

KINGSWINFORD

Medical Practice

DNA Policy

Document Description

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Service Application	
Version	1.3
Ratification Date	3.2020 – The introduction of this policy was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and new ways of working.
Target Group	Practice staff
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Next Review Date	
Relevant Guidance	National guidance, MPS, NHS England, Dudley CCG

Lead Author(s)

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Change History

Version	Date	Comments
1.1	April 2021	Updated for telephone consultations
1.2	March 2023	Updated generally
1.3	April 2024	Updated generally

Document complies with
the Equality Act 2010

DNA Policy

Introduction

Whereas the surgery provides a good level of access to appointments, we are (in common with General Practice nationally) experiencing a high level of demand which is making it difficult for patients to get a routine appointment. One thing that makes this more difficult is the problem of missed routine appointments – Did Not Attend (DNAs).

Where patients have been declined routine appointments, because consultations are fully booked, it is disappointing when one of these booked appointments does not turn up, or fails to answer the telephone call, and has not contacted the practice to cancel the appointment so that it can be released for others.

The management team and PPG monitor DNAs. A large number of DNAs are incurred every month, although these levels are not as high as they were pre-covid, they are slowly increasing.

DNA Policy

A DNA occurs when an appointment is not attended and 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.

An appointment is not attended when:

- 1) a patient fails to arrive at a face to face appointment; or
- 2) a patient fails to answer their telephone after two attempts at calling by the clinician

The practice will code a DNA and this will prompt a retrospective check 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 and this was a true DNA on the part of the patient. A re-referral on the part of the GP (more GP time) will often be required by the hospital department so that the patient can be recalled.

The Process

- **DNA 1**

Where this is the first occasion, a code will be added to the patient's medical record automatically by EMIS. The reception team will contact the patient by telephone to highlight the DNA. A letter (signed by the management team) will be sent to the patient following the call if it was a genuine DNA (First letter to patient Annex A). If it is found there was a reasonable reason for the DNA, this will be documented in the records. An alert will also be added to the patient record to display when booking an appointment.

- **DNA 2**

Where this is the second occasion within a 12-month period, the patient will be contacted by telephone by the reception team, advised of the missed appointment and an alert will be added to their record. A letter (signed by the management team) will be sent to the patient following the call if it was a genuine DNA (Second letter to patient Annex B). If it is found there was a reasonable reason for the DNA, this will be documented in the records. A further alert will be added to the patient record to display when booking an appointment.

When the patient makes a further appointment, they will be advised by the receptionist that the practice is aware of the previous DNAs and asked to confirm their intention to attend their next appointment, or cancel the appointment if they are unable to attend. The patient will be advised that the surgery runs a DNA policy, a copy of which can be made available at the surgery or can be found on our website. A further alert will be added to the patient records to display when booking an appointment.

- **DNA 3**

Where a third DNA has occurred within a 12-month period, 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 three DNAs have to be within the same 12-month period. The practice will consider whether consistent failure to adhere to our practice policy constitutes a breakdown between the patient and the GP (where the GP practice has given clear instruction on policy and service provision and the patient has chosen to disregard this on several occasions in spite of due warning).

The DNAs will also be recorded on an excel file saved in the shared drive. Attempts to contact the patient will be recorded as well as the reason given for the DNA and the date of the appropriate letter.

Final Steps

The patient will be invited to a meeting with one of the GP partners to assess the reasons for the patient DNAing appointments. An agreement will be made to change this behaviour and a clear understanding that any further DNAs of an appointment will lead to a breach of this agreement and will constitute a breakdown of the doctor/patient relationship. At this meeting the GP will show the patient how to cancel an appointment via the website, text message and patient online access if appropriate. If the patient does not have online access this facility will be offered and arrangements made with reception (vouching method can be used). A warning letter will be given to the patient indicating that any further DNA will lead to the patient being removed from the surgery list. Standard procedures, as recognised between the practice and NHS England, will be followed in removing the patient from the list.

In writing to the patient to invite them to a meeting with one of the GP partners, it will be made clear that failure to respond to this letter may constitute a breakdown in the doctor/patient relationship. A further letter will be issued with a clear directive that failure to respond to the second letter within 28 days will lead to the patient being removed from the surgery list. Standard procedures, as recognised between the practice and NHS England, will be followed in removing the patient from the list.

