



Dear Patient

Staffa Health operates a 'zero tolerance' policy with regard to incidents of aggressive or abusive behaviour towards our members of staff.

It's an honour and a privilege for us to provide healthcare to our local population and we are grateful to the 99.9% of our patients who use our services with good grace and understanding of the pressures faced by the modern NHS: this message is not directed at you.

In recent times we have experienced an increasing number of examples of unacceptable behaviour directed towards our staff, something which we will not tolerate. Just to be clear, we are not referring here to expressions of frustration or complaints which you may have about our services; everyone is entitled to express their opinion in a fair and reasonable manner and we will always listen and endeavour to help.

Examples of what IS unacceptable include:

- Physical violence
- Verbal abuse
- Racist abuse
- Sexual or sexist abuse
- Shouting, physical intimidation or other threatening actions
- Applying force to any practice property

Our policy is available to read on our website [www.staffahealth.co.uk](http://www.staffahealth.co.uk) but it can be summarised as follows:

- When the line is crossed our staff will make that clear to the person involved and ask them to stop. If the behaviour continues they will terminate the conversation and (where the incident occurs on practice premises) ask them to leave.
- The case will be reported to the practice manager and discussed with a senior GP at the earliest opportunity to decide on appropriate action.
- Possible actions include:
  - Sending of warning letter
  - Removal from the practice list
  - Reporting to police

This has been in place for a number of years and is in accordance with general NHS policy but we have felt the need to make it more public in light of the increasing number of problems we are seeing. As stated earlier, we do not wish to offend anyone and understand that the vast majority of our patients treat us with fairness and respect. This is directed at the very small minority of people who seem to think that our staff are 'fair game' and consequently behave in an unacceptable manner; this will not be tolerated.

Dr Ruth Cooper and Dr Tim Scott (senior partners)  
September 2017

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