**DID NOT ATTEND (DNA) POLICY**

**INTRODUCTION**

Approximately 70 appointments per month are classified as ‘Did Not Attend’ (DNA) ie. 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

It is estimated that missed GP appointments costs the NHS £200million each year.

**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 convened 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 3 occasions in the space of 12 months, the patient may be removed from the practice list. In the first and second instance an informal warning letter, text or email will be issued. In the third instance a formal warning letter will be issued advising that any further DNA’s may result in removal from the list. Formal 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.

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.

The practice manager will be responsible for the issue of a monthly DNA clinical system report by clinician for clinician review. The review, completed by the responsible clinician(s) is to be returned to the practice manager each month.

**INFORMAL FIRST WARNING TEXT/EMAIL/LETTER**

The first time a patient DNAs an appointment an informal text, email or letter will be sent to the patient depending on their contact preferences. The text, email or letter will advise of the below:

*Dear Patient,*

*I was concerned to see that you didn’t attend your appointment with ………….Dr/Nurse……… on the ……………………*

*It may be that you simply forgot or there might have been some other reason.*

*Please book another appointment if you still need one and we shall look forward to seeing you and being of help.*

*Yours sincerely,*

**INFORMAL SECOND WARNING TEXT/EMAIL**

The second time a patient DNAs an appointment within a 12-month period another informal text, email or letter will be sent to the patient depending on their contact preferences. The text, email or letter will advise of the below:

*Dear Patient*

*I was concerned to see that you didn’t attend your appointment with ………….Dr/Nurse……… on the ……………………*

*This is the second appointment that you have missed in the past twelve months and I wonder if there is a particular reason for this? Please could you contact the us by phone, letter, or email to let us know what happened?*

*As you may appreciate missing your appointment means that someone else could have attended in your place and so we take repeated missed appointments very seriously.*

*Please book another appointment if you still need one and we shall look forward to seeing you and being of help.*

*Yours sincerely*

**FORMAL THIRD WARNING LETTER**

If the patient DNAs a third appointment within a 12-month period and final formal warning letter will be sent and will stay on the patients record for 12 months. The letter will advise of the below:

*Dear Patient*

*I was concerned to see that you didn’t attend your appointment with ………….Dr/Nurse……… on the ……………………*

*This is the third appointment that you have missed in the past twelve months without letting us know.*

*As was explained in the last letter sent to you, on the ………………………, we take repeated missed appointments where there are no reasonable circumstances very seriously because of the negative affects it has on our other patients. Please contact the Practice Manager to discuss the reasons behind the repeated missed appointments.*

*Please take this letter as formal notice that if you miss any future appointments in the next twelve months without any reasonable explanation, you may be removed from the Practice List and be required to register with another Practice.*

*Please book another appointment if you still need one and we shall look forward to seeing you and being of help.*

*Yours sincerely*

**FOURTH DID NOT ATTEND APPOINTMENT WITH 12 MONTH PERIOD**

If a patient DNAs a fourth appointment, they could be removed from the practice list and have to find an alternative doctor. The patient will be discussed in a practice meeting and the patient will be advised of the outcome.

**APPEALS**

The practice will always respond to reasonable appeals and valid reasons for a patient’s failure to attend an appointment.

**CHILD NOT BROUGHT TO APPOINTMENT**

Repeatedly failing to attend appointments for some children or young persons may be an indicator that there is an increased safeguarding risk. At Stubbington Medical Practice failure to attend in relation to a child or young person will be referred to as “Was Not Brought” or WNB; this statement clearly reflects the point that children and young people rely on their parents, carers, or guardians to bring them for appointments

**CAUSE FOR CONCERN**

Whilst it is acknowledged that many missed appointments are genuine oversights, instances of repeated cancellations, rescheduling of appointments or WNBs all merit cause for concern.

Where a child or young person is not brought to a booked appointment, the clinician or our safeguarding administrator is to consider the impact of not bringing the child or young person to that appointment. In the first instance, will attempt to contact the parent/guardian for those aged 13 and under or the patient for those aged over 13. Where contact is not made, a letter is to be sent to the parent/guardian asking for them to contact the surgery. After 3 failed appointments/letters, consideration will be given to whether the child/young person may be at risk. Where this is unknown or there is a reason for concern a referral may be made to Safeguarding for further input.

**REFERRAL**

If a clinician has significant concerns, they are to initiate a child protection referral. Where the clinician believes that harm is imminent, they should call the police immediately.

**FIRST CHILD NOT BROUGHT TO APPOINTMENT LETTER**

*We were sorry to see that {Given name} was not brought to their recent appointment to the surgery.  We have attempted to contact you by telephone to enquire why {Given name} was not brought to their appointment and to see if a further appointment is required, however we were unable to reach you.*

*Health appointments and developmental reviews are important to ensure health and wellbeing are maintained and/or monitored. They also provide an opportunity to discuss any concerns around your child’s health.*

*If you booked the appointment due to a medical condition which is now resolved, please could you inform the surgery so that we can update our records. However, if the appointment was for a developmental review/immunisation we would ask that you contact the surgery at your earliest convenience to re-book this appointment.*

**SECOND** **CHILD NOT BROUGHT TO APPOINTMENT LETTER**

*We were sorry to see that {Given name} was not brought to their recent appointment to the surgery and our records show that this is the second failed appointment within the previous 12 months.  We have attempted to contact you by telephone to enquire why {Given name} was not brought to their appointment and to see if a further appointment is required, however we were unable to reach you.*

*Stubbington Medical Practice have a responsibility to follow up on those children who have not been brought to their appointments to ensure that the child is ok and that there is no cause for concern. As this is the second time within 12 months that you have failed to bring your child to a booked appointment, we would ask you to contact the surgery to discuss the reason that your child was not brought to their appointment.*

**THIRD** **CHILD NOT BROUHGT TO APPOINTMENT WITHIN 12 MONTHS**

The safeguarding team at the practice will be made aware, and considerations will made to assess if the child is at risk and safeguarding input may be needed.