

NHS Attendance Policy

At Pinn Dental we aim to provide all our patients with the best possible service. This policy helps us deliver dental services appropriately. Missed appointments are a lost opportunity to provide valuable patient-facing time to another patient in need. This policy is in place to ensure a fair, consistent and transparent process is followed when a patient misses an appointment or cancels at short notice without giving a minimum of 48 hours' notice.

We are inundated with patients seeking NHS dental services and the size of our contract is limited and therefore does not allow us to stretch this funding to accommodate all new enquiries. We have more than 30 new patients joining our practice a month and almost double this number requesting to be seen, so it is essential the practice time is made available to those who require and value the service.

Should any NHS patient have 2 or more appointments where they fail to attend or give less than 48 hours' notice prior to being seen they will be removed from the NHS list and Pinn Dental will no longer provide NHS dental services to the individual unless there are exceptional circumstances and proof can be provided upon request.

Clarification:

Failure to Attend (FTA)

This is logged by our software system when no notice has been given either verbally or in writing. This means the clinic time has been wasted, when in fact it could have been offered to someone else in need.

Short Notice Cancellations (SNC)

Please note, a short notice cancellation (less than 48 hours' notice) is the same as a missed appointment as we are unable to offer this time to someone else and often results in wasted clinic time which is highly sought after and in high demand.

Cancellation Confirmations

Cancelled appointments MUST be either verbally in person, over the phone or in writing via email to reception@pinn-dental.co.uk and must be accompanied by an email to confirm this cancellation from us to ensure this has been done correctly.

Advanced Payments or 'Deposits'

Sometimes an advanced payment or 'deposit' may be taken when booking the appointment for the planned and agreed treatment.
This is to secure the appointment and order the relevant materials and components necessary for the next visit.

We aim to make this policy as clear as possible, and as such you will find this:

1. In reception – as an NHS missed appointment poster.
2. On all emails – a clear statement at the bottom of each email communication
3. On all text messages – as a brief reminder at the end of each message
4. On our website – on the NHS page
5. On all treatment plans – a gentle reminder is placed at the bottom

The practice reserves the right to decide the appropriate action when it is deemed a patient repeatedly misses appointments or cancels at short notice. The practice is committed to investing time in understanding why a patient has missed appointments before deciding not to see a patient again.

The practice will not discriminate in its decision to restrict access to NHS services for the vulnerable and socially disadvantaged members of society. Exceptions will be considered for patients whose mental impairment or physical state may affect their attendance. Withdrawal of NHS care in these cases will be at the practice's discretion only after all other reasonable resolutions have been exhausted, and after a discussion with the patient.

Steps

1. After a patient's 1st FTA or short notice cancellation, the team will verbally inform them of the NHS patient policy and record this on their file.
2. Should this happen again the patient will be informed that we will no longer be able to provide them with NHS dental services and they will be set as inactive on the system.
 - Should a patient miss an appointment for a private course of treatment (even if they are a registered NHS patient), they will be asked to pay a fee for the lost surgery time that is proportional to the length of the session and complexity of the treatment scheduled.
3. Often an advanced payment or 'deposit' may be taken when booking the appointment ahead of the scheduled treatment. This is to secure the appointment and order the relevant materials and components required for the next visit.
4. If a patient asks to appeal following exceptional circumstances, they will have 28 days to provide us with proof/details to enable us to consider their appeal.
5. A task will be set by the receptionist for 28 days, if the patient has failed to respond within this time, they will automatically have their file permanently closed.
6. Patients can return to the practice (should they wish), but on an independent basis (and at the discretion of the practice). However, a deposit for all appointment bookings will be taken in advance and NHS funding will no longer be available as it will have been re-directed to another patient on our NHS waiting list.