

Did Not Attend (DNA) Policy

Effective Date: 19.08.2026

Review Date: 19.08.2027

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and consistent approach to managing patients who do not attend scheduled appointments without prior notice. Effective management of DNA appointments helps improve access to services, reduce waiting times, optimise resource utilisation, and support patient safety.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all patients booked into services provided by the practice and to all staff involved in appointment booking, administration, and clinical care.

3. Definition

A Did Not Attend (DNA) occurs when a patient:

- Fails to attend a scheduled appointment.
- Does not contact the practice in advance to cancel or rearrange.
- Arrives too late to be seen and an alternative appointment cannot be accommodated.

4. Responsibilities

Practice Staff

- Record all DNA appointments accurately in the patient record.
- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy.
- Ensure consistent application of the policy.

Clinicians

- Assess any clinical risks associated with the missed appointment.
- Determine whether follow-up contact is required.

Patients

- Attend appointments as scheduled.
- Inform the practice as soon as possible if they are unable to attend.
- Provide up-to-date contact details.

5. Procedure

First DNA

1. Record the DNA in the patient record.
2. Contact the patient if clinically appropriate.
3. Remind the patient of the importance of attending appointments or cancelling in advance.
4. Rebook if clinically necessary.

Second DNA Within 12 Months

1. Record the DNA in the patient record.
2. Send a written reminder regarding the practice's attendance expectations.
3. Consider discussing barriers to attendance with the patient.

Third DNA Within 12 Months

1. Record the DNA in the patient record.
2. Review the patient's circumstances and any safeguarding or vulnerability concerns.
3. Issue a formal warning letter outlining potential consequences of repeated non-attendance, one being that the patient may need to find an alternative practice.
4. Escalate to the Practice Manager or appropriate clinical lead for review.

6. Children and Vulnerable Adults

Missed appointments involving children or vulnerable adults may present safeguarding concerns.

- A clinician should review all DNAs involving these groups.
- Appropriate safeguarding procedures should be followed where concerns exist.
- DNAs should never automatically result in discharge from care where a safeguarding risk has been identified.

7. Patient Safety Considerations

Where a missed appointment may affect patient health or create a clinical risk:

- The clinician should assess the urgency of follow-up.
- Additional attempts to contact the patient may be required.
- All actions taken must be documented in the patient record.

8. Appointment Reminders

The practice will endeavour to reduce DNAs through:

- SMS reminders.
- Email reminders.
- Telephone reminders where appropriate.
- Clear information regarding cancellation procedures.

9. Recording and Monitoring

The practice will:

- Monitor DNA rates regularly.
- Identify trends and potential causes.
- Report significant concerns to the management team.
- Implement improvement measures where required.

10. Equality and Accessibility

The practice recognises that some patients may face barriers to attendance. Reasonable adjustments will be considered for:

- Patients with disabilities.
- Patients with language barriers.
- Patients experiencing social or economic challenges.
- Patients with mental health conditions.

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislative, contractual, or operational changes require amendment.