

PCMH Appointments and Expectations Process

August 2025



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Contents

1. Policy Statement.....	4
2. Scope	4
3. Definitions	4
4. Appointment Invitations	4
5. Handling Missed Appointments (DNAs)	4
6. Remote Screening Appointments.....	5
7. Early Termination of Appointments	5
8. Contact Details	5
Appendix A: Equality Impact Assessment.....	6

1. Policy Statement

The Primary and Community Mental Health Team (PCMH) is committed to providing accessible, timely, and patient-centred appointment management. This policy outlines the procedures for scheduling, managing, and following up on patient appointments, including how we handle missed appointments (DNAs) and support patient engagement to promote continuity of care.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all PCMH patients and PCMH clinical and administrative staff involved in booking, managing, or recording patient appointments, including handling Did Not Attends (DNAs), appointment cancellations, and patient engagement efforts.

3. Definitions

- **DNA (Did Not Attend):** A patient who misses a scheduled appointment without adequate notice or cancels on the same day.
- **Cancelled Appointment:** An appointment cancelled by the patient with at least 24 hours' notice.
- **Ad-hoc Appointment:** An unscheduled or additional appointment created outside the regular rota.
- **OPT-IN Letter:** A letter sent to patients who have missed three consecutive appointments, asking if they wish to continue their care with PCMH.

4. Appointment Invitations

- Patients are offered a minimum of three appointments, with invitations sent via phone, SMS, and secure messaging (AccuRx).
- Clinicians will attempt to contact all patients who do not attend (DNA) to encourage re-engagement.
- If contact cannot be made, the appointment is recorded as a DNA, and a note is added to the patient's mental health ongoing record.

5. Handling Missed Appointments (DNAs)

- All missed appointments without adequate notice, including same-day cancellations, are recorded as DNAs.
- Cancellations with at least 24 hours' notice are recorded as 'Cancelled by patient' and not counted as DNAs.
- After three consecutive DNAs, an OPT-IN letter will be sent by PCMH admin inviting the patient to confirm their wish to continue care.
- If the patient responds and wishes to re-engage, a further appointment will be scheduled.

- Failure to respond to the OPT-IN letter or additional DNAs after re-engagement may result in discharge from the service, subject to clinical discretion.
- Alternative appointment formats (e.g. video calls, different days/times) may be offered to improve engagement.

6. Remote Screening Appointments

- If a patient DNAs a remote screening appointment, the clinician will attempt further telephone contact within the appointment period to complete the screening.
- If contact attempts are unsuccessful, the patient will be discharged back to their GP and will not be rebooked by PCMH.

7. Early Termination of Appointments

- Appointments may be ended early if the patient is unable to engage due to temporary impairment (e.g. under the influence of alcohol or drugs).
- The clinician must explain (where possible) the reason for ending the appointment, document the discussion, and record the appointment as completed.
- Multiple early terminations (more than two) will trigger a review of the care plan and discussion about acceptable behaviours and service criteria.
- Discharge may be considered if impairments persist, with communication to the patient and their GP.
- Known neurological conditions impacting engagement should be documented in the treatment plan and considered during treatment planning.

8. Contact Details

For any questions or support regarding your appointments, please contact:
Primary and Community Mental Health Team

Email: sct-ctr.pcmht-admin@nhs.net

Telephone: 0114 2264526

Appointments can also be cancelled and rebooked using the above contact details

Appendix A: Equality Impact Assessment

Characteristic / Group	Impact	Please explain your assessment
Age	Positive	The policy is applicable across all age ranges
	Negative	
	No impact	
	Impact not known	
Gender Re-assignment	Positive	The policy is applicable to all genders
	Negative	
	No impact	
	Impact not known	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Positive	The policy is applicable to everyone irrespective of marital status.
	Negative	
	No impact	
	Impact not known	
Pregnancy and Maternity	Positive	The policy is not affected by pregnancy
	Negative	
	No impact	
	Impact not known	
Race	Positive	This policy is applicable to everyone
	Negative	
	No impact	
	Impact not known	
Religion or Belief	Positive	This policy is applicable to everyone. The service runs using the UK bank holidays. Clinical appointments can be rearranged to accommodate any faith needs.
	Negative	
	No impact	
	Impact not known	
Sex	Positive	This policy is applicable to everyone
	Negative	
	No impact	
	Impact not known	
Sexual Orientation	Positive	This policy is applicable to everyone
	Negative	
	No impact	
	Impact not known	
Other – socio-econ status, employment, carers, migrant status, location, homeless etc	Positive	This policy impacts people who work 9-5 and students more than others due to the service only offering appointments Monday to Friday 9am-5pm. To mitigate this we ask all clinicians to book appointments in advance. With 2 weeks' notice for the first appointment. For people which work a shift pattern we do our best to accommodate. Letters for appointments can be provided on request to be provided to employers or tutors.
	Negative	
	No impact	
	Impact not known	