

Grimethorpe Surgery

Protocol for Did Not Attend Appointments

Procedure Written by	Dr J.E.C. Bennekers
Review	biennial
Responsibility for review	Manager or partners
Review dates	Reviewed by
Written 17/2/20	Dr J.E.C. Bennekers
Reviewed 2/12/21	Dr J.E.C. Bennekers
Reviewed 25/7/23	Dr J.E.C. Bennekers
Reviewed 23/7/24	Dr J.E.C. Bennekers

Reviewed 23/07/24

Review due 23/07/25

AIM:

To raise the awareness and explain how we deal with the problem caused by patients, who fail to attend their booked appointments (without prior cancellation) and do not provide a reasonable explanation for their non-attendance.

PROCESS:

The practice monitors the number of missed appointments daily, weekly and monthly. We are keen to reduce the number of appointments wasted on a weekly basis. Missed appointments cause:

- Frustration for both staff and patients
- An increase in the waiting time for appointments
- A waste of resources (doctors/nurses time)
- A lost opportunity for patients needing an appointment to be seen.

We log patient's non-attendance on their patient record. The problem is monitored, and we will apply the following process:

Letter 1

If a patient fails to attend booked appointment/s without informing us we will write to the patient asking if there are any specific problem/s that may have prevented them from contacting us to cancel the booked appointment. We will send a letter, patient information leaflet, and a copy of the protocol.

Letter 2

If a patient fails further appointment/s, we will usually send a second reminder.

Letter 3

Where a subsequent DNA has occurred within 12 months, the Practice will review the individual case and a decision will be taken with regard to addressing the patient's future ability to pre-book routine appointments.

The Practice will also consider whether consistent failure to adhere to our Practice policy constitutes a breakdown in relationship between the patient and the GP (where the GP Practice has given clear instruction on policy and service provision and the patient has chosen to disregard this on several occasions in spite of due warning). If this is found to be the case, the patient will be removed from the Practice List and needs to register with a different Surgery.

We believe this policy is necessary for the benefit of the majority of our patients who do attend appointments or give us notice to cancel, and for those who require an appointment but miss out due to patients failing to inform us if they do not attend their booked appointment.

Appendix 1 DNA letter 1

Grimethorpe Surgery

The Grimethorpe Centre
Acorn Way
Grimethorpe
Barnsley
S72 7NZ
Tel: 01226 716809
Fax: 01226 712999

The Cudworth Centre
Carlton Street
Cudworth
Barnsley
S72 8SU
Tel: 01226 707110
Fax: 01226 707295

Date

Title Forename Surname
Patient address

Dear Title/Initials/Surname

MISSED APPOINTMENT/S

We have noticed from your records that you failed to attend ___ consecutive appointments at the surgery.

Date:
Date:

Whilst we appreciate this may have been an oversight on your part, we would like to remind you that it is important to cancel unwanted appointments, so that we have the opportunity to offer the appointment to another patient.

The effect of missed appointments, when patients fail to contact the surgery in advance to cancel/change appointments, is:

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

The Practice has a Policy which sets out our aims and the process we use to try to reduce the problem; I enclose a copy for your information.

Yours sincerely,



Dr J.E.C. Bennekers, practice manager

Enc's 1. Patient Information - Missed Appointments
2 'Did Not Attend' Protocol

APPENDIX 2 DNA Letter 2

Grimethorpe Surgery

The Grimethorpe Centre
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Date

Title Forename Surname
Patient address

Dear Title/Initials/Surname

MISSED APPOINTMENT/S

Further to our previous letter dated
that you failed to attend another appointment.

we note from your medical record

We explained in the previous letter and the information sent to you, that it is important for patients to cancel unwanted appointments. We believe patients who do not attend appointments are in effect, denying the opportunity for another patient to see the doctor or nurse. We trust you agree that this is an unacceptable situation.

As this is your **second** reminder letter, we would stress to you the importance of contacting the surgery if you cannot attend an appointment to allow another patient to may make use of that appointment. I would urge you to read the Did Not Attend Policy which we sent to you with our previous letter. The Policy indicates that we will send three letters to a patient who has missed appointments and who has not contacted the practice to cancel, the third letter is usually to inform the patient that we will be contacting the Health Services Support team to seek removal from our patient list.

