



Ending Of Professional Relationship Procedure

Procedure Number
WCDHB-PC-0010

Version Nos:
4

1. Purpose

This Procedure outlines the process to be followed when the professional relationship between a patient/consumer and a West Coast District Health Board (WCDHB) health professional is terminated.

2. Application

This Procedure is to be followed by all WCDHB health professionals

3. Definitions

There are no definitions associated with this Procedure.

4. Responsibilities

For the purposes of this Procedure:

Staff Members are required to:

- ensure they abide by the requirements of this Procedure

5. Resources Required

This Procedure requires no specific resources.

6. Process

- 1.00 Every health professional, regardless of whether they are acting alone or as part of a group, has an ongoing ethical and professional responsibility to act in a manner that will not result in serious harm to a consumer/patient under their care.
- 1.01 When considering ending a professional relationship, health professionals must carefully assess the proposed action and its consequences for the consumer/patient. This assessment must include consideration of:
 - i). the nature and location of the health professional's practice and the consumer/patient population served,
 - ii). the availability of other health professional resources in the area,
 - iii). alternative arrangements for the care, ongoing monitoring and transfer of consumers/patients, and
 - iv). an appropriate contingency plan for consumer/patient care to deal with unforeseen emergency situations.
- 1.02 Where a health professional decides to terminate the professional relationship with a consumer/patient, the health professional is responsible for ensuring that the ending of the professional relationship is made clear, so that the patient no longer has any expectations of continuing care from the health professional.
- 1.03 The health professional is required to inform the consumer/patient (in writing) that the professional relationship has ended, the reasons why the professional relationship has



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- ended, and that they are being referred to another health professional (of their own choice or in the case of a specialist, back to the patient/consumer's usual General Practitioner)
- 1.04 The letter to the patient/consumer is also to request them to notify the health professional of the new health professional to whom they wish to be referred, as well as detailing an appropriate contingency plan for the care of the consumer/patient to deal with unforeseen emergency situations.
- 1.05 The termination of the professional relationship is to be documented in the consumer/patient's clinical record.
- 1.06 The patient/consumer is also to be provided with a copy of their clinical record.
- 1.07 The health professional is to send a letter of referral, and all relevant information about the consumer/patient, to the new health professional.

7. Precautions And Considerations

- ➔ The health professional is responsible for informing the consumer/patient that the professional relationship has ended.
- ➔ The termination of the professional relationship is to be documented in the consumer/patient's clinical record.
- ➔ The health professional is to send a letter of referral and all relevant information about the consumer/patient to the new health professional.

8. References

Medical Council Of New Zealand Guidelines For Doctors Ending A Professional Relationship (December 1996)

9. Related Documents

WCDHB Clinical Documentation Procedure.

Revision History	Version:	4
	Developed By:	QPR Advisor
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