



**Peninsula  
Dental**  
Social Enterprise

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

## **Exeter Community Dental Clinic Patient Pathway and Attendance Policy**

**Version 1.0**

Date approved: June 2024

Approved by: The Board

Review due: June 2025

Document classification: Public

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	3
2	Referral and Treatment Pathway	3
3	Patient Attendance – Failure to Attend	6
4	Cancellation of Appointments (less than 24 hours' notice)	7
5	Booking Outstanding Treatment	8
6	Patient Discharge	9
7	Communications	9
8	Policy Exceptions	10
9	Guaranteed Treatment and Continuation/Further Treatment	10
10	Subject Access Requests	11

# **Exeter Dental Community Clinic Patient Pathway & Attendance Policy (Including Failure to Attend and Short Notice Cancellations)**

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise (PDSE) works in collaboration the CoLab Exeter in the delivery of The Exeter STaR project to provide oral health services, on one day per week, delivered by a qualified Dentist to people experiencing rough sleeping or living in supported accommodation, who are going through substance misuse challenges.

1.2 The aim of the STaR project is to establish a One Team approach, providing enhanced wrap around support and recovery interventions. The project aims to increase engagement by testing different ways of working with people that have experienced difficulties engaging with traditional models of care. STaR provides a comprehensive range of interventions where the client is placed at the centre, taking support to the person and helping individuals to engage with a range of specialist interventions.

## **2. Referral & Treatment Pathway**

2.1. PDSE accepts referrals for routine and urgent primary dental care from the Clock Tower GP Surgery, it does not accept referrals directly from any associated support organisations.

- 2.2. Referrals must be submitted by the Clocktower GP Surgery to the Exeter Dental Education Facility via secured NHS email. Completed referrals must be submitted on the dedicated referral form. All fields on the referral form must be completed in full, incomplete referrals are not able to be accepted and will be returned to the refer to provide further information.
- 2.3. Referrals for routine dental care will be accepted when there is clinical capacity. Clinical capacity will be regularly reviewed and the decision to take in new referrals will be communicated to the Clocktower by the Exeter DEF Clinic Team Leader, referrals for routine dental treatment should not be accepted at any other time. Routine courses of treatment will include a full dental examination and clinical assessment aimed at formulating a treatment plan to treat active disease and provide dental stabilisation.
- 2.4. Patients who are undergoing a routine course of treatment are eligible to access urgent appointments if they meet the criteria set out below.
- 2.5. [Dental emergency](#) is defined as *“patients who require emergency care are those requiring immediate attention in order to minimise the risk of serious medical complications or prevent long-term dental complications. Their condition means they are most likely to present in Accident & Emergency departments with:*
- *Uncontrollable dental haemorrhage following extractions;*
  - *Rapidly increasing swelling around the throat or eye;*
  - *Trauma confined to the dental arches.”*
- 2.6. *“Patients who require urgent care are those requiring attention for:*
- *Severe dental and facial pain not controlled by over-the-counter preparations;*
  - *Dental and soft tissue acute infection”*
- 2.7. Patients under a course of treatment who are experiencing a dental emergency should contact the Dental Education Facility as soon as possible so that they can be triaged for severity and booked accordingly.

2.8. One urgent appointment is available every week for patients not undergoing a course of routine dental treatment. The referral for the one of urgent appointment can be sent via NHS email at the beginning of the week, or if the slot is not already filled, it can be sent on the morning of the appointment.

2.9. Patients referred for a one-off urgent appointment cannot progress to a routine course of treatment unless they have been re-referred when there is capacity to take routine referrals.

2.10. Patients referred for a one-off urgent appointment must only be booked back in for a follow up appointment in the following circumstances:

- Following a complex extraction and/or removal of sutures,
- Following a prescription for antibiotics a review must be conducted within 2-7 days. This can be conducted by telephone if required.