How to avoid becoming a DNA

Should a patient need to cancel they can:

- ring 01384 271241, or
- come in person to the surgery, or
- ask someone else to ring or come into the surgery to cancel the appointment, or
- respond to your appointment text reminder, or
- complete the form on the website at Kingswinford Medical Practice

Annex A – First letter to patient

Dear [insert patient name]

Our records show that you had an appointment booked with [our insert clinician's position, name or Dr x] on [insert day and date] but failed to attend this appointment. If you believe this to be incorrect, please contact us on 01384 271241 to discuss.

Appointments at Kingswinford Medical Practice are at a premium and this missed appointment could have been used by another patient if you had provided the practice with adequate notice that the appointment was no longer required.

During this last month, [insert number] appointments were recorded as "Did Not Attend" (DNA) which represents [add percentage] of appointments at Kingswinford Medical Practice. Please be advised that this organisation has a DNA policy which, for patients who repeatedly fail to attend, may result in them being removed from the organisation's list.

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

- Call the practice on 01384 271241
- Come in person to the surgery
- Respond to your appointment reminder text
- Cancel your appointment via our website -
<https://www.kingswinfordmedicalpractice.nhs.uk/triage/cancel-an-appointment>
- Ask someone else to ring or come into the surgery to cancel the appointment

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

Yours sincerely

Victoria Evans
Practice Business Manager

Annex B – Second letter to patient

Dear [insert patient name]

Our records show that you had an appointment booked with [our insert clinician's position, name or Dr x] on [insert days and date] but failed to attend this appointment. If you believe this to be incorrect, please contact us on 01384 271241 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 practice on 01384 271241
- Come in person to the surgery
- Respond to your appointment reminder text
- Cancel your appointment via our website -
<https://www.kingswinfordmedicalpractice.nhs.uk/triage/cancel-an-appointment>
- Ask someone else to ring or come into the surgery to cancel the appointment

If you fail to attend a third appointment within the same 12-month period, we will consider removing you from the organisation's 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

Victoria Evans
Practice Business Manager

Annex C – Third letter to patient

Dear [insert patient name]

Our records show that you had an appointment booked with [our insert clinician's position, name or Dr x] on [insert days and date] but failed to attend this appointment. If you believe this to be incorrect, please contact us on 01384 271241 to discuss.

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

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

- Calling the practice on 01384 271241
- Come in person to the surgery
- Respond to your appointment reminder text
- Cancel your appointment via our website -
<https://www.kingswinfordmedicalpractice.nhs.uk/triage/cancel-an-appointment>
- Ask someone else to ring or come into the surgery to cancel the appointment

As you have failed to attend three appointments within the same 12-month period, we would like to invite you to a meeting with one of our GP partners. Please contact us to arrange a convenient date and time. Failure to respond to this letter may constitute a breakdown in the doctor/patient relationship. This will result in us having to consider removing you from the organisation's patient list.

Yours sincerely

Victoria Evans
Practice Business Manager

Annex D – Fourth letter to patient

Dear [insert patient name]

Thank you for attending a meeting with [GP Partner]. This meeting was called given you had failed to attend three appointments in the same 12-month period. We have explained the impact missing an appointment has on the practice and assessed the reasons for you failing to attend.

We agreed that this behaviour will change. If not, any further DNA's of an appointment will lead to a breach of this agreement and will constitute a breakdown of the doctor/patient relationship.

As explained, appointments can be changed or cancelled by:

- Calling the practice on 01384 271241
- Come in person to the surgery
- Respond to your appointment reminder text
- Cancel your appointment via our website -
<https://www.kingswinfordmedicalpractice.nhs.uk/triage/cancel-an-appointment>
- Ask someone else to ring or come into the surgery to cancel the appointment

If you fail to attend any further appointments within the same 12-month period, this will result in us having to consider removing you from the organisation's patient 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

[GP Partner]

Annex E – Removal of a patient

Dear [insert patient name]

Our records show that you have failed to attend the following appointments:

Date	Time	Clinician's name
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

We previously wrote to you on [insert days and date] regarding these appointments and invited you to attend a meeting with a GP partner. This was held on [insert day and date]. Despite agreeing to attend future appointments you have now missed three/four 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 organisation's 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 primary care organisations can be found at 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]