**BARNTGREEN SURGERY**

**CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

We are committed to providing a confidential service to our patients.

Patients have the right to expect that all information about them is treated as confidential, including sensitive diagnoses, the fact of having visited the practice, or even being registered with the practice. This duty of confidentiality extends to all patients regardless of age.

No identifiable information about a patient will be passed on to anyone or any agency unless this is essential for providing care to protect someone’s health or safety.

Written consent is required before information is given to outside agencies e.g. insurance companies or solicitors. Patients have the right to see what has been written before it is sent.

Computer records are password protected and access is restricted to appropriate staff. Paper records are held securely within the practice and there is a secure method of disposal of confidential waste. There are safeguards in place when contacting patients by telephone and when posting or faxing information.

Unless a patient has given their permission, information will not be released to a third party. This includes giving results, sick notes or prescriptions to relatives. Information will not be left on answer machines.

Patient confidentiality will only be breached in exceptional circumstances, e.g. when there is risk of harm to the patient or another person. This might be in cases of abuse or a criminal act. In such circumstances advice will be taken from colleagues or from professional, regulatory or defence organisations. The patient will be kept fully informed about the disclosure.

All staff have signed a confidentiality agreement as part of their contract of employment.