



# DNA (Did Not Attend - failed encounter) Emergency Guidance

**GPs in London and across the country have declared a #GPstateofemergency. To help GPs and their practice teams to manage the increasing workload, Londonwide LMCs has produced some emergency guidance to manage requests for unresourced work and identify and communicate to patients activities that aren't covered by your core contract.**

## Why have a DNA policy?

A significant number of appointments per week are classified as 'Did Not Attend' (DNA).

DNA means that the patient does not turn up for the appointment and does not contact the surgery in advance to cancel/change appointment.

The effect of DNAs is:

- An increase in the waiting time for appointments
- Frustration for both staff and patients
- A waste of resources

By reducing the number of DNAs you should be able to:

- Reduce costs
- Increase productivity
- Enable more effective booking
- Allow efficient running of clinics

## What this guidance provides

**! DNAs can really add to the practice workload so use our tools that can help you reduce this stress in the practice.**

This guidance includes:

1. A guide on developing a Practice Policy.
2. Information on read codes for DNAs.
3. Identifying DNAs and sending out letters.
4. Removing Patients from the Practice List.
5. Model letters to patients who DNA.

## Practice Policy

1. If a patient fails to attend a pre-booked appointment on one occasion, an informal warning letter will be sent to the patient (Appendix A). This letter will be printed by the Duty Receptionist and posted to the patient.
2. If the patient fails to attend another appointment within a 12 month period, a formal warning letter will be sent reminding them that should they miss another appointment they risk being removed from the practice list (Appendix B).
3. If the patient fails to attend 3 appointments within a 12 months period, this patient's details will be brought to <<Senior GP>> attention by <<Practice Manager>>. <<Senior GP>> will make a decision as to whether the patient is removed from the list.

Warning letters are only valid for a period of 12 months, removal based on warning greater than 12 months old will be invalid. In such a scenario only the DNA appointments within a 12 month period may be reviewed to determine which stage of the policy should be applied.

## Read Codes for DNAs

DNAs will be recorded by the clinicians at the end of their morning or afternoon sessions.

There are no read codes for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> DNAs; therefore when recording DNA, please use the following read code:

**#9N42 ..... DNA-no reason**

Then in free text please specify if it's 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> DNA.

## Identifying DNAs and sending out letters

- <<Practice Manager>> will run weekly searches on the read code # 9N42 or go through the appointment lists.
- Duty Receptionists will send out the first and second warning letters and inform <<Practice Manager>> if a third letter is needed.

## Removing Patients from the Practice List

This decision can only be made in consultation with <<Senior GP>>. Removal of a patient from the registered list for repeatedly failing to attend appointments will be in accordance with The NHS General Medical Service Regulations 2015 (Sch3)(24)(8)(b). This regulation requires that the patient has been warned that they are at risk of removal and that the reasons for removal have been explained to the patient. The practice must keep a written record of the removal of any patient from its list including the reason for removal, the circumstances of the removal and the grounds for removal. If the decision is made to remove the patient from the registered list <<Senior GP>> should write to the patient explaining them of the practice decision and advising them to register with an alternative practice (Appendix C)

Once a decision has been made, <<Name>> will need to inform NHS England and request the deduction of the patient from the registered list. The patient will be deducted on the eighth day after NHS England has been notified (GMS Reg2015(24)(8)(b)).

## Appendix A: Informal letter to patients who miss an appointment

Dear <<Patient>>,

According to our records you had an appointment booked with <<Clinicians name>> on <<Insert date/time>> but did not attend for the appointment. If this is incorrect, or if there are particular problems we should know about, please notify the practice. As I am sure you can appreciate, there is a large demand on appointments at the practice and this appointment could have been used by another patient if you had informed the practice that you no longer required to be seen. In the past week the practice has had <<insert number of DNAs>> appointments where patients have not attended appointments.

The practice has a policy on patients not attending appointments which in extreme cases can result in the patient being removed from our practice list. If you wish to cancel the appointment you can do so by either;

- <<Telephone Details>>
- <<Email Details>>
- <<Text Details>>

Please help us to utilize our appointments as best as possible by cancelling any future appointments that you do not need.

Many thanks for your co-operation

Yours sincerely,

<<Practice Manager>>

**You can download an editable version of Appendix A [here](#).**

## Appendix B: Formal letter for patients who have miss a 2nd appointment

Dear <<Patient>>,

According to our records you had an appointment booked with <<Clinicians name>> on <<Insert date/time>> but did not attend for the appointment. If this is incorrect could you please notify the practice? We previously wrote to you on <<Insert Date>> as you had previously missed an appointment on <<Date/Time>>. This is now the second occasion within the past 12 months that you have not attended an appointment and have not cancelled this appointment. The practice has made cancelling appointments as easy as possible by enable cancellation to be done either by email, phone or text, the details of each are below;

- <<email address>>
- <<Phone>>
- <<Text details>>

This letter is to inform you that should you miss another appointment without cancellation, the practice may remove you from the practice list as this would be deemed a breakdown in the doctor patient relationship.

Please help us to best utilize our appointments by cancelling any future appointment immediately upon realising you do not need it or cannot attend the booked time.

Yours sincerely,

<<Practice Manager>>

You can download an editable version of Appendix B [here](#).

## Appendix C: Removal of a patient from the list due to repeated DNAs

Dear <<Patient>>,

According to our records you had an appointment booked with <<Clinicians name>> on <<Insert date/time>> but did not attend for the appointment. If this is incorrect could you please notify the practice? We previously wrote to you on <<Insert Date>> and <<Insert Date>> as you had previously missed two appointment on <<Date/Time>> and <<Date/Time>>. This is now the third occasion within the past 12 months that you have not attended appointments and have not cancelled this appointment.

I have reviewed your clinical records and see no reason why you should not have been able to cancel these appointments. In accordance with our practice policy and NHS General Medical Service Regulations 2015(Sch3)(24)(8)(b), the practice will be removing you from our patient list. The practice has notified NHS England of this on <<Insert Date>>. You will be removed from our practice list on the eighth day following this notification to NHS England.

We would recommend that as a priority you register with another local practice who will hopefully be able to help you with your health needs. A list of local practices can be found at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk), there is a search facility available on the home page of this site that by entering your post code you will be able to find a list of local practices.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that as a practice we do not take the decision to remove a patient from our list lightly but need to ensure that we are able to provide for all of our registered patient population to the best of our ability and that this is made more difficult if a patient repeatedly misses appointment without cancellation.

I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

<<Senior GP>>