



Version	Date Published	Review Status
1.0	October 2019	October 2020

Ash Grove Medical Centre Policy for reducing non-attendance of appointments (DNA's) for over 18's

Document Control

A. Confidentiality Notice

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B. Document Details

Classification:	Corporate Policy
Author and role:	Jo Hewlett - Practice Manager
Organisation:	Ash Grove Medical Centre
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Current Document Approved By:	Deb Lister – Management Coordinator Kari Leonard – Management Coordinator
Date Approved:	October 2019

C. Document Revision and Approval History

Version	Date	Version Created By	Version Approved By	Comments
1	October 2019	Kirsty Temple	Jo Hewlett	

Policy Validity Statement

This policy is due for review 12 months from the latest date shown above. After this date, policy and process documents may become invalid.

This policy is subject to review and change with the GP's approval.



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Policy users should ensure that they are consulting the currently valid version of the documentation.

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.

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 health of the patient

Practice Policy

1. If a patient fails to attend a pre-booked appointment on one occasion, an informal warning letter will be sent to the patient (Appendix A). This letter will be printed by Kirsty Temple, Medical Secretary and posted to the patient.
2. If the patient fails to attend another appointment within a 12 month period, a formal warning letter will be sent reminding them that should they miss another appointment they risk being removed from the practice list (Appendix B).
3. If the patient fails to attend three appointments within a 12 months period, this patient's details will be brought to the GP Partners attention by Jo Hewlett, Practice Manager. The GP Partners will make a decision as to whether the patient is removed from the list.

Warning letters are only valid for a period of 12 months and removal based on warning greater than 12 months old will be invalid. In such a scenario only the DNA appointments within a 12 month period may be reviewed to determine which stage of the policy should be applied.



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Any person under 18 who does not attend will receive a letter (Appendix C) and the code 'child not brought to appointment' added to the record. Clinicians to make judgements on

what follow up are needed. Multiple DNA's should be reported to the health visitors +/- safeguarding as appropriate.

Practices will advertise the DNA policy on their websites.

Waiting room posters or other methods will be used to promote surgery wide attendance rates and the importance of not wasting appointments.

Read Codes for DNAs

DNAs will be recorded by the clinicians at the end of their morning or afternoon sessions as currently done. Kirsty Temple will then use the following read codes when sending out the letters. There are no read codes for 1st, 2nd or 3rd DNAs, therefore when recording, the following read code will be used:

XE2NM DNA-no reason

Then in free text please specify if it's 1st, 2nd or 3rd DNA.

Identifying DNAs and sending out letters

- Kirsty Temple, Medical Secretary will run weekly searches on the read code # 9N42 or go through the appointment lists.
- Kirsty Temple, Medical Secretary will send out the first and second warning letters and inform Jo Hewlett, Practice Manager if a third letter is needed.

Removing Patients from the Practice List

This decision can only be made in consultation with the GP Partners. Removal of a patient from the registered list for repeatedly failing to attend appointments will be in accordance with The NHS General Medical Service Regulations 2015 (Sch3)(24)(8)(b). This regulation requires that the patient has been warned that they are at risk of removal and that the reasons for removal have been explained to the patient. The practice must keep a written record of the removal of any patient from its list including the reason for removal, the circumstances of the removal and the grounds for removal. If the decision is made to remove the patient from the registered list one of the GP Partners should write to the patient explaining them of the practice decision and advising them to register with an alternative practice (Appendix D).

Once a decision has been made, one of the GP Partners will need to inform NHS England and request the deduction of the patient from the registered list. The patient will be deducted on the eighth day after NHS England has been notified (GMS Reg2015(24)(8)(b)).



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Appendix A: Informal letter to patients who miss an appointment

Dear <>,

According to our records, you failed to come for your appointment with **XXXX** on **XXXX**. As you didn't make the surgery aware, it has been recorded on your medical records as a "did not attend appointment". As I am sure you can appreciate, there is a large demand on appointments at the surgery and this appointment could have been taken by someone else who needed medical attention.

