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DID NOT ATTEND POLICY

Introduction

More than 15 million general practice appointments are being wasted each year because patients do not turn up and fail to warn surgeries that they will not be attending.

There are around 307 million sessions scheduled with GPs, nurses, therapists, and other practice staff every year and 5% – one in twenty – are missed without enough notice to invite other patients. That works out as around 15.4 million missed slots.

Of these, around 7.2million are with busy family doctors, which adds up to more than 1.2 million GP hours wasted each year – the equivalent of over 600 GPs working full time for a year.

Each appointment costs an average of £30, putting the total cost to the NHS at more than £216million pounds on top of the disruption for staff and fellow patients that would pay for:

- The annual salary of 2,325 full time GPs
- 224, 640 cataract operations
- 58,320 hip replacement operations
- 216,000 drug treatment courses for Alzheimer's
- The annual salary of 8, 424 full time community nurses

(Source : <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2019/01/missed-gp-appointments-costing-nhs-millions/>)

Approximately 370 appointments per month are classified as 'Did Not Attend' (DNA) - i.e. the patient did not turn up for the appointment/Children was not brought to their appointment and did not contact the surgery in advance to cancel/change appointment. The effects of this 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

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General Policy

Most of our patients, parents/guardians know it can be difficult to get a routine appointment with a GP or Nurse. In the course of events where demand is unpredictable, that cannot easily be remedied. One thing that makes this more difficult to overcome is the problem of missed routine appointments when patients do not attend (DNAs).

Where patients, parents/guardians have been declined routine appointments because the consultations are fully booked, it is at best disappointing when one of those booked appointments does not turn up and has not contacted the Practice to cancel the appointment so that it can be released for others or telephoned so late as to make it impossible to allocate to another patient.

In 2022, there was over 3500 such DNAs – with either GPs or Nurses and in some cases, double appointments at specialist clinics. This is the equivalent of 14 full days of missed clinical appointments.

The cost in time and money is a burden to the National Health Service generally and the Practice in particular cannot sustain this.

Remember that your DNA is other patient's denied appointment.

This has been discussed with the patient participation group (PPG), and we have their support in supporting the process.

DNA 1 – where this is the first occasion, a code is automatically added to the patient's medical record by the clinical system at the end of the working day and the DNA counted in a monthly search.

DNA 2 – where this is the second occasion, the patient will be contacted by the practice, advised of the missed appointment and a dated note added to the home screen of the patient record. When the patient makes a further appointment, they will be advised by the practice that we are aware of their previous DNA and ask to confirm their intention to attend their next appointment. An automatic text message/email (if consented) will be sent to the patient. If there is no facility to text, the patient can request for the appointment to be sent by email or letter.

An informal warning letter advising of the DNA'd appointments will be sent to the patient along with a *Missed Appointments* leaflet.

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DNA 3 – where the patient fails to attend a third appointment, a formal warning letter will be issued. Outlining any further DNA appointments will bring the matter to be discussed at a practice meeting and a majority agreement will be reached as to whether the patient will be removed from the practice list.

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.

Child DNA

DNA 1 – where this is the first occasion, the clinician will telephone the parent/guardian at the appointment time to advise of the missed appointment, a code will be automatically added to the patient's medical record and advise if appropriate to book another appointment for the child.

DNA 2 – where this is the second occasion, the clinician will telephone the parent/guardian at the appointment time to advise of the missed appointment and highlight to the Safeguarding Clinical Lead GP Dr Carter. A dated note will be added to the home screen of the patient record, if a further appointment is appropriate, the parent/guardian will be made aware of both DNAs and will be asked to confirm their intention to bring the child to the booked appointment, an automatic text message/email (if consented) will be sent to the parent/guardian the day before the appointment. If there is no facility to text, the parent/guardian can request for the appointment to be sent by email.

DNA 3 – where this is the third occasion, the clinician will immediately inform either the Safeguarding Clinical Lead GP or Senior GP Partner (who is present on the day). The Senior Clinician will contact the parent/guardian of the child to discuss reasoning for non-attendance of medical appointments. A formal decision will be made by the Senior Clinician of the next steps which could result in a formal warning letter being issued.

Telephone Consultation DNA

Where patients have booked a telephone consultation with a clinician, the patient will be advised at the time of booking the appointment that the call will be at any point during the day and in some cases can specify AM or PM however this will never be guaranteed due to the potential for emergencies to take precedence.

If the telephone consultation has been booked for a mobile telephone, it is the responsibility of the patient to ensure that they are not in any area with poor / no signal for the period of time for the expected call.

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First attempt - If the clinician has telephoned the confirmed mobile telephone number and been unable to make contact with the patient, a text message will be sent to the confirmed mobile telephone number advising of the attempt to call and that the clinician will try again. This will give the patient opportunity to ensure that they are able to take the call at the next attempt.

Second attempt – If the clinician has telephoned the confirmed mobile telephone number again with no response, the consultation will be coded as a non-attendance and will follow the same structure to the policy as a face to face consultation.

How to avoid becoming a DNA

If you cannot attend or no longer need an appointment, please ring us in advance.

You are able to telephone the main surgery telephone number 24hrs a day and select option 0 to leave a voicemail to cancel an appointment.

Mistakes do happen and the practice understands that appointment can be forgotten about or overlooked. In such cases, the practice will take into account the reason given by patients.

Preference, of course, is for the practice to know in advance so we can offer the appointment(s) to other patients in need.

What we as a Practice are doing to reduce DNAs

We are reminding the general public what our policy is and we feel that it is important to enforce it robustly.

