



Safeguarding: 'Was Not Brought' / Rapid Read

MISSED APPOINTMENTS: WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

There are many simple reasons for a one-off missed health appointment, and they should not normally be a cause for concern.

However, missed appointments can be a sign of neglect, for example when:

- a child misses more than one vaccination appointment
- the patient has learning difficulties, or lacks the capacity to make a decision about attending the appointment
- care home staff have failed to bring the patient to the appointment

Context and patterns are crucial: if a child on a child protection plan for neglect misses a health appointment, this is a cause for concern, and prompt action should be taken to ensure the welfare of the child.

PRACTICE PROCEDURE AND POLICY

Practices should consider having a practice procedure or policy relating to children and adults not being brought to appointments.

Children and adults not brought to appointments should be coded **'Was Not Brought'** rather than 'Did Not Attend'.

Every time a child (or an adult who is reliant on another person to get to an appointment) is not brought to a scheduled health appointment, the practitioner should consider:

- what the impact on the welfare of the child or adult could be
- whether there are any other concerns within the family

They should then take any action necessary.

IMMUNISATIONS AND COVID-19

According to the BMJ, the number of MMR vaccines delivered in England dropped by 20% during the first three weeks of the lockdown.

Parents have expressed concerns about overburdening the NHS at this time, and a fear of exposure to Covid-19 when attending for vaccination.

This fall in vaccination rates risks the loss of herd immunity for preventable diseases. It is important that routine vaccination remains a priority, and that missed appointments are followed up in line with 'was not brought' policies.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS

Make contact with the individual, or their parent or carer, to:

- find out why they did not come to the appointment
- discuss with them any barriers that may have prevented their attendance
- encourage them to make another appointment, and offer support for future attendance, if necessary

If you cannot make contact or agree a further meeting, do not discontinue the service or appointment without discussion with a senior colleague and consideration of local attendance and safeguarding policies.

If you are concerned there may be a safeguarding risk, discuss a patient's non-attendance with your colleagues - it could be a sign of other problems.



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