

# Chaperones

**This leaflet provides information for you and your partner on the use of chaperones within the Trust.**

## What is a chaperone?

A chaperone is an adult who is present during an intimate examination of a patient, woman or birthing person and is there to protect both the individual being examined and the doctor, nurse or midwife from allegations of inappropriate behaviour. The chaperone should not be a relative, partner or friend of the patient, and is employed within the health service in a clinical capacity. They may also be asked to assist the doctor, nurse or midwife with equipment needed during the examination, such as gloves, gels etc. In Maternity Services, an 'intimate' examination would cover examination of either the breasts or an internal examination.

The NHS, the British Medical Association, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal College of Midwives all recommend that chaperones are routinely available during the intimate examination of a patient.

## What about my privacy?

The chaperone will have had training about maintaining confidentiality and will also know what is, and what is not, necessary during this type of examination.

## Can my partner, relative or friend act as a chaperone?

You can choose to have your partner, relative or friend with you during any examinations. It can be helpful to think about whether you and they will feel comfortable about this. Also, there could be matters that you would prefer to discuss confidentially with your midwife or doctor. You have the right to ask for a chaperone to be provided by the hospital, and this can be a helpful thing when you want extra support during an examination but would prefer not to have your partner, relative or friend in the room.

## What if I (or my partner) do not want a chaperone to be present?

The absence of a chaperone should only be with the agreement of both you and the doctor / midwife or nurse. **During intimate examination of a patient of the opposite sex to a doctor, a chaperone should always be present.**

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

J Siddall, Consultant Obstetrician, June 2008

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