

PROTOCOL FOR VISITS BY EXTERNAL MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS TO DETAINEES IN IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTRES

1. The purposes of visits by external medical practitioners to detainees in immigration removal centres in accordance with Detention Centre Rule 33(7) are:

- i) to provide a second medical opinion of the patient's medical needs and the current medical treatment and/or
- ii) to prepare medical reports for the patient's legal advisors

Whilst the second opinion may be shared with the healthcare staff at centres, the responsibility for the ongoing treatment of the patient remains with the centre healthcare staff.

2. A visiting medical practitioner must provide written evidence that he/she is registered with the General Medical Council and/or the General Dental Council.

3. Detainees must confirm in writing to the Health Care Centre that they wish to be visited by the named external medical practitioner and that they consent to the medical practitioner having access to his/her medical notes [Standard form attached]. Removal Centres must advise detainees of their rights to, and methods for, requesting such a visit.

4. The named external medical practitioner will contact the Health Care Centre at the Removal Centre to make an appointment to visit the detainee and to provide written confirmation that he/she satisfies the requirements in paragraph 2 above. This information will not be retained by the Removal Centre once verified. The Health Care Centre will contact the Centre Manager to ensure the criteria are met and that the visit is approved.

5. Health Care Centres will endeavour to meet the visit time requested by the external medical practitioner, or offer alternative appointment times if the requested time is not possible. The visit will be held in a health care room with appropriate examination facilities including an examination couch, handwashing facilities and a door that affords full privacy.

6. If a healthcare room is not available at the time of the requested visit, a standard visit in the Centre Legal Visits Room will be offered as an alternative.

7. The Health Care Centre will provide the external medical practitioner with full access to the detainee's comprehensive medical notes, nursing notes and details of his/her medical treatment.

8. Where good medical practice dictates, and with the patient's consent, the external medical practitioner will either make a direct entry into the patient's medical notes or provide the Health Care Centre with written notes of his/her assessment, by email, fax or post in order to provide continuity of care for the patient. Similarly if there are acute medical concerns about the patient, they should be conveyed without delay, either by telephone or by direct contact with healthcare staff in the centre.

9. Both the external medical practitioner and the Health Care Centre staff will adhere to normal standards of professional conduct and to the guidelines set out in the GMC Good Medical Practice, the Independent Health Care National Minimum Standards and the Private and Voluntary Health Care Regulations 2001 and in the case of other health care professionals the guidance of their relevant professional bodies.

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