

Chaperone policy

All Claimants have the right to have a chaperone present during a consultation.

Formal Chaperones

- A formal chaperone is a healthcare professional with appropriate chaperone training. A relative or friend of the Claimant is not an impartial observer and would not be considered a suitable formal chaperone. It is mandatory for a formal chaperone to be present for intimate examinations (including examinations of breasts, genitalia and rectum).
- If a formal chaperone is required, Medicolegal Partners (MLP) must be made aware, at either the time of instruction or when the appointment is arranged.
- The majority of our clinics offer a formal chaperone service, however there are exceptions. Should it be known that a formal chaperone is required, MLP will ensure that the appointment is arranged in examination rooms that provide such service.
- Experts can agree to a 'reasonable request' to have a friend or family member present at an intimate examination, as well as a chaperone.

Informal chaperones

- It is acceptable for an informal chaperone (family member, friend, legal guardian, non-clinical staff member) to accompany the Claimant if that is the wish of the Claimant. MLP must be given details of the informal chaperone's name and relationship to the Claimant at least 72hrs in advance of the appointment.

Children/Young people

- It is mandatory for all children and young people under the legal age of consent (16 years) to be seen in the presence of another adult. This may be a parent, acting as an informal chaperone, or a formal chaperone; the child should not be examined unaccompanied. Any intimate examination must be carried out in the presence of a formal chaperone.

Chaperone policy continued

After the appointment

- If the Claimant has been offered a formal chaperone but declined, the expert must record this in their notes. That the offer of a chaperone was made and declined should always be recorded.
- If a concern is raised by any party in attendance at the examination, it must be raised verbally with Jane Palliser, Operations Manager, immediately or as soon as the concern is raised: and a full report of the incident must be written by the concerned party and made available to the Operations Manager within 36 hours of the examination.

The role of a formal chaperone

- To provide the Claimant with physical and emotional support and reassurance.
- To ensure the environment supports privacy and dignity.
- To provide practical assistance with the examination.
- To safeguard patients from humiliation, pain distress or abuse.
- To provide protection to the Experts against unfounded allegations of improper behaviour.
- To identify unusual or unacceptable behaviour on the part of the Expert.
- To provide protection for the Expert from potentially abusive Claimants.