



**Peninsula
Dental**
Social Enterprise

Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise (PDSE)

Patient Attendance Policy (Including Failure to Attend and Short Notice Cancellations)

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

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Patient Attendance Policy

(Including Failure to Attend and Short Notice Cancellations)

1. Introduction

1.1 Due to the high demand on the service, the need to ensure consistency of undergraduate student education and to ensure that our clinics are utilised effectively, continued failure to keep appointments may result in treatment provided by Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise being discontinued.

1.2 All patients shall be informed of the Patient Attendance policy (Including Failure to Attend and Short Notice Cancellations):

- Upon acceptance for treatment following the triage assessment
- By publicity notices at reception, on the website and in patient leaflets
- By letter upon failure of an appointment.

1.3 Patients who fail to keep the initial triage appointment will only be offered to rebook under extenuating circumstances.

1.4 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 – Adult Patients

2.2 Patients over the age of 18 who fail to attend appointments will be subject to the Failure to Attend (FTA) section of this policy. The patient 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 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 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.

3. Cancellation of Appointments (less than 24 hours' notice) – Adult Patients

3.1 Patients over the age of 18 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 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. If the patient cannot be contacted by telephone the 'Cancelled appointment' letter will be sent.

3.3 If the patient 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.

3.4 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.

4. Booking Outstanding Treatment – Adult Patients

4.1 Adult 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 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 2 occasions in a 12 month period, they will be denied any further appointments and will be required to find an alternative dental provider.

5. Paediatric Patients – Was Not Brought

5.1 The term Was Not Brought (WNB) applies to patients under the age of 18 who fail to attend appointments. The WNB procedure forms part of the PDSE Safeguarding Children Policy.

5.2 If an appointment is not attended:

- 1 A telephone contact is to be made in the first instance to enquire as to why the child was not brought and recorded in R4 and a further appointment to be made. If contact is successful then a **WNB1A** letter should be sent with the new appointment; if the contact is unsuccessful then a **WNB1B** letter is sent on the following working day advising of the missed appointment and the requirement to book a further appointment. This letter must be produced through the R4 electronic patient records system so that its issue is recorded.
- 2 If no contact is made within 14 days sent **WNB2A** letter to advise that no contact has been made, or if a further appointment is sent a **WNB2B** letter advising to make contact to rebook. This must also be produced through R4 to ensure its issue is recorded. Both will advise that if no contact is made within the next 7 days then information may be shared with the relevant services.
- 3 If still no response send **WNB3A** letter. This must also be produced through R4 to ensure its issue is recorded. If still no contact is made by the parent/guardian of the child/children within 3 working days. Document in clinical records and discussed with safeguarding co-ordinator to send **WNB4A** sharing of information letter to GP and School to check contact details. If contact is made but a further appointment missed sent **WNB4B** advising to contact within 3 working days.
- 4 If response received from **WNB4A** consider:
 - Are the contact details correct? If no update
 - Are there any concerns held by other organisations?
- 5 If other concerns are held or no response to **WNB4B** consider:
 - Does the child have dental disease?
 - Have the concerns been discuss with Safeguarding Hub to confirm threshold has been met
- 6 If NO to above send **WNB4B** to GP ONLY or if YES to above send **WNB4C** to GP ONLY and make safeguarding referral, within 24hours and a copy of the referral to be put in the patients notes.

- 7 If contact is made and appointment is not booked following advice that treatment is necessary, or following a cancellation it is recognised that a parent/guardian may not be able to make a further appointment at the time they are advised that treatment is necessary or when they have had to cancel an appointment. If this situation occurs, allow 14 days for contact to be made, if no further contact has been made then begin the WNB process.

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
- Details of any outstanding 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.

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 Where possible, we will endeavour to book an appointment to suit the patient preferences. However due to the limitations of cohort placements and student clinics this may not always be possible.

6.5 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.

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. If there are additional factors to consider, such as the patient being allocated as a student exit case (year 4 and 5 only), then it is the responsibility of the student to raise the issue of their patient failures to attend with the Clinical Lead, who will discuss this with them. If after this discussion it is decided not to implement the standard process and to continue with the patient's treatment, this must be communicated as soon as possible to the Clinic Team Leader who will inform the administration team.

7.2 The management team and team leaders 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.

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