# DID NOT ATTEND POLICY

## Introduction

Monthly calculations are conducted to establish the number of appointments which 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 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

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, as their support is important in supporting the process.

If a patient fails to attend a pre-booked appointment on more than **twice** in the space of 12 months, an informal warning letter will be sent to the patient, advising them that a further occurrence could risk removal from the practice.

If the patient fails to attend another appointment, the matter will 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. In this case a formal warning letter will be issued.

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 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. This contact may also be initiated by a communication task send to reception staff to determine the reason for failed attendance.

Where a new appointment is arranged, this shall be communicated with the responsible clinician.

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

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

The practice manager will be responsible for the issue of a monthly DNA clinical system reports which will be reviewed at the monthly business meetings by practice partners. The Practice Manager will produce a monthly DNA notice to be displayed in house and on the practice website to highlight the number of failed appointments.

## >>> Continues >>>

Dear

I have noticed from our records that you failed to attend *[insert number]* consecutive appointments at the surgery.

This may have been an oversight on your part, but I need to bring to your attention that the practice now 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 me on the above telephone number and I will try and help where I can.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Practice Manager

**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 will 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

**For an example of a final removal letter please see Removal of Patient from List [\*]**

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***Notice for Reception area***

**PLEASE NOTE**

Due to an increase in the number of wasted appointments through patients failing to attend appointments 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 required to find an alternative doctor.

If you cannot attend your appointments for any reason please let us know as soon as possible, giving at least 24 hours’ notice. We can then offer the appointment to someone else.

Thank you for your co-operation