



## **Clinic Correspondence Policy**

**Core Documentation Cover Page**

## Clinic Correspondence Policy

| Version number  | Dates produced and approved (include committee) | Reason for production/ revision  | Author  | Location(s)   | Proposed next review date and approval required |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| V1.0  | Sept 2011<br>SMT                                | To provide students with clear guidance and the procedure that should be followed when written correspondence regarding patients is required to be produced within the UCO's General Clinic. | Head of Clinical Practice   | All master versions will be held in:<br>J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet | Sept 2012                                       |
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| V3.0  | Jan 2017<br>PRAG Chair                          | Administrative Amendment to reflect current practice.  | Head of Clinical Practice &<br>Deputy Head of Clinic & Partnerships | All master versions will be held in:<br>J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet | Jan 2019  |
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| V5.0  | Aug 2018<br>PRAG Chair                          | Administrative Amendment to reflect current practice   | Clinic Reception Manager  | All master versions will be held in:<br>J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Website  | Aug 2020  |
| V6.0  | Mar 2021 /<br>PRAG Chair                        | Administrative Amendment to reflect current practice and include Caldecott Principles  | Clinic Reception Manager  | All master versions will be held in:<br>J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Website  | March 2024                                      |
| Equality Impact   |   |  |   |   |   |
| Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities) |   |  |   |   |   |
| Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)  |   |  |   |   | X   |
| Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)   |   |  |   |   |   |

**If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this policy,  
please email your comments to: [quality@uco.ac.uk](mailto:quality@uco.ac.uk)**

## CLINIC CORRESPONDENCE POLICY

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## 1. SCOPE

- 1.1 This policy provides students and staff with clear guidance on the procedure that should be followed when written correspondence regarding patients is required to be produced within the University College of Osteopathy (UCO) Clinic.

## 2. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

- 2.1 With the release of any patient data that may be included in a letter or other correspondence, please ensure that you are clear on your responsibilities with handling patient data and that you are adhering to UCO policies and procedures. For further information, please see the UCO's Data Management area on SharePoint that can be found at: <https://bso.sharepoint.com/sites/UCOPortal/SitePages/Data-management.aspx>
- 2.2 You should also be familiar with the Caldicott principles as set out below.

### CALDICOTT PRINCIPLES

- 2.3 When dealing with and managing personal data, we must have the Caldicott principles at the forefront of our considerations. These are set out below and more information can be found at: <https://www.ukcqc.uk/manual/principles>

#### **2.4 Justify the purpose(s)**

Every proposed use or transfer of personal confidential data within or from an organisation should be clearly defined, scrutinised and documented, with continuing uses regularly reviewed, by an appropriate guardian.

#### **2.5 Don't use personal confidential data unless it is absolutely necessary**

Personal confidential data items should not be included unless it is essential for the specified purpose(s) of that flow. The need for patients to be identified should be considered at each stage of satisfying the purpose(s)

#### **2.6 Use the minimum necessary personal confidential data**

Where use of personal confidential data is considered to be essential, the inclusion of each individual item of data should be considered and justified so that the minimum amount of personal confidential data is transferred or accessible as is necessary for a given function to be carried out.

#### **2.7 Access to personal confidential data should be on a strict need-to-know basis**

Only those individuals who need access to personal confidential data should have access to it, and they should only have access to the data items that they need to see. This may mean introducing access controls or splitting data flows where one data flow is used for several purposes.

## **2.8 Everyone with access to personal confidential data should be aware of their responsibilities**

Action should be taken to ensure that those handling personal confidential data — both clinical and non-clinical staff — are made fully aware of their responsibilities and obligations to respect patient confidentiality.

## **2.9 Comply with the law**

Every use of personal confidential data must be lawful. Someone in each organisation handling personal confidential data should be responsible for ensuring that the organisation complies with legal requirements.

## **2.10 The duty to share information can be as important as the duty to protect patient confidentiality**

Health and social care professionals should have the confidence to share information in the best interests of their patients within the framework set out by these principles. They should be supported by the policies of their employers, regulators and professional bodies.

## **3. POLICY DETAILS**

3.1 Ascertain the exact reason for the requirement for the correspondence; this will probably fall into one of the following categories:

- a) Referral to patient's GP or another medical agency
- b) Confirmation of patient's status to employer, Department of Health or other agency
- c) Request for alterations to patient's work environment
- d) Request for medical history, test results or other information from patient's GP, consultant or other therapist
- e) Acknowledgement of referral to a UCO clinic (see end section for more detail)

3.2 Advise the patient of any charge which may be levied (charges are recorded at the end of the document). Chargeable letters will not be posted until payment is received.

