

THE WATERLOO PRACTICE

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DID NOT ATTEND POLICY

INTRODUCTION

A significant number of appointments are wasted each week when patients fail to notify us in reasonable time, at least one hour before the appointment, that they are not going to keep the appointment or fail to notify us at all that they are not requiring their appointment.

The effect of these is:

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

GENERAL POLICY

If a patient fails to attend a pre-booked appointment a warning letter will be sent to the patient (after checking if a reason has been given – see Record Keeping below) advising them that if there is a further occurrence within a twelve month period they are risking removal from the practice and if there are three occasions in a 12 month period they will definitely be removed from the practice list.

If the patient fails to attend a second appointment in the twelve month period the matter will be discussed at a practice meeting and a majority agreement will be reached as to whether the patient will be removed from the practice list at this stage. If the decision is taken at that stage to allow the patient to stay on the list pending another failed attendance, when a third failed attendance occurs in the twelve month period the matter will be discussed again at a partners meeting and a majority agreement will be reached as to whether the patient will be removed from the practice list. If the patient remains on the list as a majority decision each subsequent DNA will be reported back to the partners meeting for review.

When a decision is taken to action the removal of a patient they will be notified in writing.

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 warning will be issued, valid for 12 months.

Where a patient fails to attend an appointment there may be an implied duty on the practice to follow-up the reason for non-attendance. The clinician with whom they were booked is responsible for deciding if it is appropriate to contact the patient or patient's carer to determine the reason for the failure to attend and where possible re-arrange the appointment.

Where the patient has failed to attend a review appointment for a long term condition and the appointment was made by the practice as a result of a recall process the patient will re-enter the recall process until such time as the recall policy has been completed.

The clinician will have overall responsibility for the individual patient follow-up and attendance although the administration aspects may be delegated.

Patients are expected to provide at least one hour's notice of cancellation of an appointment to ensure that there is the opportunity for the appointment to be reused and not wasted.

Patients who fail to keep their appointments will be encouraged to discuss with the Practice Manager why this is the case. The Practice Manager will explore if there is anything that the practice can do to support the patient to improve attendance.

RECORD KEEPING

When a patient informs us at least one hour before their appointment that they are unable to attend the appointment it will be marked as cancelled. If the cancellation happens within one hour of the appointment the patient will be asked if there is any particular reason why they are unable to attend. Any reason given will be added to the "details" part of the appointment and the appointment should be reduced to half the original duration. The appointment must then be marked as "Did Not Attend". Appointments halved in duration and marked as "Did Not Attend" will therefore release an appointment which can ideally be used. The duration of the available appointment should be the total of both the available appointment PLUS the duration of the DNA appointment.

It is recognised that it might not be appropriate to mark some failed attendances as "DNAs". In this case a note will be added to the patient record that the DNA is to be considered as a cancellation. Acceptable reasons for cancellations at this late stage might be traffic accidents, sudden problems cropping up etc. Unacceptable reasons for failed attendances would be where the patient has forgotten about the appointment until it is too late, has been called into work at this late stage, has "slept in", has not made adequate efforts to ensure their attendance on time etc.

Patients who contact us after the appointment time but on the same day with a reason or apology for missing the appointment will have the appointment updated with the details provided but the failed attendance will be recorded as a "DNA". All other failed attendances will be coded as a DNA into the patient record automatically overnight.

The Practice Manager will be responsible for the issue of a monthly DNA report.

This policy is to be made available to patients via the waiting room, practice leaflet, website and other reasonable means.

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