We would appreciate your co-operation and support to improve access for all our patients.

Yours sincerely,



Dr J.E.C. Bennekers, practice manager

APPENDIX 3 – DNA Letter 3

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Cudworth
Barnsley
S72 8SU
Tel: 01226 707110
Fax: 01226 707295

Date

Title Forename Surname
Patient address

Dear Title/Initials/Surname

MISSED APPOINTMENT/S

We have sent 2 previous letters dated _____ and _____ but, unfortunately, we note you have failed to attend another appointment. As we have received no explanation for your non-attendance we have discussed what this means about the patient-doctor relationship and which steps we will need to take as a result.

The outcome of our discussions is as follows:

We are no longer able to allow you to pre-book online appointments. If you continue not attending booked appointments, we may decide to ask for removal of your name from our practice list.

We feel the patient-doctor relationship has broken down and are saddened to make the decision to ask the Primary Care Support team to remove your name from our practice list. They generally take 30 days to action this request. We will be writing to PCSE today, and we advise you to register with another General Practitioner in your area at your earliest opportunity.

Please note, the SYPS team will write to you, to tell you when your removal from our list will be effective, and until that date (or until you register with another GP) we remain responsible for your health care.

If you have difficulty registering with a new GP or would like details of a practice close to your home you can request this information from Primary care England.

Website: <http://PCSE.england.nhs.uk>

Email: PCSE.inquiries@nhs.net

To register at a new GP practice you will usually need to request a new patient registration form from your new GP and return the form with some form of ID (over 18s). The new practice will explain what their next procedure is.

Yours sincerely,



Dr J.E.C. Bennekers, practice manager

How do we help to avoid DNAs?

We send patients a confirmation text to confirm time, date, place, and person the appointment is with.

We also send a reminder text 2 days prior to the appointment.

What can you do to avoid becoming a DNA?

- Keep your appointment
- If the appointment is no longer needed, cancel your appointment
- If you can't attend your appointment, cancel the appointment
-

How can you cancel your appointment?

- Ring the surgery to cancel
 - 01226 716 809 for Grimethorpe
 - 01226 707 110 for Cudworth
- Cancel your appointment online
- Cancel your appointment in person at reception.
-

**BE CONSIDERATE!
DON'T NEED YOUR APPOINTMENT?
CAN'T MAKE YOUR APPOINTMENT?**

**CANCEL IT!
OTHER PATIENTS WILL BE GRATEFUL!**

THANK YOU!

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PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Did Not Attend Appointment - Wasted Appointments



*** Information about what DNAs are and why we feel it's important to avoid them ***

What is a DNA?

DNA stands for 'Did Not Attend' or 'Did Not Arrive'. In the UK every year an excessive amount of appointments are booked and subsequently not attended. In a significant proportion, these appointments were not cancelled and the practice did not receive any notification the patient would not attend the booked appointment.

A variation of this problem is when a child or vulnerable adult is not brought to an appointment. In this case, the problem can also be a safeguarding concern.

How big a problem is this?

- In the last 12 months alone, 3521 patients did not attend their appointment at Grimethorpe Surgery.
- This is nearly 10% of all the available appointments in the last year!
- 41% of the missed appointments were for patients who repeatedly failed to attend.

Why is it a problem if I don't attend my appointment?

After all, you may no longer need your appointment as you feel better. Or you were out shopping and simply forgot. Or perhaps, you thought the appointment wasn't until the next day.

As long as you cancel the appointment in advance, there is no problem. We can simply use the no longer needed appointment for a patient who does need the appointment. Our staff members will be happy to reschedule your appointment if required.

However, if you fail to inform us you will not be attending it causes:

- A valuable appointment going to waste
- An appointment badly needed for another patient remaining unused
- A longer wait for an available appointment for someone who needs an appointment.
- A waste of time for the clinician
- A waste of resources and money
- Risk to the health of a patient who may need that appointment

So, in short:

**KEEP IT OR CANCEL IT!
SOMEONE ELSE NEEDS THE APPOINTMENT!**