

DE-LISTING GUIDANCE

The previous guidance for practices on refusing treatment to patients was revised in November 2025 to incorporate addressing failed appointments. ([see GUIDELINES FOR DENTISTS, DENTAL TEAMS, AND HEALTH BOARDS REGARDING REFUSAL TO TREAT PATIENTS](#)). The guidance issued in December has been amended to incorporate The National Health Service (General Dental Services Contracts and Patient Charges) (Wales) Regulations 2026.

This guidance will support dental teams to make evidence-based decisions about when it is reasonable to refuse further treatment to a patient, including non-attendance. The intended outcome is to protect NHS resources by reducing lost appointment slots, ensuring more patients can access NHS dental care and supporting practices from financial losses. This guidance includes suggested templated notification letters that practices can use to communicate intent to de-list patients due to DNA or late cancellation.

DNA or Late Cancellation Guidance

If a person under 18 or a looked after young person aged 18 to 25 years was not brought to their appointment, they should be managed in accordance with Was Not Brought policy.

A patient's repeated failure to attend dental appointments could be considered a cause for irrevocable breakdown in relationship between Contractor and patient.

Patients who do not attend may present in 3 main categories:

- Not attending consecutive appointments;
- Not attending three or more appointments in the last 36 months
- Six late cancellations (that is a cancellation made less than 24 hours before an appointment for non-medical reasons) in the last 36 months

Enacting the DNA Policy

- Dentists/Practices should make patients aware of their policy, by displaying it in the practice or including information in their practice leaflet and website.
- Patients should receive communication from the practice via letter, email or text /sms message following a first missed or second appointment advising of the potential consequences.

For examples, please see; Appendix 1. DNA x 1. EXAMPLE LETTERS and Appendix 2. DNA x 2. EXAMPLE LETTER

- Patients should receive communication from the practice via letter, email or text/sms message if the practice will no longer be providing NHS dental services to the patient. For examples, please see: Appendix 3. DNA x 3. EXAMPLE LETTERS
- Dental Practices must clearly record all DNAs and last minute cancellations in the patient's records, including all attempts to contact the patient to ensure they attend appointments, as well as reason provided by the patient for the DNA. Practices will record and report DNA rates, as well as actions taken to reduce missed appointments, via the LHB reporting tool, which may be subject to replacement by a national template or an electronic portal.

Was Not Brought

Was Not Brought: This refers to the situation where a child or adult did not attend an appointment due to reliance on a responsible person to assist in attending the clinic setting. Professionals are encouraged to consider the circumstances from the individual's perspective and take appropriate action to ensure their safety. Practitioners are signposted to:

- Recording “Was Not Brought” in clinical notes, providing a more accurate representation of the situation, prompting necessary follow-up actions.
- NHS Wales Guidance: Was Not Brought to Appointments/No Access Gained. Safeguarding Considerations For Children or Adults at Risk resource. Link: phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/national-safeguarding-service/safeguarding-latest-guidance/was-not-brought-guidance/was-not-brought-to-appointments-guidance-e/
- The BDA's WNB toolkit helps dental teams safeguard both children and adults at risk of harm when they miss appointments. The BDA toolkit includes guidelines for effectively managing this occurrence in dental practices. Access to guidance and documentation: [Was not brought safeguarding resources \(bda.org\)](http://www.bda.org.uk/what-we-do/clinical-guidance/was-not-brought-safeguarding-resources)

GUIDELINES FOR DENTISTS, DENTAL TEAMS, AND HEALTH BOARDS REGARDING REFUSAL TO TREAT PATIENTS

(Revised March 2026 to incorporate The National Health Service (General Dental Services Contracts and Patient Charges) (Wales) Regulations 2026)

The National Health Service (General Dental Services Contracts and Patient Charges) (Wales) Regulations 2026 specify several areas where practitioners have an absolute right to refuse treatment to current patients or those requesting treatment.

These include:

SPECIFIC GROUPS

1. Patient Preference of a dental practitioner

- (1) The Contractor must endeavour to comply any reasonable preference expressed under the Regulations but need not do so if the preferred performer has:
- (a) has reasonable grounds for refusing to provide services to the patient, or
 - (b) does not routinely perform the services required by the patient within the practice.

2. Violent/Aggressive Patients

- (1) Where a patient of the contractor has:
- a) committed an act of violence against any of the persons specified in sub-paragraph (3),
 - b) behaved in such a way against any of the persons specified in sub-paragraph (3) that the person has feared for their safety, or
 - c) behaved in such a way that in the reasonable opinion of the contractor any of the persons specified in sub-paragraph (3) would be at risk if services were provided to that patient,
 - d) the contractor may refuse to provide services to the patient or may terminate the provision of services to the patient.

