# OSWALD MEDICAL CENTRE

# Zero Tolerance Policy

## Document Control

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**Overview**

The skilled and dedicated people who work in the NHS spend their lives caring for others. Yet far too many of them are victims of violence and intimidation. This

problem has been growing. The Government is determined to make life safer for the people who work in the NHS and as such supports all NHS services to introduce zero tolerance policies under the Zero Tolerance Campaign.

**The NHS zero tolerance zone campaign has two principal aims:**

* to get over to the public that violence against staff working in the NHS is unacceptable and the Government (and the NHS) is determined to stamp it out
* to get over to all staff that violence and intimidation is unacceptable and is being tackled.

The definition of work related violence is not subjective. ‘Violence’ means:

***‘Any incident where staff are abused, threatened, or assaulted in circumstances related to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health.’***

Patients should be advised that the best way to resolve any issue or misunderstanding is in a calm and reasonable manner. The practice will regard any instance of the above definition of violence to be unacceptable and this policy sets out actions to be taken.

**Zero Tolerance**

Oswald Medical Centre fully supports the NHS Zero Tolerance Policy. The aim of this policy is to provide prescriptive actions to be taken to tackle the increasing problem of violence against staff working in the NHS and ensures that doctors and their staff have a right to care for others without fear of being attacked or abused.

We understand that ill patients do not always act in a reasonable manner and will take this into consideration when trying to deal with a misunderstanding or complaint. We ask patients to treat doctors and their staff courteously and act reasonably.

All incidents of violence under the above definition will be followed up. Patients in breach of this policy will usually be sent a formal warning. After a second incident they will be removed from the practice list if behaviour has been unreasonable.

However, aggressive behaviour, be it violent or verbal abusive, will not be tolerated and may result in patients being removed from the Practice list in the first instance. In extreme cases, the Police will be contacted if an incident is taking place and the patient is posing a threat to staff or other patients.

* 1st Instance – warning letter issued if the patient persists with unacceptable behavior after being verbally asked to stop / moderate their behaviour
* 2nd Instance – patient is removed from the practice list if the patient persists with unacceptable behavior after being verbally asked to stop / moderate their behaviour
* Actual physical violence or extreme threatening behavior where staff or patients feel their safety is or could be at risk – verbal request to stop, and immediate removal. The police will be called to assist.
* Purposeful damage to property or buildings – the police will be called and an immediate removal will take place.

**Removal from the Practice List**

A good patient-doctor relationship, based on mutual respect and trust, is the cornerstone of good patient care. The removal of patients from our list is an exceptional and rare event.

When trust has irretrievably broken down, it is in the patient’s interest, just as much as that of The Practice that they should find a new practice. An exception to this is on immediate removal on the grounds of violence e.g. when the Police are involved.

**Removing other members of the household**

In rare cases, however, because of the possible need to visit patients at home it may be necessary to terminate responsibility for other members of the family or the entire household. The prospect of visiting patients where a relative who is no longer a patient of the practice by virtue of their unacceptable behaviour resides, or being regularly confronted by the removed patient, may make it too difficult for the practice to continue to look after the whole family. This is particularly likely where the patient has been removed because of violence or threatening behaviour and keeping the other family members could put doctors or their staff at risk.

**Appeals**

Where patients receive a warning letter and they wish to challenge this, they must put their case forward in a written statement and forward this to the practice. Upon receipt the challenge will be investigated and action to take to uphold or rescind the warning will be taken.

In some circumstances, the practice may ask the patient to sign a behavior contract as part of ther conditions of their registration. Breach of any such agreement will result in removal from the practice list.