VIOLENT PATIENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Violence and abuse in medical practice is a growing concern. GPs and their staff have the right to care for others without fear of being attacked or abused.

The NHS Zero Tolerance Zone is a national campaign to stop violence against staff working in the NHS. The government is determined to ensure that staff who spend their time caring for others are not rewarded with intimidation and violence.

Arrangements are now in place for managing the problem of Violent Patients.

DEFINITION

Violence means any incident whereby a GP or his/her member of staff are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well being or health. It will also apply to similar acts against other patients within the practice.

POLICY

Any patient who commits an act of violence in this context will have proceedings commenced against them to place them in the Violent Patient Scheme.

For a patient to qualify for placement on the Violent Patient Scheme a violent incident must have occurred and this must have been reported to the Police.

A request from a practice for a patient to be removed immediately from the practice list must be made in writing although PCSS can be alerted in the first instance by a telephone call or fax. The notification must contain details of the ‘unique reference number’ (URN) issued by the Police.

A ‘first incident’ where the Police were not called and the patient is not considered a ‘threat’ to other practices will result in a ‘yellow card’ (warning) letter being issued to the patient. This will advise them that further incidents will result in them being placed on the Violent Patient Register which will in itself explain the loss to the patient of certain rights of access to primary care medical services. In these cases the patient will normally be assigned to another local practice.

A ‘first incident’ where perhaps the Police were not called or the incident was not reported but where the practice consider the patient to be a serious threat will result in the patient being temporarily assigned to the Violent Patient Register. This temporary arrangement will allow time for the PCT, together with the FME, LMC and PALs Officer, to meet with the patient and review the assignment to the register to consider whether it is appropriate.

A ‘second incident’ will result in a ‘red card’ letter placing the patient on the Violent Patient Register. Access to primary care medical services will only be through certain designated centres.
PROCESS

First Incident (Routine) following issue of warning letter by practice

- Practice contact PCSS (preferably in writing) to request immediate removal of the patient from the list

- PCSS assign the patient to an alternative practice by the end of the following working day or as soon after that period as is practicable. PCSS will normally aim to process the request on the day of receipt.

- PCSS send a ‘yellow’ letter to the patient informing him/her of the new GP to whom he/she has been allocated. The letter will also give a warning that, should a further incident be reported to the police within the next three years his/her name will be placed on the Violent Patient Register. The resulting restriction on access to NHS primary medical care is explained in the letter.

- PCSS inform the new GP of the allocation, name of the patient’s previous GP and the fact that the patient has been sent a ‘yellow’ letter.

- PCSS inform the GP who made the request that the patient has now been removed from the list; provide details of the new list to which the patient has been assigned and the fact that the patient has been sent a yellow letter.

- PCSS transfer the medical record as a matter of priority

First Incident (Uncertain)

- Practice contact PCSS (preferably in writing) to request immediate removal of the patient from the list

- PCSS will send the patient an ‘Amber’ letter, which will inform him/her of that they have been temporarily placed on the ‘Violent Patient Register’.

- PCSS complete a Violent Patient Register Form for circulation as appropriate:- GP practice, relevant PCT, Thames Valley Police Force, Out of Hours Provider, Local A&E, Two Shire Ambulance.

- PCSS refer case to PCT to arrange meeting with patient, FME, LMC, PALs

First Incident (Dangerous) or Second Incident

- PCSS will send the patient a ‘Red’ letter, which will inform him/her of that they have been placed on the ‘Violent Patient Register’.

- PCSS complete a Violent Patient Register Form for circulation as appropriate:- GP practice, relevant PCT, Thames Valley Police Force, Out of Hours Provider, Local A&E, Two Shire Ambulance.

- PCSS inform the GP who made the request that the patient has been placed on the Violent Patient Register

- PCSS transfer the medical record as a matter of priority