2.11. *“‘Urgent treatment’ means one or more of the treatments listed in Schedule 4 to the National Health Service Regulations 2005 provided to a patient in circumstances where:*

- *prompt care and treatment is provided because, in the opinion of the dental practitioner, the person’s oral health is likely to deteriorate significantly, or the person is in severe pain by reason of his or her oral condition; and*
- *care and treatment is provided only to the extent that is necessary to prevent that deterioration in oral health or address that severe pain”.*

2.10. *Where both the above conditions apply, one or more of the treatments listed in may be provided:*

- *examination, assessment and advice;*
- *radiographic examination and radiological report;*
- *dressing of teeth and palliative treatment;*
- *pulpectomy or vital pulpotomy;*
- *re-implantation of a luxated or subluxated permanent tooth following trauma*

*including any necessary endodontic treatment;*

- *repair and refixing of inlays and crowns;*
- *refixing a bridge;*
- *temporary bridges;*
- *extraction of not more than two teeth;*
- *provision of post-operative care including treatment of infected sockets;*
- *adjustment and alteration of dentures or orthodontic appliances;*
- *urgent treatment for acute conditions of the gingivae or oral mucosa, including treatment for pericoronitis or for ulcers and herpetic lesions, and any necessary oral hygiene instruction in connection with such treatment;*
- *treatment of sensitive cementum or dentine;*
- *incising an abscess;*
- *other treatment immediately necessary as a result of trauma;*
- *not more than one permanent filling in amalgam, composite resin, synthetic resin, glass ionomer, compomers, silicate or silico-phosphate including acid etch retention.”<sup>1</sup>*

### **3. Patient Attendance – Failure to Attend**

3.1. 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.

3.2. Where possible, patients and/or support workers will be reminded of appointments via text message and phone call the day before the appointment.

3.3. 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

---

<sup>1</sup> [74-dental-definitions.pdf \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/74-dental-definitions/pdf/)

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.

3.4. 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.

3.5. 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.

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

4.1 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).

4.2 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.

4.3 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.

4.4 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.

## **5. Booking Outstanding Treatment**

5.1 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.

5.2 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.

5.3 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 and if the patient meets the criteria to be referred.**



## **6. Patient Discharge**

6.1 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

6.2 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.

6.3 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.

6.4 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.

## **7. Communications**

7.1 The Clock Tower GP will be notified of forthcoming appointments via email at the beginning of the week.

7.2 PDSE will communicate all booked appointments and failure to attend with the Clock Tower GP surgery on a weekly basis 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.

7.3 PDSE management will monitor clinical capacity on a regular basis to ensure clinical time is effectively utilised. When new referrals for routine treatment are able to be accepted, an email will be sent to the Clock Tower to notify them of this.

7.4 Patients who contact the DEF directly following discharge due to completion of treatment or failure to attend must not be booked back in unless:

- They meet the criteria specified in section 9 – Guaranteed Treatment
- They are experiencing immediate issues following post-extraction (max of 48 hours after appointment).

## **8. Policy Exceptions**

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

8.2 The management team and Clinic 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.

## **9. Guaranteed Treatment and Continuation/Further Treatment**

9.1. Certain items of treatment are guaranteed for 12 months from the completion date of the original one being fitted:

- permanent fillings
- crowns
- inlays

- root fillings
- veneers
- bridges
- dentures – one denture repair will be facilitated within 12 months of the item being fitted. Additional repairs will need to be sourced by the patient with an external provider.

9.2. To be considered as a guaranteed treatment, the treatment required must be similar/related to the original restoration, such as providing a new filling to replace an original filling that failed; however, it does not have to be like-for-like. If the dentist considers there is a clinical justification for making a slight adjustment to the treatment they carried out originally, such as using a different material for a filling to increase the fracture resistance, this can also be considered as a guaranteed treatment. The guarantee does not apply if a completely different item of treatment is now required.

## **10. Subject Access Requests**

10.1 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 [pdseinfo@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:pdseinfo@plymouth.ac.uk) with the details of the request.