It has been discussed and agreed with the Patient Participation Group so that we can improve services for all our patients. Here is what we will endeavour to do to help you not become a DNA:

- We will always write your appointment details onto an appointment slip if you are booking the appointment in surgery face to face at our reception desk. Our appointment slips contain our telephone number should patient's need to cancel.
- If you make an appointment over the telephone, we will offer you a confirmation text message (if consented) at the time of booking the appointment. Our staff are trained to repeat all appointment details and clarify understanding with patients at the time of making the appointment.

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KEEP IT OR CANCEL IT!

SOMEONE ELSE NEEDS THE APPOINTMENT!

To help us to improve the system and make available over 3500 appointments this year for patients to book routinely, please adhere to our Practice Policy.

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First letter (INFORMAL warning)

Dear

I have noticed from our records that you failed to attend 2 appointments at the surgery within the last 12 months.

This may have been an oversight on your part, but I need to bring to your attention that the practice has a policy regarding missed appointments, and I enclose an explanation leaflet for you to explain the procedure.

If you have specific problems that you wish to discuss that are preventing you from informing us when you cannot attend for an appointment, then please ring to discuss on the above telephone number and we will try and help where we can.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Reception lead

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Second letter (FORMAL WARNING)

Dear

Further to my previous letters dated _____ I have been made aware that you failed to attend another appointment on _____.

As explained in the leaflet I sent you and the notice on display in the practice reception area, the practice takes repeated missed appointments very seriously. As a result, this letter represents a formal warning that should a further appointment be missed, you may be removed from the practice list without further notice.

If you would like to discuss the circumstances surrounding your appointments, please contact [*Insert Name*].

Yours sincerely,

Senior Partner
On behalf of the Partnership

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FIRST LETTER (Following DNA contact)

Dear,

Following our recent telephone conversation, I confirm that a new appointment has been arranged for you as follows:

Date:

Time:

With:

In order to make sure that you remain in the best health, it is essential that you attend for your health/screening check. If you are unable to do so, and to prevent valuable appointment time going unused, you must arrange to telephone reception to cancel this in advance.

As advised by text message, it is your responsibility to ensure that you attend your appointment(s).

Yours sincerely,



RECEPTION LEAD

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APPENDIX 1 : NOTICE FOR RECEPTION AREA

The attached file is an A4 poster that can be used in the reception area (a downloadable PDF and a PNG image file below);

PDF (A4 document)	PNG (Image File)
 <p>DID NOT ATTEND POSTER.pdf</p>	 <p>DID NOT ATTEND POSTER.png</p>



APPENDIX 2 : PATIENT LEAFLET



did-not-attend-leaf-
let-2022.docx

"The total cost to the NHS of missed appointments was over £216 million"
(NHS England, 2019)

Please remember that there may be a shortage of appointments - when a patient fails to attend, they have prevented someone else from being seen in their place.

CONTACT US

We do not accept prescription requests via email.

Please download the NHS App on your smart phone - for further information please click here.

Alternatively, you can register for Online Patient Access (or drop in a paper request to the surgery).

Practice Address
—
Practice Phone No.
—
Practice Email
—
Website Address

PRACTICE NAME GOES HERE

MISSED APPOINTMENTS

COMPANY LOGO

MISSED APPOINTMENTS

When patients miss appointments, it can be disruptive for our GPs, for you, and other patients in need of care.

Why is it important?

More than 1.5 million general practice appointments are being wasted each year because patients do not turn up and fail to warn surgeries that they will not be attending.

Around 7.2million are with GPs, which adds up to more than 1.2 million GP hours wasted each year – the equivalent of over 400 GPs working full time for a year.

[ENTER PRACTICE MISSED APPOINTMENT STATS BELOW]

During **[YEAR/CHOSEN PERIOD]**, there were **XX** appointments at this GP Practice booked, but patients did not attend. This includes:

- XX** face to face appointments with a GP
- XX** face to face appointments with a Nurse Practitioner
- XX** virtual Appointment with a healthcare professional

When a patient does not attend, it stops another patient being seen sooner.

WHY IT MATTERS

There are many reasons why a patient might miss an appointment, and in some cases, it can be an indication that something serious is going on for that individual.

While many missed appointments can be down to human error, a patient not attending an appointment could be a warning sign that something is wrong. This may require follow-up action from one of our clinicians, or other health workers.

We would encourage patients to let us know as soon as possible if they are unable to attend, so that we can offer that time to someone else who really needs it.

Alternatively, you can cancel your appointment online using our online form, **[EMIS OR SYSTEMLINE]**, or the NHS App if you are signed up to the service.

We understand that sometimes things come up and you may not be able to attend an appointment, all we ask is that you let us know.

Text Message Reminders

[PRACTICE NAME] are using electronic methods, such as SMS reminders, to encourage patients to keep their appointments, or cancel them in a timely manner.

Need help?

If you can't make an appointment, please let us know. Provide as much notice as possible (if you are calling then at least 30 mins before your appointment time) so that your appointment can be offered to someone else.

Alternatively, you can cancel your appointment online using our online form, **[EMIS OR SYSTEMLINE]** or the NHS App if you are signed up to the service.

OPENING TIMES

MONDAY	08:00 TO 18:00
TUESDAY	08:00 TO 18:00
WEDNESDAY	08:00 TO 18:00
THURSDAY	08:00 TO 18:00
FRIDAY	08:00 TO 18:00
SATURDAY	08:00 TO 18:00
SUNDAY	08:00 TO 18:00

[ENTER OPENING TIMES ABOVE]