3.3 Obtain the patient's written consent by completing a UCO Disclosure of Information Form (available at reception). ALL correspondence requires written consent, to comply with data protection and confidentiality. This includes patients who collect letters themselves from the UCO clinic.

3.4 Take a photocopy of the Disclosure of Information Form. The original is to be placed in the patient's file and the photocopy is to be sent in accompaniment with the letter.

3.5 Prepare a draft of the letter using the appropriate letter template, which can be found via the 'letters' button on the patient's record on TM2. Any staff or student who has access to TM2, can access this, not just the student that the patient is booked in with.

3.6 Letter templates can be found in TM2; there is also a copy at the end of this policy.

- 3.7 The final content and layout of the letter should be finalised with the assistance of a Clinic Tutor.
- 3.8 Particular attention should be paid to:
- a) Correct spelling of names and addresses
  - b) Correct date of birth
- 3.9 Include sufficient detail of the complaint (onset, relevant examination findings, diagnosis, response to treatment and reason for referral, including if appropriate your suggested course of action) to allow the recipient to understand your intention. Try not to exceed one side of printed A4 paper and consider your tone in communications.
- 3.10 Ensure the 'Address any queries...to the Reception Manager' paragraph is present, and the correct reference includes the supervising Clinical Tutor's name at the top of the letter.
- 3.11 Once the letter has been agreed with your Clinical Tutor then print one copy for your tutor to sign.
- 3.12 Once the letter has been signed by the Clinic Tutor, a photocopy must be taken. This photocopy must then be placed in the patient's file alongside the original copy of the UCO Disclosure Form.
- 3.13 **Under NO circumstances** are letters to be typed using Word Documents and saved on the Team Point PCs. These actions are considered to be in breach of data protection and confidentiality laws, as the UCO Tutorial Point PCs are accessible by multiple users. Anyone found to be in breach of this instruction will be asked to account for their actions and this may lead to a Student Fitness to Practice investigation.
- 3.14 Take the signed, completed letter with the full patient file and the photocopy of the UCO Disclosure Form to the Reception Team, who will log the letter and arrange for it to be posted.
- 3.15 Should it be necessary for the patient to take away the completed letter immediately; advise the Reception Team of this, so the necessary log may be completed. If a patient needs to be sent to Accident and Emergency, then there is a short form for this purpose so that the key information can quickly be collated for the medical staff at the hospital. A UCO Disclosure of Information Form must be completed.

#### 4. LETTERS OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- 4.1 As a general rule, any patient attending the UCO clinic as a result of an external referral should prompt a letter of acknowledgement or thanks to the referrer.
- 4.2 As well as being a common courtesy, such a letter is a good advertisement for the professionalism of the UCO clinical centre and its practitioners, and for osteopathy.

All such letters should conform to the preceding guidelines and appropriate templates are found under 'letters' on TM2. Only brief, relevant clinical details are required.

## 5. CHARGES FOR LETTERS

5.1 Typical charges are set out below although there is some discretion with these:

- a) Case History Letters: £ 30 - £ 150
- b) Photocopy of File: £ No Charge
- c) Letters to Employer: £ No Charge
- d) Itemised Receipt: £ No Charge

## APPENDIX 1: CLINIC CORRESPONDENCE LETTER TEMPLATE

Ref: 5229566/ XXXX/XXXX (Patient number from TM2/Surname of student/ Surname of Tutor)

Dr James Brown  
Gallop Surgery  
72 Cattle Drive  
New Malden  
Essex  
NM0 6PQ

10<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Dear Dr Brown

**Re: Mrs Constance White [29/09/1961]**  
**Wonkey Road, Scarborough, Yorks S6 2YK** (Patients Name/Address/DOB)

Mrs White presented to us .....

**If this information should involve a cost please inform the Reception Manager before the information is sent.** (This must be the last line of the letter if the letter involves any sort of request; this sentence can be removed if the letter is notification only of information)

Thank you for your help

Yours sincerely

**PLEASE ADDRESS ANY QUERIES TO THE RECEPTION MANAGER QUOTING THE ABOVE REFERENCE**