

BEDMINSTER FAMILY PRACTICE

Did Not Attend (DNA) Policy

Version	Author	Date issued	Next review date
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1. Policy

Policy Statement

This policy outlines how Bedminster Family Practice will monitor and manage non-attendance at appointments to ensure fair access to services and responsible use of NHS resources.

Policy Status

The organisation will aim to design and implement policies and procedures that meet the diverse needs of our service and workforce, ensuring that no individual is placed at a disadvantage, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Due consideration has been given to the impact this policy may have on individuals with protected characteristics.

This document and any procedures contained within it are non-contractual and may be modified or withdrawn at any time. For the avoidance of doubt, it does not form part of your contract of employment.

Furthermore, this document applies to all employees of the organisation and other individuals performing functions in relation to the organisation such as agency workers, locums and contractors.

1.1 Overview

When a patient fails to attend an appointment without providing prior notice, this is recorded as a Did Not Attend (DNA). This includes situations where a patient:

- Does not attend a scheduled face-to-face appointment at the surgery
- Does not answer a scheduled telephone appointment from the GP / Clinician / Healthcare Professional
 - At least two attempts should be made
 - There should be at least 10 mins between attempts
- Is not present for a scheduled home visit.

1.2 Impact of DNA's on the Practice

Missed appointments place a significant strain on GP services. They waste valuable clinical time and resources that could have been offered to other patients in need. Each unattended appointment reduces the availability of care for others, leading to longer waiting times and delayed access to treatment.

Repeated DNA's can also disrupt continuity of care, affect the quality of patient outcomes and increase the administrative burden on staff. By reducing DNA's the practice can ensure more efficient use of resources and improve access for all patients.

1.3 Preventative Measures to Reduce DNA's

To help patients manage their appointments more easily and reduce the number of DNA's, the practice offers several convenient ways to cancel appointments.

These options are designed to make cancellation simple and accessible, helping free up appointments for other patients and improve the overall efficiency of the service. Cancellations should be made at least 24 hours before the scheduled appointment.

Patients can now cancel:

1. Via the **NHS App**
2. By **replying** to **appointment reminder** text messages
3. Through the automated phone service using the "**check and cancel**" option
4. By completing an **online Klinik form**
5. By calling the practice and **speaking directly** to a member of the navigation team
6. By informing a member of the navigation team at the **reception desk**

Patient engagement: DNA rates are an agenda item to be discussed at Patient Participation Group meetings. This can help raise awareness of the scale of the problem and its impact on appointment availability. It may offer valuable feedback on why patients may miss appointments and hopefully help identify barriers the practice may be able to address.

Patient Information: To raise awareness of the impact of missed appointments and encourage responsible use of services, the practice shares information on DNA rates with patients by:

- Publishing monthly DNA statistics on our practice website
- Displaying posters within the practice waiting areas
- Displaying information on the TV screens in the waiting areas

Monitoring & Review

DNA rates will be monitored monthly and reviewed quarterly by the clinical team. Trends will be reported to the Patient Participation Group and used to inform service improvements or targeted patient communication.

Website: Details of the Practice's DNA Policy can be found on the Bedminster Family Practice website.

Updating contact details: A poster is displayed in the waiting room by the check-in screen reminding patients to ensure their contact details are up to date. This can help as a preventative measure with DNA's. The check in screen prompts patients to confirm contact information during each visit. If any details are incorrect or need updating, patients can request a Change of Details Form from reception desk.

1.4 Late Arrivals

The self check-in screen is set so that patients who arrive late cannot check themselves in. Instead, they will be redirected to reception.

There is a 5-minute grace period for GP and nurse appointments. This is an **internal guideline** and should not be advertised to patients.

- Patients arriving at reception within 5 minutes of their appointment time may still be checked in by the receptionist.
- If there is a long queue, please check whether anyone waiting is trying to check in and invite them forward if appropriate.
- Patients arriving more than 5 minutes late may not be seen and will usually be asked to re-book, unless the clinician advises otherwise.

Exceptions

In cases of **same-day acute illness** or **safeguarding concerns**, allowances may be made. Please check with the on-call clinician if you believe a patient should still be seen.

Clinicians will review such cases at the end of clinic and contact patients / task navigation team as necessary.

Please ensure you document relevant information on the patients record.

Rebooking Late Patients

- **Nurse appointments** - can be rebooked via an Accurx text link.
- **GP appointments** -require completion of a Klinik form (this can be retrieved from the archive if one already exists, (as long as it is still relevant).

However, it is still ultimately at the discretion of the GP, Clinician or Healthcare Professional to decide whether a late patient can still be seen, depending on the circumstances and time available.

DNA Correspondence to Patients

Following missed appointments, correspondence should be sent in a staged approach if the patient continues to miss appointments without providing notice.

- **First contact:** The initial text sent by the clinician will be classed as the first contact
- **Second contact:** Email sent after a **second DNA within a 12-month period**,
- **Third contact:** Letter sent after a **third DNA within a 12-month period**, advising that continued failure to attend without notice may result in removal from the practice list.