**Did Not Attend Policy**

**Introduction**

Approximately 80-100 appointments per month are ‘Did Not Attend’ (DNA), i.e. the patient does not turn up for the appointment and do not contact the surgery in advance to cancel/change appointment. The effect of these are:

An increase in the waiting time for receiving appointments

Frustration for both staff and patients

A waste of resources

A potential risk to the health of the patient

Also see Removal of Patient from List [\*] for up to date procedural guidelines.

**GENERAL Policy**

It is important that any DNA policy is agreed as a practice and patients are made aware of the policy and the reason for implementing. **Whilst it is important to be consistent, there will be exceptions on an individual case-by-case basis.**

The policy can be conveyed by notices in the waiting room, as well as a copy of the system on the surgery website. It should also be discussed by the patient participation group (PPG), as their support is important in supporting the process.

If a patient fails to attend a pre-booked appointment in the last 12 months, a first DNA warning SMS or letter will be sent to the patient, advising them of the effects of not keeping their appointments.

If the patient fails to attend a further appointment within a 12 month period, a 2nd DNA warning letter is sent to the patient with a copy of the practice’s DNA Policy.

If a patient fails to attend a 3rd pre booked appointment within the same 12 month period a 3rd and final formal warning letter is sent advising the patient that they are at risk of being removed from the surgery register and may have to register with an alternative medical practice.

If a further DNA is documented within the 12 month period this matter is then discussed with the Practice Manager/Partner and if deemed appropriate a deduction letter advising the patient that they will be removed from the surgery register will be sent.

Warning letters are valid for a period of 12 months. Removal based on warnings greater than 12 months old will be invalid – in this case a further formal warning and period of grace will

be required.

**SCREENING APPOINTMENTS**

Where a patient with a chronic condition or is otherwise deemed to be “at risk” fails to attend a screening or a recall appointment there may be an implied duty on the practice to follow-up the reason for non-attendance to ensure that the patient’s health is not at risk.

The responsible clinician (usually the doctor or the nurse holding the clinic) will be responsible for initiating action to contact the patient by telephone to determine the reason for the failure to attend and, where possible, re-arrange the appointment.

Where a new appointment is arranged, this is followed up with a text message confirming their appointment booking and, the day prior to the new appointment date a further text message reminder will be sent to the patient.

The clinician will have overall responsibility for the individual patient follow-up and attendance, although the administration aspects may be delegated.

The DNA will be automatically coded by the clinical system at each non-attendance.

**CHILD / VUNERABLE PERSON NOT BROUGHT IN FOR APPOINTMENTS**

It is important for GPs to have policies and procedures in place that clarify what they should do if a child / vulnerable is not brought in to a GP appointment. Such a non-attendance should not only be coded correctly – Xab0Q - but also trigger an appropriate response:

* Child not brought in to GP appointment – reception staff will contact parents to enquire as to the reason for the missed appointment and document this in the patient’s record. The appointment should be rebooked if required and parents reminded of the surgery’s DNA policy.
* Where a child or a vulnerable person does not attend an appointment, the clinician they were booked with should attempt to contact the patient/care giver (eg by phone) to clarify the situation. This group of patients are likely to rely on a parent/care-giver to help them attend their appointment. The choice not to attend may not be the patient's to make.  The DNA episode should be discussed with the duty doctor and/or safeguarding if deemed appropriate (at the discretion of the clinician they were booked with).
* Child not brought in to Nurse / HCA appointment – the Nurse or HCA will contact parents, document the reason for the missed appointment and rebooked the appointment if required. They should also remind the parents of the surgery’s DNA policy.

If there are more than 2 DNA’d appointment within the last 12 months or any reasons for concern this should be discussed with the duty doctor or Safeguarding Lead to consider a follow up telephone consultation for further investigation.

**Appeals**

A patient will always have the choice to an appeal. Appeals must be made in writing to the Practice Manager within 28 working days of the DNA letter. The appeal must include documentation supporting that a real emergency took place therefore the patient did not attend a booked appointment.

If the patient has specific problems that they wish to discuss that are preventing them from informing the surgery when they cannot attend an appointment then they must include this information in their appeal letter.

## **Notice for Reception area**

PLEASE NOTE

Due to an increase in the number of wasted appointments through patient’s failing to attend without informing the surgery it has become necessary to implement the following policy:

**If you repeatedly fail to attend appointments you may be removed from this practice list and may be required to find an alternative doctor.**

If you cannot attend your appointments for any reason please let us know as soon as possible, we can then offer the appointment to someone else.

Thank you for your co-operation

**Explanation leaflet**

MISSED APPOINTMENTS

DUE TO THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS FAILING TO ATTEND FOR THEIR APPOINTMENT THIS MAY MEAN THAT YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE THE DOCTOR ON THE DAY THAT YOU WISH TO.

IN AN ATTEMPT TO TRY AND RESOLVE THIS THE PRACTICE HAS DEVELOPED THE FOLLOWING POLICY.

IF YOU FAIL TO ATTEND APPOINTMENTS WITHOUT INFORMING US WE WILL WRITE TO YOU ASKING IF THERE ARE ANY SPECIFIC PROBLEMS PREVENTING YOU FROM LETTING US KNOW.

IF YOU REPEATEDLY FAIL TO ATTEND FOR APPOINTMENTS YOU MAY BE REMOVED FROM THE PRACTICE LIST AND HAVE TO FIND AN ALTERNATIVE GP PRACTICE.