Harbury Surgery

Advocacy Policy

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1	DR D Lewis	08.09.2025	08.09.2027

Position	Named individual
Practice Manager	Suzanna Stanley

Policy Statement

Harbury Surgery is committed to ensuring that all patients are supported to express their views, make informed decisions about their care, and have their voices heard in all matters relating to their health and wellbeing. We recognise that some patients may face barriers to fully participating in decisions about their care and we are dedicated to ensuring advocacy support is available to help remove these barriers.

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to outline the practice's approach to patient advocacy. Our aim is to safeguard the rights of patients, to promote equality of access to healthcare, and to ensure that vulnerable individuals are supported in understanding their options and making informed choices. Advocacy is central to a patient-centred approach and is consistent with the principles of the NHS Constitution and the practice's duty of care.

Scope

This policy applies to all patients registered with Harbury Surgery, their carers and families, and to all members of staff involved in patient care. The focus is on patient advocacy, ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to have their views respected and represented.

Legal and NHS Framework

Harbury Surgery is committed to fulfilling its obligations under the NHS Constitution, the Equality Act 2010, the Mental Capacity Act 2005, the Care Act 2014, and the statutory Duty of Candour. We also follow GMC Good Medical Practice which requires doctors to listen to patients, respond to their concerns, and respect their rights to be involved in decisions about their care.

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the clinical and administrative team share responsibility for promoting and supporting advocacy. GPs and clinical staff must ensure that patients understand their diagnosis, treatment options, and rights, and should recognise when advocacy support may be appropriate. Administrative staff should signpost patients to relevant advocacy services where needed.

Advocacy Process

Harbury Surgery supports patients in accessing both informal and formal advocacy. This may include encouraging patients to be accompanied by a relative, friend, or carer at appointments, or by providing information on independent advocacy services. Where appropriate, patients will be referred to NHS advocacy services such as PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service), NHS Complaints Advocacy, or local Healthwatch organisations. Patients who lack capacity will be supported in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005, including referral to an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) where indicated. Staff must always respect patient confidentiality and obtain consent before sharing information with advocates, unless there are safeguarding concerns that require disclosure.

Confidentiality and Consent

Advocacy must always be provided in a way that respects the confidentiality and dignity of patients. Information will only be shared with advocates where the patient has given consent, or where disclosure is required in line with safeguarding or statutory responsibilities. Reference to the confidentiality and access to medical records policy should be sought where applicable.

Training and Awareness

All staff will be made aware of the importance of patient advocacy as part of their induction and ongoing training. The practice will provide up-to-date information on local and national advocacy services where applicable to ensure staff are able to signpost patients appropriately.

Monitoring and Review

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Practice Manager and the GP Partners. Feedback from patients, carers, and staff will be considered in order to improve advocacy processes. The policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if national guidance or legislation changes.