

Churchill Medical Centre Late Patient and DNA Policy

The Churchill Medical Centre operates an advanced booking and on the day appointment system.

The practice expects patients to arrive on time for their appointments. To help patients to arrive on time the practice does the following:

1. For appointments booked in person an appointment slip stipulating the time, date and clinician the patient is seeing written down.
2. For appointments booked over the telephone the receptionist repeats the time, date, location and clinician to the patient.
3. For appointments booked online, a confirmation is displayed on the log in page

Text reminders are also sent to all patients who have signed up for SMS communication. A confirmation text is sent to patients at the point of booking and a reminder message is sent before an appointment time.

Late patients

As a general principle the practice expects to arrive on time and to cancel any appointments they cannot attend. Patients can contact reception by telephone, in person or online.

The practice acknowledges however that sometimes there are good reasons why a patient is late, for example is extremely unwell, disabled, has poor mental health or is very elderly.

The procedure below has been developed with advice from MPS and MDU. Medico-legally the individual practitioner and the surgery could both be held responsible for any adverse outcome, which could include short term acute illness and/or delayed diagnosis if a patient is not seen.

GP Appointments

If a patient arrives late for a GP appointment the following procedure will be followed:

- Less than 5 minutes late, the patient is checked in but advised they may have a shorter appointment

- Over 5 minutes late, the patient is offered a choice:
 - To re-book the appointment
 - To wait until the end of the surgery

If the patient chooses this, they should be checked in as normal and the following annotated in the appointment 'patient arrived x minutes late, will wait until the end of surgery'

Principles for patients who arrive late:

1. If the patient feels they must be seen urgently, the receptionist can annotate this in the appointment details. It is then for the GP to decide when to see the patient.
2. Babies and children under 5 should not be kept waiting until the end of surgery but should be seen as soon as is practically possible
3. The GP is not obliged to carry out a full appointment for those who arrive late, but feel they need to be seen that day. The GP must assess the clinical need of the patient and decide what to do at that point.

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4. Reception staff cannot make any decision as to whether a patient is seen or not. This decision must remain with the GP.

It is important to note that although it can have a significant impact on the way in which a surgery runs; lateness is not a prevalent problem at either practice.

If a patient arrives late for a nurse appointment the following procedure will be followed:

- Less than 5 minutes late, the patient is checked in but advised they may have a shorter appointment
- Over 5 minutes late, the patient is offered a choice:
 - To re-book the appointment
 - To wait until the end of the surgery*

Appointments with the nurses may be quite long appointments, often at least 20minutes. It is not then always practical for patients to be seen at the end of surgery for their full appointment as this would potentially run through a nurses' lunchbreak or long past their finish time. Nurses would need to follow the same guidance as above; that they need to clinically assess the needs of the patient at that time and need not offer a full appointment to the patient.

At Churchill, the nurse on call will help where possible with any late patients whose appointment types she is trained to do.

DNAs

On average, the practices lose approximately 42 GP appointments at Churchill to DNAs per week.

This equates to approximately 2 GP sessions at Churchill.

For nursing appointments, the practice loses an average of 48 appointments per week at Churchill.

This equates to approximately 10.5hrs wasted nursing time per week at Churchill.

Patients who miss 3 number of appointments over 12 months are sent a letter

The practice acknowledges that some patients find it harder to attend appointments, for example those with chronic health needs, dementia, chaotic lifestyles or learning disabilities. Patients in these cohorts may requires help or support to attend on time and so it may be more appropriate to be more lenient. These patients are dealt with on a case by case basis.