



**Peninsula  
Dental**  
Social Enterprise

# **Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise (PDSE)**

## **Health Inclusion Pathway Plymouth (HIPP) Patient Attendance Policy**

**Version 1.0**

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Policy will be updated as required in response to a change in national policy or evidence-based guideline.

## Contents

Section	Topic	Page No
1	Introduction	
2	Failure to Attend	
3	Cancellation of Appointments (less than 24 hours' notice)	
4	Booking Outstanding Treatment	
5	Patient Discharge	
6	Communication with referring organisations	
7	Policy Exceptions	
8	Subject Access Requests	

# **Health Inclusion Pathway Plymouth (HIPP) Patient Attendance Policy (Including Failure to Attend and Short Notice Cancellations)**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Due to the high demand on the service, to maintain consistency of referrals accepted and to ensure that clinics are utilised effectively, continued failure to attend appointments may result in treatment provided by Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise being discontinued.
- 1.2 All referring organisations and patients receiving treatment under the Health Inclusion Pathway Plymouth (HIPP) referral scheme shall be informed of the Patient Attendance policy (Including Failure to Attend and Short Notice Cancellations):
- By communicative literature at point of enquiry of referral
  - By communicative literature at point of acceptance of referral
  - By letter upon failure of an appointment
  - By communication via support workers and referring organisations
- 1.3 Exceptions to the terms set out in this policy are continually reviewed and consideration given to exceptional circumstances on an individual basis.

## **2. Failure to Attend**

- 2.2 Patients who fail to attend appointments will be subject to the Failure to Attend (FTA) section of this policy. The patient/support worker will be contacted by telephone on the day of the failed appointment, asked to provide a reason for their failure to attend and will be encouraged to book a further appointment. This telephone call will be followed by a failure to attend letter being sent. The letter will reinforce the terms set out in this policy.
- 2.3 If the patient/support worker cannot be contacted by telephone or declines booking another appointment they will be sent a letter requesting they book an appointment within 14 days. The reasons given for a failure to attend should be documented in the communications section of the patient database.

2.4 If the patient/support worker fails to contact PDSE within the 14 days of the initial letter they will be sent a 'no response' letter. This shall give them an additional 14 days to make contact and book an appointment.

2.5 Failure to book an appointment within this time will result in a final discharge letter being sent, advising that their course of treatment has been closed and that they will be required to seek an alternative dental provider. No further appointments will be offered and the patient will be discharged from care of PDSE however, the patient may be re referred if the service is accepting new referrals.

### **3. Cancellation of Appointments (less than 24 hours' notice)**

3.1 Patients/support workers who cancel an appointment without giving the required 24hrs notice will be encouraged to rebook the appointment at the time of cancellation. Appointments cancelled without giving the required 24hrs notice will be recorded as a Short Notice Cancellation (SNC).

3.2 Where an appointment is not rebooked, the patient/support worker will be contacted by the administration team either on the same day of the cancelled appointment or within a reasonable timeframe. The initial attempt to contact the patient will be via telephone. This telephone call will be followed by a short notice cancellation letter being sent. The letter will reinforce the PDSE short notice cancellation policy.

3.3 If the patient/support worker fails to contact PDSE within the 14 days of the initial letter, they will be sent a 'no response' letter. This shall give them an additional 14 days to make contact and book an appointment.

Failure to book an appointment within this time will result in a final discharge letter being sent, advising that their course of treatment has been closed and that they will be required to seek an alternative dental provider. No further appointments will be offered and the patient will be discharged from care of PDSE however, the patient may be re referred if the service is accepting new referrals.

### **4. Booking Outstanding Treatment**

4.1 Patients with outstanding treatment that is not a result of failing to attend an appointment will be contacted by way of letter. An initial letter will be sent to invite the patient to book an appointment within 14 days.

- 4.2 If the patient/support worker fails to contact PDSE within the 14 days of the initial letter, they will be sent a second letter. This shall give them an additional 14 days to make contact and book an appointment.
- 4.3 Failure to book an appointment within this time will result in a final discharge letter being sent, advising that their course of treatment has been closed and that they will be required to seek an alternative dental provider. No further appointments will be offered.

**If a patient fails to attend or fails to give sufficient notice to cancel an appointment on 3 occasions in a 12 month period, they will be denied any further appointments however, the patient may be re referred if the service is accepting new referrals.**

## 5. Patient Discharge

- 5.1 When the decision has been taken to discharge a patient during a course of treatment the appropriate discharge paperwork should be issued and the following details should be given to the patient:
- Reason for discontinuation of treatment
  - Advice on how to access emergency dental care
  - Details of how to find an NHS dental care provider
- 5.2 Appointment reminders will be issued to patients, unless they explicitly decline. All patients will be asked to give their consent to receiving text message reminders, as this is PDSE's preferred reminder system. Otherwise telephone or letter reminders will be sent as requested.
- 5.3 Patients should be advised that they should not rely on any form of reminder, if they do not receive a reminder and they have an appointment they should still attend unless otherwise notified.
- 5.4 Where possible, we will endeavour to book an appointment to suit the patient preferences. However due to the limitations of clinic availability this may not always be possible.
- 5.5 Patients will be asked at each visit if their address or phone number has changed and will be reminded that it is their responsibility to inform the clinic of any change of address or circumstances. Notices will be displayed in the patient waiting areas to reinforce this message.

## **6. Communication with referring organisations**

6.1 PDSE will communicate all booked appointments and failure to attend with the referring organisations weekly by way of email. PDSE will also communicate monthly patient failure to attend information and detail of overall time lost to FTA/SNC on a monthly basis.

6.2 Referring organisations have the right to appeal the decision to discharge. Any appeals should be sent to [pdsecommunitydentalclinic@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:pdsecommunitydentalclinic@plymouth.ac.uk)

## **7. Policy Exceptions**

7.1 This protocol will be adhered to by the patient administration team when dealing with patient failures to attend or short notice cancellations.

7.2 The management team and Admin Team Leader are able to apply discretion to this procedure where they feel it is appropriate. Any deviation from this procedure must be fully documented in the patient records.

## **8. Subject Access Requests**

8.1 Patients have the right to submit a Subject Access Request to PDSE to obtain copies of their clinical records and/or X-rays. To do this please email [pdse-info@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:pdse-info@plymouth.ac.uk) with the details of the request.

**Failure to communicate will result in the standard FTA policy being followed and the patient being discharged.**