

PORTSDOWN GROUP PRACTICE
POLICY

Title: Confidentiality Policy

Review date: August 2020

Version: 3.0

Introduction:

This policy is to ensure that staff are aware that all information held at the Practice about patients is confidential, whether held electronically or in hard copy and other information about the Practice (for example its financial matters) remains confidential.

The policy and standard of confidentiality, applies to all employees and Partners, and also applies to all health professionals, administrative and ancillary staff - including receptionists, secretaries, management, cleaners, maintenance staff, who are bound by contracts of employment to maintain confidentiality. It also applies to contractors and visitors to the Practice (all collectively referred to as 'staff' below).

The policy has been written in line with the NHS Code of Practice.

Policy Details:

All health professionals must follow their professional codes of practice and the law. This means that they must make every effort to protect confidentiality. All health professionals are individually accountable for their own actions. They should, however, also work together as a team to ensure that standards of confidentiality are upheld, and that improper disclosures are avoided.

- Staff must be aware of and conform to the requirements of the Caldicott and Information Governance recommendations
- As all information about patients is confidential, staff must not under any circumstances disclose patient information, or any other confidential Practice information, to anyone outside the Practice, except to other health professionals on a need to know basis, or where the patient has provided written consent, or the Partner has given consent.
- All patients can expect that their personal information will not be disclosed without their permission (except in the most exceptional circumstances when disclosure is required when somebody is at grave risk of serious harm).
- Electronic transfer of any confidential information, once approved by a Partner must be transmitted via the NHSnet or to another '@nhs.net' account or GCSX (Government secure email. Staff must take particular care that confidential information is not transmitted in error by email or over the Internet.
- Staff must not take data from the Practice's computer systems (e.g. on a memory stick or removable drive) off the premises unless authorised to do so by a Partner or the Group Business Manager / Operations Manager.
- Person-identifiable information will be anonymised so far as is reasonably practicable, whilst being mindful of not compromising the data
- Access to consulting rooms, administrative areas and record-storage areas will be restricted
- A clear-desk policy is in operation at all times, and is applicable to all staff
- All IT equipment is shut down at the end of the working day
- Smart Cards are to be removed from the computer whenever the user leaves their workstation
- Confidential waste is shredded or disposed of appropriately
- Staff who suspect a breach of confidentiality must inform either the Operations Manager, the Group Business Manager or the Executive Partner(s) immediately. Any breach of confidentiality will be considered as a serious disciplinary offence and may lead to dismissal.
- Staff remain bound by the requirement to keep information confidential even if they are no longer employed at the Practice.
- All staff must sign a confidentiality agreement on commencing employment with the practice.

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Additionally, the Portstown Group Practice, as Employers:

- Are responsible for ensuring that everybody employed by the practice understands the need for, and maintains, confidentiality.
- Have overall responsibility for ensuring that systems and mechanisms are in place to protect confidentiality.
- Have vicarious liability for the actions of those working in the practice – including health professionals and non-clinical staff (i.e. those not employed directly by the practice but who work in the surgery).