If the circumstances described in sub-paragraph (1) have taken place and the contractor has decided it is no longer willing to provide services to that patient the contractor must notify the Local Health Board of this decision within 7 clear days of the decision being made and begin the de-listing process, if relevant.

- (3) The reference to person in sub-paragraph (1) means—
- (a) the contractor where it is an individual dental practitioner,
 - (b) in the case of a contract with two or more individuals practising in partnership, a partner in that partnership,
 - (c) in the case of a contract with a dental corporation, a director, chief executive, company secretary or member of, or a legal and beneficial owner of shares in, that corporation,
 - (d) a member of the contractor’s staff,
 - (e) a person engaged by the contractor to perform or assist in the performance of services under the contract, or
 - (f) any other person present—
 - (i) on the practice premises, or
 - (ii) in the place where services were provided to the patient under the contract.

(4) Notification under sub-paragraph (2) may be given by any means including telephone, fax or email but if not given in writing, must be confirmed in writing within 7 clear days (and for this purpose a faxed or email notification is not a written one).

(5) The time at which the contractor notifies the Local Health Board is the time at which it makes the telephone call or sends or delivers the notification to the Local Health Board.

(6) The Local Health Board must—

(a) acknowledge in writing receipt of the notice from the contractor under sub-paragraph (2),

(b) ensure the effect of the notice is recorded on the Dental Access Portal so as to prevent re-allocation of that patient to that contractor, and

(c) take all reasonable steps to inform the patient concerned as soon as is reasonably practicable.

3. Patients who refuse to pay NHS charges before the start of, or during, treatment

(1) If the contractor has, in accordance with Schedule 5 of the Regulations, requested that the patient pay a charge in respect of that course of treatment and that patient has failed to pay that charge, the contractor may—

(a) refuse to begin a course of treatment, or

(b) terminate a course of treatment before its completion, and

where it has ended a course of treatment in accordance with sub-paragraph (a) or (b), begin the de-listing process.

(2) Where the contractor refuses to provide services or has terminated a course of treatment under sub-paragraph (1), the contractor must notify the Local Health Board within 7 clear days and if the contractor has initiated the de-listing process notify it of this.

(3) Notification under sub-paragraph (2) may be given by any means including telephone, fax or email but if not given in writing, must be confirmed in writing within 7 clear days (and for this purpose a faxed or email notification is not a written one).

(4) If the notification under sub-paragraph (2) confirms de-listing has been initiated the Local Health Board must

(a) acknowledge in writing receipt of the notice from the contractor under sub-paragraph

(b) ensure the effect of the notice is recorded on the Dental Access Portal so as to prevent re-allocation of that patient to that contractor, and

(c) take all reasonable steps to inform the patient concerned as soon as is reasonably practicable.

4. Irrevocable breakdown in relationship between contractor and patient

(1) The contractor must notify the Local Health Board within 7 days of making the decision that it is no longer willing to provide services to a patient under the contract where—

(a) in the reasonable opinion of the contractor, there has been an irrevocable breakdown in the relationship between the patient and that contractor, and

(b) notification of such a breakdown has been given to the patient by the contractor.

(2) Where a notification under sub-paragraph (1) has been sent to the Local Health Board the contractor must begin the de-listing process.

(3) The notification under sub-paragraph (1) and (1)(b) may be given by any means including telephone, fax or email but if not given in writing, must be confirmed in writing within 7 clear days (and for this purpose a faxed or email notification is not a written one).

(4) Upon receipt of the notification under sub-paragraph (1) the Local Health Board must—

a) acknowledge in writing receipt of the notice from the contractor under sub-paragraph (1),

(b) ensure the effect of the notice is recorded on the Dental Access Portal so as to prevent re-allocation of that patient to that contractor, and

(c) take all reasonable steps to inform the patient concerned as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Appendix 1. DNA x 1. EXAMPLE LETTERS

Dear

I am writing to remind you that you failed to attend a dental appointment on [insert date]. If you would like another appointment, please contact the practice as soon as possible.

The practice has a DNA policy on missed appointments in line with Health Board guidance.

The practice may no longer be able to offer you treatment in this practice if you:

- Do not attend the next appointment
- Do not attend three appointments in the last 36 months
- Have more than six late cancellations (that is a cancellation made less than 24 hours before an appointment for non-medical reasons) in the last 36 months.

