



# DID NOT ATTEND POLICY

## Introduction

Approximately 100 appointments per month are classified as 'Did Not Attend' (DNA) - i.e. the patient did not turn up for the appointment and did not contact the surgery in advance to cancel/change the appointment. The effects of these are:

- An increase in the waiting time for appointments
- Frustration for both staff and patients
- A waste of resources
- A potential risk to the health of the patient

## General Policy

A monthly search of DNA's will be carried out. Whilst it is important to be consistent, there will be exceptions on an individual case-by-case basis.

If a patient consistently fails to attend (more than 2 appointments in a 3 month period), a first letter will be sent (see below).

If the patient continues to miss appointments, the matter will be discussed at a practice meeting and a decision will be taken with regard to their ability to pre-book routine appointments in the future. In this case a formal warning letter will be issued.

Warning letters are valid for a period of 12 months.

The policy will be conveyed to patients via notices in the waiting room as well as on the surgery website.

## Screening Appointments

Where a patient with a chronic condition, or who 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.

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

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

An automatic text will be sent to patients who miss an appointment and have text reminders activated on their records.

With regards to children, the Practice has a duty to consider all children who do not attend their appointment, whether it is non-attendance at practice appointments or if we are notified by other healthcare providers such as Royal Derby Hospital.

There may be many reasonable and innocent explanations why a child was not brought to an appointment, but this is a frequent theme seen in serious case reviews. This may be further investigated by the Practice as a potential safeguarding concern.



## First letter

Dear (patient)

According to our records, you have booked and then did not attend        appointments with your GP/Practice Nurse/Healthcare Assistance, over the past        weeks/months.

As a Practice we have over 100 unattended appointments per month. Wasted appointments may mean another patient who wants to see their GP or Practice Nurse is unable to due to limited availability.

We understand that on occasions there may be genuine reasons why you are unable to attend or no longer need an appointment. If this is the case, please let us know as soon as possible, preferably giving at least 24 hours' notice. Your appointment can then be given to someone else and a new one can be offered to you if needed.

We will continue to monitor your appointment attendance and further missed appointments may result in the withdrawal of your ability to pre-book routine appointments in the future.

If you have specific problems that are preventing you from informing us when you cannot attend for an appointment, then please ring me and I will try and help where I can.

**\* If you would like to receive a text reminder for your appointment, please ensure that we have your mobile telephone number (delete as appropriate).**

If you feel this letter has been sent to you in error or you have any related queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on (01332) 842288 or by email at [appletree.medical@nhs.net](mailto:appletree.medical@nhs.net).

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

**Lianne Burke**  
**Practice Manager**

## Second letter (FORMAL WARNING)

Dear

Further to my previous letter dated \_\_\_\_\_ I have been made aware that you failed to attend another appointment on \_\_\_\_\_.

As explained in my letter of \_\_\_\_\_, the Practice views repeated missed appointments very seriously. As a result, this letter represents a formal warning that should a further appointment be missed, a decision will be taken with regard to your ability to pre-book routine appointments in the future.

If you have specific problems that prevent you from cancelling appointments and you would like to discuss these, please contact me on (01332) 842288 or by email at [appletree.medical@nhs.net](mailto:appletree.medical@nhs.net).

Yours sincerely

**Lianne Burke**  
**Practice Manager**