**DID NOT ATTEND POLICY & PROCEDURE**

**Introduction**

A large proportion of available appointments per week are wasted due to patients failing to attend appointments. The effects of these are:

* An increase in the waiting time for appointments
* Frustration for both staff and patients
* A waste of resources
* Poor patient satisfaction

It has been noted that some patients consistently miss appointments; these include emergency appointments which patients will have booked on the day.

**Practice Procedure should a client continuously fail to attend**:

1. The clinical appointment system will automatically record any patient Did Not Attend’s (DNA) as they occur in the appointment schedules.
2. The clinician (usually the doctor or the nurse holding the clinic) should initiate action to contact the patient by telephone to determine the reason for the failure to attend and, where possible, re-arrange the appointment.
3. If a patient DNA’s an appointment, a text should be sent to the patient advising of the practice policy for DNA’s (appendix 1)
4. If a patient DNA’s a second booked appointment, the appropriate first letter (see *appendix 2 & 3* ) which includes a copy of the practice notice which explains the practice policy should be sent.
5. If the patient subsequently fails to attend, the patient will be sent the appropriate second letter (see *Appendix 4 & 5*) asking them to contact the practice to discuss any reason which may be preventing them from attending appointment.
6. If the patients subsequently fails to attend a further appointment, the patient will be sent a final warning and any further DNAs may result in removal from the list.

**Exceptions**

The partners have agreed the following rules for exceptions in the practice policy:

* Cannot “blanket” remove a family if one person does not attend.
* Patients with ongoing safeguarding issues should not be removed.
* Pregnant ladies should not be removed
* Appointments with other health care professionals (Smoking cessation, MacMillan) etc are excluded from the DNA policy.
* Patients who are under the age of 19 and/or patients with safeguarding concerns will be reviewed by GP / Practice Management prior to removal as pre-caution.

**CHILD NOT BROUGHT IN FOR APPOINTMENTS**

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

* Child not brought to GP appointment – clinician should review records (reason for appointment, history etc) and if appropriate 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.
* Child not brought 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. This also applies to vulnerable adults.

 **CANCELLING APPOINTMENTS**

Patients who cancel their appointment in sufficient time for the appointment to be utilised by another patient, will not be recorded as a DNA. However, patients are kindly asked to notify the Practice that they wish to cancel their appointment ideally a minimum of 2 hours before the appointment time.

**PROTOCOL FOR DNA’s**

Where no reasonable circumstances for DNA have been identified, for example, hospital admission, the following warnings will be given:

**FIRST DNA**

If a patient fails to attend their first pre-booked appointment in the previous 12 months, a first DNA warning SMS or phone contact should occur with the patient, advising them of the effects of not keeping their appointments. (See page 7 for wording of SMS).

**SECOND DNA**

If the patient fails to attend a further appointment, a DNA warning letter is sent to the patient.

**THIRD DNA**

If a patient fails to attend a 3rd pre booked appointment, a final formal warning should be forwarded to the patient advising any further DNA’s will result in the patient being removed from the Practice and the patient will need to register with an alternative medical practice

**FOURTH DNA**

If a further DNA occurs, 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.
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.

**Acknowledgement**

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