

DUNELM MEDICAL PRACTICE

CONFIDENTIALITY (TEENAGERS) POLICY

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B. DOCUMENT DETAILS

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INTRODUCTION

This policy is specific to patients under the age of 18, and should be read in conjunction with the Staff Confidentiality Policy and Agreement ^[*], and Fraser (Contraceptive) Guidelines [*see Resources below*].

POLICY

The principles of confidentiality apply equally to all patients regardless of age. Young people (including those under 16) are entitled to equal confidentiality male or female as all other patients. This includes respecting their wishes to withhold information from parents or guardians. The GP involved will determine the competency of a young person seeking treatment and will determine the extent to which confidentiality guidelines apply in each case.

Care must be taken to ensure that this right of confidentiality is not inadvertently breached by following the procedural guidelines in force.

It is generally recognised that parents will accompany children up to 13 years of age, many will continue to do so past this age but the clinician can check if they are happy to have the parent there, if it is something personal.

A person between the ages of 13-16 can come and see a clinician alone. However a clinician must believe that they are capable of understanding the choices of treatment and their consequences. This includes contraceptive advice, but the principles apply to other treatments, including abortion.

The policy of the Practice is to support young people in exercising their choice of medical treatment, and to deal with them in a sympathetic and confidential manner. Where a young person presents at the surgery without adult support they may be booked in to see a clinician in the normal way. Where there is some question of the urgency of an appointment the matter should be referred to a nurse in the first instance to triage the request.

The Fraser guidelines apply more in the treatment of contraceptive advice and care for girls.

- The Clinician must be satisfied that the girl understands the advice given.
- That he cannot persuade her to inform the parents.
- That she is likely to continue having sexual intercourse with or without contraceptive treatment.

The Gillick Competency in brief is as follows:-

It is not enough that she should understand the nature of the advice which is being given but she should be sufficiently mature to understand it.

It is also commonly believed that "the parental rights yields to the child's right to make his own decisions when he reaches a sufficient understanding and intelligence to be capable of making up his own mind on the matter requiring decision"

RESOURCES

[BMA - Consent and Gillick competency
Fraser \(Contraceptive\) Guidelines](#)

http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/publications/publications_wda48207.html