

Harmanswater Dental Centre

“Did Not Attend” Appointments Policy

1. Purpose of This Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that appointment availability at The Practice is used effectively and fairly. Missed appointments reduce access to care for other patients and place strain on NHS resources. This policy outlines the procedure for managing failed appointments and the circumstances under which a patient may be deregistered from the practice.

2. Definition of a Failed Appointment

A failed appointment (also known as a “Did Not Attend” or DNA) occurs when:

- A patient does not attend their scheduled appointment, and
- The patient does not contact the practice in advance to cancel or rearrange.

Appointments cancelled with less than 24 hours’ notice may also be recorded as failed appointments if the appointment cannot be reallocated.

The Practice will give due consideration where reasonably practicable, to accommodating patient preferred appointment times, subject to clinical need and service availability.

3. Policy on Failed Appointments

A. Two Consecutive Failed Appointments

If a patient fails to attend two consecutive appointments, the practice may proceed with deregistration of the patient from The Practice.

B. Three Failed Appointments Within Two Years

If a patient fails to attend three appointments within a two-year period, the practice may also proceed with deregistration.

C. Consideration of Exceptional Circumstances

The Practice recognises that unforeseen or exceptional personal circumstances may prevent attendance.

Any relevant circumstances shared by the patient will always be taken into consideration before any decision about deregistration is made.

4. Communication With Patients

When a failed appointment occurs, the patient must be contacted by Reception, in writing, using the approved *Failed Appointment Letter*. These letters advise the patient of:

- The missed appointment
- The potential consequences of repeated failed attendance
- The impact of missed NHS appointments on service capacity
- Their ability to inform the practice of any exceptional circumstances

5. Dentist Responsibility

Each dentist at The Practice is personally responsible for the following:

- Monitoring and recording failed appointments for their own list of patients
- Following up each missed appointment appropriately
- Ensuring communication is sent in writing and recorded in the patient's notes
- Informing the practice manager if a recommendation for deregistration is made

This ensures consistency, fairness, and clear accountability across the practice.

6. Deregistration Procedure

If a patient meets the criteria for deregistration:

1. The dentist must ensure all letters have been sent and documented.
2. Any information regarding exceptional circumstances must be reviewed.
3. A final decision will be made in consultation with the practice manager.
4. The patient will receive a written notice confirming deregistration and guidance on finding alternative dental care.

7. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if operational needs, NHS guidance, or regulatory requirements change.

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