

GEN59 Direct requests for assistance, care or treatment using protocols and guidelines

OVERVIEW

This standard covers directing requests for assistance, care or treatment, using protocols and guidelines to identify the nature and urgency of the request. It is primarily for requests that are received via phone, email or some other way that means that the person making the request is likely to be at a distance, rather than face to face with the person receiving it. As such it is most likely to be of relevance to 999 emergency operators, NHS 24/NHS Direct, and helpline operators. The standard does not involve independent decision making as to the health status and needs of the individual. Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies. Version No 1

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

You will need to know and understand:

1. The reasons why your role and responsibilities should always be explained when taking information
2. The types of information that need to be gathered and passed on, and why each is necessary
3. The steps required in order to gather appropriate information in relation to different sorts of circumstances, individuals, symptoms, illnesses etc
4. How communication styles may be modified to ensure it is appropriate to the individual and their level of understanding, culture and background, preferred ways of communicating and needs
5. Barriers to communication that can arise and the responses needed to manage them in a constructive manner
6. The application of protocols and guidelines available for use as tools for decision making in relation to different types of request and symptoms, illnesses, conditions and injuries
7. The importance of recording all information obtained in relation to requests for assistance, treatment, care or other services
8. How the manner in which you interact with others can affect the confidence they have in the service
9. The steps you would take to ensure that the privacy and dignity of the individual are maintained
10. The process to be followed in directing requests for onward action to different care pathways and related organisations

11. Why it is important that you advise the individual making the request of the course of action you will take and what will happen next
12. The circumstances in which a request for assistance, treatment, care or other services may be inappropriate/beyond your remit and the actions you should take to inform the person making the request of alternatives open to them
13. The legislation, policy, guidelines and practices with regard to the confidentiality of patient information and data protection issues
14. The legislation, policy, guidelines and practices with regard to the keeping and sharing of records, including the use of Integrated Care Record Systems (ICRS)

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

You must be able to do the following:

1. explain to the individual what your role is and the process you will go through in order to direct their request
2. clarify and confirm that the individual understands and accepts the actions being taken to direct their request
3. select and apply the correct protocols and guidelines appropriate to the individual, and the context and circumstances in which the request is being made
4. adhere to the sequence of questions within the protocols and guidelines
5. phrase questions in line with the requirements of the protocols and guidelines, adjusting your phrasing within permitted limits to enable the individual to understand and answer you better
6. accurately and appropriately record responses and other information obtained of relevance during immediate interaction, treatment or care of the individual
7. determine which service or assistance the individual requires and refer them on, as appropriate
8. seek prompt advice when a clear referral cannot be made or when an alternative service is not known
9. pass on all information obtained to the organisation who will be receiving the individual, as necessary and in line with patient confidentiality and data protection requirements
10. inform the individual making the request what course of action you are taking and what will happen next
11. explain clearly the time frame within which the individual making the request can expect to be given further assistance, giving them interim guidance, support and reassurance where appropriate
12. recognise when a request is beyond your remit or that of your organisation, and inform the individual of more appropriate alternative services, where known

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This National Occupational Standard was developed by Skills for Health. This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004): Dimension: Core 1 Communication. This standard has replaced EC_02.