

# **CLIFTON MEDICAL CENTRE DID NOT ATTEND POLICY Feb 17**

## **Aim**

This policy has been introduced, in conjunction with our patient group, to help us improve patient access to appointments.

## **Introduction**

Approximately 85 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 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**

This DNA policy was agreed with the patient participation group and the practice February 2017. The policy is conveyed by notices in the waiting room and as a copy of the system on the surgery website

If a patient fails to attend a pre-booked appointment on more than three occasions in the space of 6 months, this would suggest a pattern of behaviour and 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.

The practice will be fair to all patients irrespective of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or other belief, disability, age, ethnic origin, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, and any exceptions will be made on an individual case-by-case basis.

## **Reception action**

At the end of each day the appointment sessions must be checked and did not attend code 9N42 added to patients records, enabling us to search on a quarterly basis.

## **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 (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.

Where a new appointment is arranged, this is to be followed up with a letter of confirmation, and, the day prior to the new appointment date, a further telephone call to the patient is to be made to check that they will attend.

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.

## **TEXT REMINDERS**

Text messages are sent to patients to remind them of their pre-booked appointment. All team members should confirm contact details with patients, opportunely, to ensure that patients receive the message.

## First letter (INFORMAL warning)

Dear

I have noticed from our records that you failed to attend *[insert dates and times and when booked]* 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, which has been devised in conjunction with our patient group. I enclose an explanation leaflet for you to explain the procedure.

Patient demand is high for appointments as people are living longer with more complicated conditions. By cancelling your appointment the practice is able to offer the booking to another patient.

Clifton Medical centre is open 8.00am to 6pm Monday to Friday and our telephone numbers are 01709 363950 and 0844 477 3622 (a queuing system operates). Our Wickersley site is open from 8.30 until.

In the event that you wish to cancel an appointment when our surgeries are closed, please text . Please note this mobile number is for the purpose of cancellation of appointments and will not respond to any other queries.

We will continue to review your attendance pattern, however 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 contact reception to discuss.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

## 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 [\*]**

**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 a waste of a valuable appointment, you must arrange to telephone reception to cancel this in advance.

As advised, we will be telephoning you on [*insert date*] to confirm that you will attend.

Yours sincerely,

**PRACTICE MANAGER**

## 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

## MISSED APPOINTMENTS

DUE TO THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS FAILING TO ATTEND APPOINTMENTS, IT MAY BE THAT YOU ARE NOT BE ABLE TO SEE THE DOCTOR ON THE DAY THAT YOU WISH TO.

IN AN ATTEMPT TO TRY AND RESOLVE THIS, THE PRACTICE HAS DEVELOPED THE FOLLOWING POLICY.

IF YOU FAIL TO ATTEND APPOINTMENTS WITHOUT INFORMING US, WE WILL WRITE TO YOU ASKING IF THERE ARE ANY SPECIFIC PROBLEMS PREVENTING YOU FROM LETTING US KNOW.

IF YOU REPEATEDLY FAIL TO ATTEND FOR APPOINTMENTS, YOU MAY BE REMOVED FROM THE PRACTICE LIST AND HAVE TO FIND AN ALTERNATIVE GP PRACTICE.