**BOUNDARIES SURGERY**

**DID NOT ATTEND PROTOCOL**

# Introduction

## Policy statement

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance regarding the management of patients who failed to attend their appointments. It is essential to make the best use of the GPs’/nurses availability to ensure that all patients have access to appointments within an acceptable time frame.

This document sets out the procedures for monitoring and recording and the required actions to be taken to effectively manage missed appointments at Boundaries Surgery. Within general practice, failure to attend appointments is commonplace. It is therefore essential that an efficient management system is in place.

The practice aims to design and implement policies and procedures that meet the diverse needs of our service and workforce, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Consideration has been given to the impact this policy might have in regard to the individual protected characteristics of those to whom it applies.

## Did Not Attend

Failure to attend an appointment is commonly referred to as ‘Did Not Attend’ or DNA. For the purpose of this policy, the acronym DNA will be used.

# Policy

## Statistical evidence

On a monthly basis, approximately 48[[1]](#footnote-2) appointments are recorded as being DNAs – i.e. the patient did not attend the appointment, or call to cancel or change the appointment 24 hours prior to the scheduled appointment time. The effects of DNAs are:

* An increase in waiting times for patients
* A waste of clinicians’ time
* An adverse risk to patients’ health

## Recording DNAs

All DNAs are to be recorded in EMIS Web, in each patient’s healthcare record as follows:

* Did Not Attend – Reason given
* Did Not Attend – No reason given

The practice manager will review DNA statistics on a monthly basis, presenting this information at the Practice Meeting whilst also displaying the statistics in the waiting room and on the practice website; this has been shown to reduce DNAs by circa 14%.

## Preventative measures

In order to reduce the number of DNAs, the practice will:

* Enable patients to cancel appointments by calling the Surgery on 01420 562153 or emailing NHCG.Boundariessurgery@nhs.net.
* Remind the patient via text 2 days prior to his/her appointment and enable cancellation by text (outside of pandemic conditions) .
* Encourage patients to write down the information at the time of booking and repeat this information to practice staff to confirm accuracy
* Listen to patient feedback and discuss how improvements can be made

## Managing DNAs

Clinicians are responsible for recording DNAs using the correct read codes as detailed in this policy. Should a patient call and cancel, giving less than 24 hours’ notice, the person taking the call is to record this as a DNA: DNA – Reason given using SNOMED code 185326000.

If a patient fails to attend for an appointment, a letter (or text where appropriate) will be sent to the patient using the template at Annex A.

If the patient fails to attend a second appointment within a 12-month period, a letter (or text where appropriate) will be sent to the patient using the template at Annex B.

If the patient fails to attend a third appointment within the same 12-month period, a decision will be made by the Practice Manager in consultation with the lead GP as to whether the patient is to be removed from the practice list. The Practice Manager will then write to the patient using the template at Annex C and will notify NHSE, requesting the patient to be removed from the practice list.

All letters are to be saved in each patient’s health records. Letters sent to patients are only valid for a 12-month period.

By reducing the number of DNAs the practice will:

* Enhance the efficiency of clinical sessions
* Reduce costs
* Increase productivity
* Offer a more effective service to patients

## Practice information

In order to remind patients of the significance of DNAs, templates for posters to display in the waiting room can be found at Annex D.

## Summary

DNAs continue to have a significant financial impact across the NHS. Having a robust management system in place will help to reduce the number of DNAs at Boundaries Surgery and ensure that all patients have access to an appointment within an acceptable time frame.

## Annex A – First letter to patient

Dear [insert patient name],

Our records show that you had an appointment booked with [insert clinician’s name] on [insert day and date] but failed to attend this appointment. If you believe this to be incorrect, please contact us on [insert phone number] to discuss.

Appointments at [insert practice name] are at a premium and this missed appointment could have been used by another patient if you had provided the practice with at least 24 hours’ notice that the appointment was no longer required.

During this last month [insert number] appointments were recorded as ‘Did Not Attend’ (DNAs). This practice has a DNA policy which for patients who repeatedly fail to attend may result in them being removed from the practice list.

If you need to cancel or change an appointment you can:

* Call the dedicated appointment line on [insert number]
* Email [insert email address]
* Text [insert text number]

Please help us to maximise appointment availability in the future. Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

[Practice Manager]

## Annex B – Second letter to patient

Dear [insert patient name],

Our records show that you had an appointment booked with [insert clinician’s name] on [insert day and date] but failed to attend this appointment. If you believe this to be incorrect, please contact us on [insert phone number] to discuss.

We previously wrote to you on [insert day and date] regarding an appointment you had missed on [insert day and date]. This is the second occasion you have failed to attend a scheduled appointment within a 12-month period.

In our previous letter, we advised you that you can cancel or change an appointment by:

* Calling the dedicated appointment line on [insert number]
* Emailing [insert email address]
* Texting [insert text number]

If you fail to attend a third appointment within the same 12-month period, we will consider removing you from the practice list.

Please help us to maximise appointment availability in the future by contacting us as soon as you know you will be unable to attend your scheduled appointment. Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

[Practice Manager]

## Annex C – Removal of a patient

Dear [insert patient name],

Our records show that you had an appointment booked with [insert clinician’s name] on [insert day and date] but failed to attend this appointment. If you believe this to be incorrect, please contact us on [insert phone number] to discuss.

We previously wrote to you on [insert day and date] regarding the appointments you missed on [insert day and date] and [insert day and date]. You have now missed three appointments within a 12-month period without justification.

Having discussed this with the practice manager, we have decided that we are removing you from our practice list. We notified NHS England on [insert date] of our decision and you will be removed on the eighth day following notification.

You are advised to register with another practice in the local area as soon as possible. A list of practices can be found at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) by entering your postcode in the ‘Find local services’ section.

The decision to remove you from the list was not taken lightly, but it is imperative that we provide an efficient service for all of our listed patients and we are unable to do so if a patient repeatedly fails to attend scheduled appointments.

The practice team wishes you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

[Senior GP]

## Annex D – Waiting room poster

**Did Not Attend (DNA)**

**During the month of [insert month]**

**[90]% of patients kept their appointments.**

**It is easy to cancel or change your appointment by:**

**Calling [insert number]**

**Emailing [insert address]**

**Please ensure you cancel or rearrange any unwanted appointments.**

**DID NOT ATTEND (DNA)**

**WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU**

**Each time you fail to attend an appointment, we will write to you. If you fail to attend three appointments in a 12-month period, the practice will consider removing you from the patient list.**

**You will then have to find an alternative   
GP practice in the local area.**

**Don’t waste valuable appointments;**

**if you don’t need it or want to change it,**

**cancel it by calling us on**

**01420 562153**

**Or by replying ‘Cancel’ to your appointment text reminder.**

1. Based on monthly average from 1 August – 31 October 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)