

## **Good Practice Guidelines Names**

- Naming systems in ethnic groups may differ greatly from western conventions. Do not assume that the last name is always a surname.
- Take your lead from a patient or member of staff and use their preferred name. Make a note of this in patients' case notes for future reference.
- If you are not sure how to spell a patient's name, then ask them to write it out for you on a card, to ensure that it is spelled correctly in their records.
- Many ethnic groups do not give their child a permanent name for some time after birth; receiving a name is often a time of celebration and ritual involving the community. It is important to make a note of any temporary names and amend records when a child receives a permanent name.
- A name is a very important part of somebody's identity. Never use a familiar name, nickname or shortened version unless specifically asked to do so – always use a title and family name at least. This is especially important when addressing members of the opposite gender or older members of a group.