

Stoke Gifford and Conygre Medical Centre

Patient Policy for Missed Appointments

Background. We know that it can sometimes be difficult to get a routine appointment with a GP or Nurse. With demand constantly outstripping supply, there will be times when we are full and this cannot be helped. However, avoidable waste occurs when an appointment is not attended and when the Patient has not contacted the Practice in advance to cancel it, or where the cancellation is so late as to make it impossible to allocate that time to another Patient who needs treatment.

The cost in time and money of these missed appointments is a burden to the National Health Service generally and the Practice, in particular, cannot sustain this. In 2019 the NHS reported that, '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....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...

Policy for 'Did Not Attends' (DNAs). Where an appointment is not attended, or where adequate notice of 6 working hour's notice is not given, the Practice will code this DNA. This will be highlighted in any retrospective checks on the number of DNAs recorded against that person. Whilst we are primarily concerned with our own appointment observance, consideration may also be given to any hospital appointments where we have been notified that a Patient has failed to attend as this also adds to work where a new referral is required.

Where DNAs occur, the following steps will be taken.

DNA 1 - Where this is the first occasion, a code will be added to the Patient's medical record and the DNA counted in a monthly search.

DNA 2 - Where this is the second occasion, the Patient will be contacted by the Practice, advised of the missed appointment and an alert will be added to their record. When the Patient makes a further appointment, they will be advised by the Receptionist that the Practice is aware of their previous DNA and asked to confirm their intention to attend their next appointment. The Patient will also be informed that if a further appointment is DNA'd, they could be at risk of compromising their relationship with the Practice.

DNA 3- Where a third DNA has occurred, 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 this consistent failure to adhere to our Practice policy justifies having the patient removed from the practice list.

This policy is in line with NHS guidance.

How to avoid being listed as having DNA. If you cannot attend or no longer need an appointment, please ring us in advance so that we have 6 working hours notice.

Mistakes do happen and the Practice understands that appointments can be forgotten about or overlooked. In such cases, the Practice will take into account the reason given by Patients.

Please cancel by phone (0117 979 9430) or via the Klinik function on our website.

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