

Missed Appointment Policy

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1. Introduction:

Non-attendances (DNAs), Was Not Brought and cancellations are a very costly waste of resource within Young Persons Advisory Service (YPAS) and so it is important to have focused plan of action to proactively manage them.

As a very minimum, services should monitor data around DNAs such as DNA rates per quarter and make decisions on what is an acceptable DNA rate for the organisation to meet.

YPAS recognises that people may choose not to attend appointments or discontinue contact with the services we provide for them. There will be occasions where a person's non-attendance is an indicator that they may be at risk to themselves or others through deterioration in their mental health, or other issues preventing them from attending such as environmental safeguarding concerns. Therefore, any failure of planned contact should be regarded as a potentially serious matter and should lead to an assessment of potential risk. Staff should always seek guidance from line management and follow: YPAS Safeguarding [Policy](#) & [Procedure](#)

Evidence from serious case reviews for both children and adults suggest that failure to keep appointments can be early indicators of safeguarding concerns. Early intervention is the key to safeguarding Children, young people (CYP) and adults.

2. Purpose:

The purpose of this overarching policy is to ensure that all relevant staff (including administrative) employed by YPAS apply a clear and consistent approach to dealing with clients that DNA, Was Not Brought, cancel their appointment or Service cancellation. This policy gives all staff across services pragmatic guidance relating to the management of DNA or cancelled contacts both from a clinical and safeguarding risk perspective

This policy sets out the aims and principles under which YPAS services will operate. A policy outlines roles and responsibilities, defines the scope of the subject covered, and provides a high-level description of the controls that must be in place to ensure compliance

3. Objective:

- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of clients who do not attend an appointment or discontinue contact with services.
- To ensure that the processes in place ensure early intervention and prevention when disengagement is a feature as this is the key to safeguarding
- To provide a standardised response to missed appointments
- To ensure timely sharing of information between staff and other agencies to promote the wellbeing and safeguarding of people not accessing services
- To promote effective communication and information sharing with both interagency and multi-agency professionals and services when people of any age do not attend, particularly where high risk is identified.
- To ensure the recording and collection of timely information to enable analysis of incidents and identification of investigations

4. Explanation of Missed Appointments terms:

- **Client:** A person (child, young person, or adult) who is in receipt of mental health and emotional well-being interventions from YPAS
- **Did Not Attend (DNA):** The term “DNA” includes all non-contacts with clients when no advance notice is given of intention not to attend. i.e. the client does not attend or is not brought to an appointment; this may be an assessment, initial appointment, or part of ongoing intervention. The client (or family) is not at home when visited at a pre-arranged time by a practitioner.
- **Was Not Brought:** This term refers to Children’s appointments where a carer/parent/family member or Guardian did not bring the child.
- **Client Cancellation:** cancellation refers to situations when notice is given by the client of their intention not to attend a planned appointment. I.e., any pre-arranged appointment that is cancelled by the client or a representative acting on their behalf even if an alternative appointment is arranged.
- **Service Cancellation:** Any pre-arranged appointment that is cancelled by any YPAS staff even if an alternative appointment is arranged.
- **Discharge:** The discharge of a client from YPAS’s services and back to the referring agency.
- **Due Regard:** Having due regard for advancing equality involves:
 - Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
 - Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low
- **Procedural Documents:** the collective term for policies, procedures, or guidelines.

5. Prevention:

Missed appointments in general are time consuming, resource intensive and can be an indicator that client: is at risk, needs practical support prior to clinical intervention, consider FHAT (Family Help Assessment Tool) to ensure multi-agency approach or not ready for intervention.

Upon the first initial contact, staff should follow the [Allocations Procedure](#), Where possible a courtesy reminder sent 24 hours prior to the appointment

Wherever it is feasible consideration of the needs of clients both in the appointment set up and attendance can prevent wasted appointments e.g., appointment time, location and user-friendly information in accessible formats.

The missed appointment policy should be made clear to the client from the onset. The client needs to understand the commitment needed to benefit the process. This should be reiterated during the Welcome session. If they are not ready to commit, consider other support they can access both internally and externally.

6. DNA First Assessment:

The action taken when a client DNA's first appointment will depend on the level of risk to the individual or others and will be based on an assessment of that risk and professional judgement. As the client is not known to the service at this time, the assessment and action will be based on information within the referral. If the referral information indicates potentially high-risk issues, then there should be liaison with the referrer as soon as and establish the best plan to engage and minimise the risk to the client or others.

Consideration: Practitioner should also take into account any accessibility barriers and other contextual reasoning.

7. DNA Appointments: (Intervention stage):

- When a client fails to attend an appointment, the practitioner should consider the options, based on risk assessment and level of engagement, then take the most appropriate action.
- missed appointments will be deducted from the overall intervention length.

8. Client Cancellation:

If a client cancels an appointment and indicates that they do not wish to receive further appointments, follow duty of care process.

If a client cancels an appointment and makes a further booking, they should be reminded of the Missed Appointment Policy as outlined previously.

- A maximum of two appointments will result in a discharge from service.
- Missed appointments will be deducted from the overall intervention length.

If risk or safeguarding concerns are present, mitigation should always be considered (see [Safeguarding Policy](#))

9. Recording of Missed Appointments:

The decision-making process in relation to missed appointments along with any resultant action plan should be fully recorded in line with the Record Keeping Policy.

Cancelled appointments should not be recorded as 'DNA' but should be recorded as cancelled with the details of who cancelled the appointment and the reasons that were given, and actions taken by the service.

10. Service Cancellation:

Staff have a duty to ensure that clients are seen at times and venues agreed. Clients are notified of the service cancellation in a timely manner. Upon their return to work it is the practitioner's responsibility to make contact with the client and rearrange the missed appointment.

In the event of an extended absence (see [long term absence procedure](#))

11. Not Brought:

The above principles apply when recording Not Brought appointments. liaison with the parents or carers regarding the reasons for Not Brought appointments are paramount. This is particularly the case when with younger children and vulnerable people. Careful consideration will need to be given to assessment of any safeguarding concerns related to the non-attendance of appointments.

Neglecting health needs (by not being brought to appointments) can become a safeguarding issue. See [safeguarding policy](#)

- Liaison with other professionals that are involved will be an important factor in assessing the risk associated with the missed appointment.
- If the client is known to Social Care, the practitioner will inform the relevant professional(s) if the client is considered vulnerable or at risk of harm.

12. Information Governance:

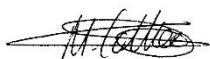
Personal identifying Information concerning clients or staff is strictly confidential and must not be disclosed to unauthorised persons. This obligation shall continue in perpetuity. Disclosures of confidential information or disclosures of any data of a personal nature can result in prosecution for an offence under the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. or an action for civil damages under the same Act in addition to any disciplinary action taken by the YPAS.

13. Approval:

Policies and Procedures are approved by YPAS's Chief Executive Officer and Ratified by the Board of Trustees.

Name: Monique Collier (*Chief Executive Officer*).

Signature:



Date: 24/08/26