Yours sincerely

OR

Dear

Our records show that you had a dental appointment booked with on [insert date] but failed to attend this appointment. If you believe this to be incorrect, please contact us on [insert phone number] to discuss.

Dental appointments are at a premium and this missed appointment could have been used by another patient if you had provided the practice with adequate notice that the appointment was no longer required.

Please be advised that the practice has a DNA policy which, for patients who repeatedly fail to attend, may result in them being removed from the practice's list.

- Not attending two consecutive appointments
- Not attending three appointments in the last 36 months
- Having more than six late cancellations in the last 36 months, that is a cancellation at such short notice the practice could not reasonably be expected to fill the appointment

If you need to cancel or change an appointment, you can:

- Call the practice on [insert number]
- Email [insert email address]
- Cancel your appointment via our website [insert website]
- [Enter any other method]

Please help us to maximise appointment availability in the future. Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 2. DNA x 2. EXAMPLE LETTER

Dear

I am writing to remind you that you failed to attend a dental appointment on two occasions, [insert dates]. If you would like another appointment, please contact the practice as soon as possible.

The practice has a DNA policy on missed appointments which is supported by the Health Board.

The practice may no longer be able to offer you treatment in this practice if you:

- Do not attend two consecutive appointments
- Do not attend three appointments in the last 36 months
- Have more than six late cancellations (that is a cancellation made less than 24 hours before an appointment for non-medical reasons) in the last 36 months.

Yours sincerely

OR

Dear

Our records show that you had a dental appointment booked on [insert day and date] but failed to attend this appointment. If you believe this to be incorrect, please contact us on [insert phone number] to discuss.

We previously contacted you on [insert day and date] regarding an appointment you had missed on [insert day and date]. This is the second occasion you have failed to attend a scheduled appointment within a 12 month period.

Please be advised that the practice has a DNA policy which, for patients who repeatedly fail to attend, may result in them being removed from the practice's list.

- Not attending two consecutive appointments
- Not attending three appointments in the last 36 months
- Having more than six late cancellations in the last 36 months, that is a cancellation at such short notice the practice could not reasonably be expected to fill the appointment

In our previous letter, we advised you that you can cancel or change an appointment by:

- Calling the dedicated appointment line on [insert number]
- Emailing [insert email address]
- Cancel your appointment via our website [insert website]
- [Enter any other method]

If you fail to attend a third appointment within 36 months we will consider removing you from the practice's list.

Please help us to maximise appointment availability in the future by contacting us as soon as you know you will be unable to attend your scheduled appointment. Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 3. DNA x 3. EXAMPLE LETTERS

Dear

You have missed two consecutive dental appointments on [dates].

or

You have missed more than three appointments on [dates] in the last 36 months.

or

You have cancelled more than six appointments at late notice in the last 36 months.

We tried to contact you by [message / phone / email] to remind you of the appointments.

In line with NHS Regulations and the practice policy as supported by Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board, we will no longer provide you with NHS dental treatment at this practice.

We advise that you should enrol your details on the NHS Dental Access Portal, which will reallocate you to another dental practice. You can access the Dental Access portal using this link: <https://dhw.nhs.wales/digital-access-portal/>. Once registered you will be notified when a suitable place at an NHS dentist becomes available.

If you are in pain and need urgent dental treatment, please telephone NHS Wales 111.

Failed appointments are a severe problem to the National Health Service. They prevent other patients from being seen, and waste money and staff time.

Yours sincerely

OR

Dear

Our records show that you had an appointment booked on [insert date] but did not attend this appointment. If you believe this to be incorrect, please contact us on [insert phone number] to discuss.

We previously wrote to you on [insert date] regarding the appointments you missed on [insert date] and [insert date]. You have now missed three appointments in 36 months without justification.

In line with NHS Regulations and the practice policy as supported by Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board, we will no longer provide you with NHS dental treatment at this practice.

We advise that you should enrol your details on the NHS Dental Access Portal, which will reallocate you to another dental practice. You can access the Dental Access portal using this link: <https://dhw.nhs.wales/digital-access-portal/>. Once registered you will be notified when a suitable place at an NHS dentist becomes available.

If you are in pain and need urgent dental treatment, please telephone NHS Wales 111.

The decision to remove you from the practice list was not taken lightly but it is imperative that we provide an efficient service for all of our patients and we are unable to do so if a patient repeatedly does not attend scheduled appointments.

The practice team wishes you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,