



DNA policy

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Introduction

A significant number of appointments per week are classified as 'Did Not Attend' (DNA).

DNA means that the patient does not turn up for the appointment and does not contact the surgery in advance to cancel/change appointment.

The effect of DNAs 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

By reducing the number of DNAs we hope to be able to:

- Enable more effective booking
- Allow efficient running of clinics
- Reduce costs
- Increase productivity

Policy

If a patient fails to attend a pre-booked appointment on more than one occasion in a week, a text message will be sent to the patient (Appendix A or Appendix B for patients without a mobile number)

If the patient fails to attend more than 3 appointments within a 6 month period, an informal warning letter will be sent to the patient informing them should they miss more appointment they risk being removed from the practice list. (Appendix C)

If the patient fails to attend another appointment in the next 3 months since sending them a warning letter, the second warning letter will be sent to the patient. (Appendix D)

If the patient fails to attend another appointment after the second warning letter, this patient's details will be brought to Practice Manager who will, with a consultation with a Senior Partner make a decision as to whether the patient is removed from the list.

Specific consideration should be given to vulnerable patients, who might have a good clinical reason for not cancelling their appointments. Any removals due to high DNA rates will be only approved if a doctor who knows the patient thinks appropriate and patient received warnings and opportunity to improve.

Warning letters are only valid for a period of 12 months, removal based on warning greater than 12 months old will be invalid. In such a scenario only the DNA appointments within a 12 month period may be reviewed to determine which stage of the policy should be applied.

Read Codes for DNAs

DNAs will be recorded by the clinicians. The DNA must be coded onto the clinical system at each non-attendance.

#9N42 DNA-no reason

Identifying DNAs and sending out letters

Senior Administrator will run weekly searches on the read code # 9N42as well as review DNA slots on appointment book and will send out weekly texts, first and second warning letters and inform Practice Manager

Screening appointments

Where a patient with a chronic condition or 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.

Monitoring and reporting of DNAs

Senior Administrator will run weekly searches on DNAs and provide the numbers to Practice Manager.

Senior Administrator will update and maintain DNA tracker tool for analysis and will bring the results to Practice Manager and partners on periodical basis to monitor levels of DNAs.

Removing Patients from the Practice List

This decision can only be made in consultation with a Senior Partner. Removal of a patient from the registered list for repeatedly failing to attend appointments will be in accordance with The NHS General Medical Service Regulations 2015. This regulation requires that the patient has been warned that they are at risk of removal and that the reasons for removal have been explained to the patient. The practice must keep a written record of the removal of any patient from its list including the reason for removal, the circumstances of the removal and the grounds for removal. If the decision is made to remove the patient from the registered list Senior GP should write to the patient explaining them of the practice decision and advising them to register with an alternative practice (Appendix D).

Once a decision has been made, Practice Manager will follow Patient Removal Policy, inform NHS England and request the deduction of the patient from the registered list. The patient will be deducted on the eighth day after NHS England has been notified.

Appendix A:

Wording for a text message:

"Dear <<Patient>> you did not attend your appointment in the last week. In the future, please cancel your appointment when unable to attend. The Exchange Surgery"

Appendix B:

Informal letter to patients who miss an appointment

Dear <<Patient>>,

According to our records you had an appointment booked with <<Clinicians name>> on <<Insert date/time>> but did not attend for the appointment. If this is incorrect can you please notify the practice.

As I am sure you can appreciate, there is a large demand on appointments at the practice and this appointment could have been used by another patient if you had informed the practice that you no longer required to be seen. In the past week <<%>> of patient attended their appointments last week, and most of those who did not contacted the practice in advance to cancel.

The practice has a policy on patients not attending appointments which in extreme cases can result in the patient being removed from our practice list. If you wish to cancel the appointment you can do so by either:

- Texting back CANCEL to an appointment confirmation text if received
- Calling the reception on 020 3049 4888
- Sending an email to lamccg.exchangesurgeryreception@nhs.net (please note we need at least 12 hours' notice)
- Login to Patient Access account and cancel the appointment

Please help us to utilize our appointments as best as possible by cancelling any future appointments that you do not need.

Many thanks for your co-operation

Yours sincerely,

<<Name>>
Senior Administrator
The Exchange Surgery

Appendix C: Formal letter for patients who have missed three appointments in 6 months

Dear <<Patient>>,

According to our records you had an appointment booked with <<Clinicians name>> on <<Insert date/time>> but did not attend for the appointment. If this is incorrect could you please notify the practice.

We previously wrote to you on <<Insert Date>> as you had missed an appointment on <<Date/Time>>. This is now the third occasion within the past 6 months that you have not attended an appointment and have not cancelled this appointment. The practice has made cancelling appointments as easy as possible by enabling cancellation to be done either by email, phone or text, the details of each are below;

- Text back CANCEL to an appointment confirmation text
- Call the reception on 020 3049 4888
- Send an email to lamccg.exchangesurgeryreception@nhs.net (please note we need at least 12 hours' notice)
- Login to Patient Access account and cancel the appointment

This letter is to inform you that should you miss another appointment without cancellation, the practice may remove you from the practice list as this would be deemed a breakdown in the doctor patient relationship.

Please help us to best utilize our appointments by cancelling any future appointment immediately upon realising you do not need it or cannot attend the booked time.

Yours sincerely,

<<Name>>

Senior Administrator
The Exchange Surgery

Appendix D: Removal of a patient from the list due to repeated DNAs

Dear <<Patient>>,

According to our records you had an appointment booked with <<Clinicians name>> on <<Insert date/time>> but did not attend for the appointment. If this is incorrect could you please notify the practice.

We previously wrote to you on <<Insert Date>> and <<Insert Date>> as you had missed appointments on <<Date/Time>> and <<Date/Time>>. This is now another occasion since sending you a letter about this and you have not attended an appointment on <<Date/Time>> and have not cancelled this appointment.

I have reviewed your clinical records and see no reason why you should not have been able to cancel these appointments. In accordance with our practice policy and NHS General Medical Service Regulations 2015 the practice will be removing you from our patient list. The practice has notified NHS England of this on <<Insert Date>>. You will be removed from our practice list on the eighth day following this notification to NHS England.

We would recommend that as a priority you register with another local practice who will be able to help you with your health needs. A list of local practices can be found at **www.nhs.uk**, there is a search facility available on the home page of this site that by entering your post code you will be able to find a list of local practices.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that as a practice we do not take the decision to remove a patient from our list lightly but need to ensure that we are able to provide for all of our registered patient population to the best of our ability and that this is made more difficult if a patient repeatedly misses appointment without cancellation.

I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

<<Senior GP>>

The Exchange Surgery