In the past week, the surgery has had XXX DNA'd appointments, where patients have failed to turn up for appointments.

We understand that on occasions there may be a genuine reason why you were unable to attend an appointment. If you feel like you have been sent this letter in error, please contact the surgery to discuss the matter. Please ensure the surgery has the correct up to date personal detail, so the text messaging services reaches you.

The practice has a policy on patients not attending appointments, which in extreme cases can result in the patient being removed from our practice list. If you wish to cancel the appointment, you can do so by either:

- Ringing reception on 01977 673141
- Calling into surgery and speaking to reception
- Replying CANCEL to your reminder text
- Via NHS App

Please help us to utilize our appointments as best as possible by cancelling any future appointment that you do not need.

Many thanks for your co-operation.

Yours Sincerely

Practice Manager



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Appendix B: Formal letter for patients who have missed a 2nd appointment

Dear <>

According to our records you had an appointment booked with XXXX on XXXX but did not attend for the appointment. If this is incorrect could you please notify the practice. You were also sent a letter on XXXX explaining the cancellation procedure and how wasted appointments cause a significant strain on the NHS.

The practice has made cancelling appointments as easy as possible by enabling cancellation to be done by one of the following:

- Ringing reception on 01977 673141
- Calling into surgery and speaking to reception
- Replying CANCEL to your reminder text
- Via NHS App

Please be advised that if you miss another appointment within a 12 month period without any notice of cancellation, then we will have no choice but to refer it to the GP Partners to decide if you can stay as a patient at Ash Grove Medical Centre.

Please help us to best utilize our appointments by cancelling any future appointment immediately upon realising that you do not need it or cannot attend the booked time.

Yours sincerely,

Practice Manager



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Appendix C: Letter to a parent of someone under 18

Dear <>

According to our records, you have failed to bring XXXX to their appointment on XXXX. This has been recorded on their medical records as “child not brought to appointment”.

We understand that on occasions there may be a genuine reason why you were unable to attend an appointment. If you feel like you have been sent this letter in error, please contact the surgery to discuss the matter. Please ensure the surgery have all the correct up to date personal details so the text messaging service reaches you.

The practice has made cancelling appointments as easy as possible by enabling cancellation to be done by one of the following:

- Ringing reception on 01977 673141
- Calling into surgery and speaking to reception
- Replying CANCEL to your reminder text
- Via NHS App

Any further missed appointments will be raised with the Safeguarding lead or passed to the Health Visitors for discussion.

Yours Sincerely,

Practice Manager



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Appendix D: Removal of a patient from the list due to repeated DNAs

Dear <>,

According to our records you had an appointment booked with XXXX on XXXX but did not attend the appointment. If this is incorrect could you please notify the practice.

We previously wrote to you on XXXX and XXXX as you had previously missed two appointments. This is now the third occasion within the past 12 months that you have not attended appointments and have not cancelled them.

I have reviewed your clinical records and see no reason why you should not have been able to cancel these appointments. In accordance with our practice policy and NHS General Medical Service Regulations 2015(Sch3)(24)(8)(b), the practice will be removing you from our patient list. **The practice has notified NHS England of this on XXXX. You will be removed from our practice list on the eighth day following this notification to NHS England.**

We would recommend that as a priority you register with another local practice, who will hopefully be able to help you with your health needs. A list of local practices can be found at www.nhs.uk, there is a search facility available on the home page of this site that by entering your post code you will be able to find a list of local practices.

Please note, if you currently have any medications on repeat that a one week supply will be issued and sent to your nominated pharmacy.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that as a practice we do not take the decision to remove a patient from our list lightly but need to ensure that we are able to provide for all of our registered patient population to the best of our ability and that this is made more difficult if a patient repeatedly misses appointments without cancellation.

I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Senior GP