# Disability Policy and Procedures

## Policy Statement

The [insert practice name] recognises its responsibilities and legal obligations in ensuring, as far as is reasonably possible, that people with disabilities are afforded equal opportunities with respect to employment and to receiving a dental service, and are not discriminated against for a reason relating to their disability. People associated with a disabled person are also protected e.g. carer or parents.

To this end, as a service provider, the Practice will take reasonable steps to:

* demonstrate that thought and action has been given to meet the needs of disabled users
* provide auxiliary aids or services that will assist disabled people to use our services;
* provide the service by an alternative method where physical barriers make it impossible or difficult for disabled people to use our service.

As an employer, the Practice will take reasonable steps to ensure:

* recruitment processes and terms of employment do not discriminate for reasons related to disability;
* stages of employment (e.g. opportunities offered for promotion, transfer, training or other benefits) are the same for all employees;
* take reasonable steps so a disabled person is not put at a disadvantage because of their disability (e.g. flexible working, provide specialist equipment, reorganise the working environment).

## Responsibilities

Every member of the dental team is expected, and encouraged, to show consideration towards disabled colleagues, patients and associated people, and to help implement this policy and related procedures. Discrimination on the grounds of disability will not be tolerated by the Practice.

If any member of staff has any queries about this policy, please contact the Practice Manager/Principal Dentist [delete as appropriate and insert name].

## Procedures

## Service to Patients

The accessibility of the practice will be reviewed regularly [insert how often], and reasonable steps to improve accessibility will be taken. When identifying reasonable steps, the following will be considered:

* whether taking particular steps would be effective in overcoming the difficulty that disabled people face in gaining access to our dental service;
* the extent to which it is practicable for the Practice to take the steps;
* financial and other costs of making the adjustment;
* the extent of our financial and other resources.

Any changes will be incorporated into a plan, and into the Practice’s maintenance programme, where appropriate, and implemented according to a realistic timescale.

Auxiliary aids that facilitate access to disabled patients are highlighted in the practice information leaflet, and include:

* external and internal ramps;
* induction loop;
* large-print information or other alternative formats, on request [amend as appropriate]

On induction, staff will be provided with the practice policy and procedures related to disability and made aware of issues relating to the Equality Act 2010, and the legal obligations of the Practice and its staff.

Staff will not discriminate on the basis of disability and will not treat a patient (or colleague) less favourably for reasons of disability. Note that there might be situations where a patient or a member of the dental team would be harmed if treatment was not refused; for genuine health and safety reasons, therefore, it might not be possible to provide care for a disabled person in our Practice.

Staff are encouraged to: [amend as appropriate]

* be aware that disabilities take a variety of forms and are not always visible
* where possible face patients directly and avoid covering their mouth when speaking to patients (to facilitate lip-reading by patients)
* ensure the lighting does not put them in shade when speaking to patients
* ask the patient or, where appropriate, the person accompanying the patient if they understand the information given to them, and be prepared to use other forms of communication for those with communication difficulties (e.g. write things down if patients have hearing difficulties)
* move from behind the reception desk if the desk is not at a level that is comfortable for wheelchair users to see staff or to lean on the desk
* offer assistance to patients, where necessary, when patients are negotiating steps to the entrance or within the dental practice, or have difficulty moving around the practice (but not to assume that all disabled patients will want assistance)
* familiarise themselves with the practice’s emergency evacuation procedures and how disabled patients are helped from the premises
* avoid cluttering the practice with obstacles such as bags or boxes
* treat all patients with dignity and respect and bear in mind that disabled patients have a right to good service

## Responsibilities to Employees

**Recruitment** [amend as appropriate]

* All person specifications, job descriptions and advertisements will clearly outline the genuine essential requirements of the post
* All applicants will be assessed on their individual merits
* Reasonable adjustments will be made in the recruitment and selection process, as required
* The discussion of support requirements to enable an applicant with a disability to fulfil the duties of the post will take place after those involved in recruitment have taken the decision to appoint the applicant. The offer of employment to the applicant may be conditional on the nature of the disability and the reasonableness of any adjustments that may be required to be made

## Employment [amend as appropriate]

* Training and development opportunities for promotion are offered equally to all employees;
* Reasonable adjustments that will help a disabled employee fulfil the functions of their position and avoid putting them at a disadvantage will be discussed with the employee and put into action.

The following staff have read and understood this policy [include all team members].

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Dental Team Member**  | **Position** | **Signature** | **Date** |
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