**Checklist for reducing missed appointments (DNAs/WNBs)**

This checklist will support outpatient services in improving their outpatient appointment attendance. It is intended to be used alongside NHS England’s [guidance for reducing missed appointments in outpatient services](https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/reducing-did-not-attends-dnas-in-outpatient-services/).

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| **Where to start** |
| 1. **Engage with patients to understand and address the root causes of missed appointments**, for instance through a phone or online survey. Resources, including a phone survey script, online form and trust case studies are available on [FutureNHS](https://future.nhs.uk/OutpatientTransformation/view?objectID=40616048) (login required).
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| 1. **Make it easier for patients to change their appointments** by enabling them to reply to their [appointment reminders](https://future.nhs.uk/OutpatientTransformation/view?objectID=40616368), for example, two way SMS reminders.
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| 1. **Conduct local data analysis** to understand variation across services, health inequalities impact, and how often patients miss consecutive appointments. Review data regularly (for example, at board meetings). National data is available via the [model health system](https://model.nhs.uk/compartments/43e2cd1a-c59e-4c7f-bc86-2a5d8db9830e/subcompartments/a0a4226c-88bd-4654-818e-51b0c61b002a) (login required), including at specialty level.
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| 1. **Apply trust access policies to clinically review patients who miss consecutive** **appointments.**
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| **Other high impact actions** |
| 1. **Make sure appointment communications and reminders give patients the information they need:**
* date, time and location of the appointment
* how to cancel or move the appointment.

Communications should be:* simple, friendly and easy to understand – check whether the language is at the appropriate reading age
* in the patient’s language of choice
* support any patient accessibility needs.

[Template letters and SMS reminders](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.england.nhs.uk%2Fpublication%2Freducing-did-not-attends-dnas-in-outpatient-services%2F&data=05%7C01%7Cstefanie.dimov1%40nhs.net%7C03a4ab4b9e5f4f1e29bd08dbbdcbca77%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638312455188804299%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=6A0oc4KHSt3Xftb55GmPitwPXwlXlKP%2FY%2B2ETM8UX%2BM%3D&reserved=0) are available, alongside [principles for communicating with patients](https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/documents/good-communications-with-patients-core-principles/).Translated versions of [appointment confirmation](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ffuture.nhs.uk%2FOutpatientTransformation%2Fview%3FobjectID%3D46673648&data=05%7C01%7Cstefanie.dimov1%40nhs.net%7C03a4ab4b9e5f4f1e29bd08dbbdcbca77%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638312455188804299%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=XG2KTkfhu94U3yCEZfcf6wMD1hPEtgefU1bGTHbna%2BM%3D&reserved=0) and [appointment reminder letters](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ffuture.nhs.uk%2FOutpatientTransformation%2Fview%3FobjectID%3D46673744&data=05%7C01%7Cstefanie.dimov1%40nhs.net%7C03a4ab4b9e5f4f1e29bd08dbbdcbca77%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638312455188804299%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=x3nYPRZsTIFXySbgCgrGX8uDlBD3KY13403tIzsrryw%3D&reserved=0) are also available. |  |
| 1. **Ensure your booking processes make it easy for patients to cancel or move an appointment:**
* flexible contact hours and a way to contact out of hours (for example, voicemail)
* enough admin support to manage requests to change appointments
* patient portal which allows self-booking or rescheduling.
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| 1. **Ensure patients are provided with options of how they receive their care moving forward:**
* give patients the choice of a [remote consultation](https://future.nhs.uk/OutpatientTransformation/view?objectID=25675280) (for example, video or telephone), where possible
* give patients choice where they have their appointment, where possible
* use [patient initiated follow-up](https://future.nhs.uk/OutpatientTransformation/viewdocument?docid=174153797&done=DOCCreated1&fid=31314032) with patients whenever appropriate, to put them in control of their appointments
* ensure patients still need their appointment by [validating your waiting lists](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/validation-toolkit-and-guidance/).
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| 1. **Implement** [**short-notice bookings**](https://future.nhs.uk/OutpatientTransformation/view?objectID=156901765)to fill slots that have not been booked, for example, where patients have cancelled at late notice, enabling more patients to be seen.
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| 1. **Take steps to** [**mitigate and reduce health inequalities**](https://future.nhs.uk/OutpatientTransformation/view?objectID=156890245)**:**
* capture patients’ preferred means of communication, appointment times and appointment types
* work towards ensuring data completeness, for example, with respect to ethnicity
* make patients aware of available support, for example, the [Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs/healthcare-travel-costs-scheme-htcs/)
* talk to your local patient groups to get a better understanding of the patient demographics you are serving
* Run clinics outside of regular 9am to 5pm working hours, and on weekends.
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