal care.

Expect the role of the chaperone to be clearly explained to you, the chaperone will be introduced to you by the health professional that is to undertake the health care interaction or examination/procedure.

There is no common definition of a chaperone given by the Trust because the needs of the patient, health care practitioner and type of procedure will dictate the role.

## Who can be a chaperone?

A member of staff or a paid/ professional carer can be a chaperone.

## Can a family member act as a chaperone?

Your family member can not act as a chaperone, formally witness or take part in a clinical examination or interaction. You can however request that a member of your family or a friend is present during the examination, procedure or interaction.

## Can I refuse a chaperone?

You have the right to refuse that a particular person is a chaperone; in this instance a member of staff will document the reasons for your refusal and your health interaction will be reviewed.

## What is the chaperone's responsibility?

- ❖ To ensure that conduct is sensitive and respectful of your dignity and confidentiality
- ❖ To reassure you if you are distressed or experiencing discomfort and to communicate this to the member of staff undertaking the episode of care
- ❖ To ensure that they can communicate with you in a way that you can understand
- ❖ To ensure they are aware and able to access the Trust complaints process and mechanism for raising concerns

## What if a chaperone cannot be offered?

If in the unlikely event a chaperone cannot be offered because of an emergency or staff unavailability, then expect to be informed. You may be asked in this instance if you would consent to proceeding with the interaction in the absence of a chaperone or more appropriately offered an alternative appointment when a chaperone will be available.

Where you express a personal preference, every effort will be made to ensure that intimate procedures, including assistance with personal hygiene are carried out by a member of staff of the same sex. If this cannot be achieved because of the specialist nature of the procedure, a chaperone of the same sex will be offered. If this is not possible, the reasons will be documented in your notes and an incident form completed, which will be communicated to senior management.

## Contact

Please speak to a member of staff on the ward or in the out-patient department if you have any questions regarding this leaflet.

Please use this space to write notes / reminders.

---

## Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends and carers.

## Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager  
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust  
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary  
Wigan Lane  
Wigan WN1 2NN

---

## Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



---

## How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use and store the information we hold about you, please take a look at our “how we use your information” leaflet which can be found on the Trust website: [https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient\\_information/leaflets/](https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient_information/leaflets/)

---

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille and other languages upon request. For more information please ask in the department/ward.

---

© Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust  
All rights reserved. Not to be reproduced in whole or in part without the permission of the copyright owner

