Appointment Management and Cancellation Policy

It is the aim of this practice to provide quality dental care to our patients and to use clinical time effectively. To achieve this aim, we have an appointment management and cancellation policy.

Management of appointments
Appointments can be made or rescheduled by calling our dedicated appointments line on 0191 267 7120 or by emailing the clinic where a full triage is undertaken. We don't feel that patients being able to book directly through an online system is a good use of our appointment book.

Reminders
Telephone call reminders are made to patients 1-3 days before any appointment (depending on the day) and patients are requested to inform the practice of any changes to their contact details.

Cancellation or delay of an appointment by the practice
We will only cancel or delay a patient's appointment in unavoidable circumstances. In such cases, we will take the following steps:

- The patient will be contacted as soon as the practice is aware of the need to cancel or delay the appointment. We will explain the reason for the cancellation or delay
- At the time of contact, the patient will be offered a new appointment at the earliest time available
- If the patient is unable to commit to a new appointment during that contact, we will ask them to get in touch at a later time, when we will offer them a priority appointment
- Patients who have to be cancelled or delayed are offered a complimentary private scale and polish as a gesture of goodwill.

Cancellation of an appointment or missed appointment by a patient
Patients are requested to give at least 48 hours' notice to cancel a dental appointment. Cancellations should be made by telephone on: 0191 267 7120. A voicemail may be left out of hours as the date and time are recorded. Late cancellations and missed appointments may represent a cost to the practice, when other patients could have been seen in the time set aside for the patient.

[**England/Wales:** We do not make a charge for NHS patients for a late cancellation or missed appointment. However, we reserve the right to ask a patient to find another dental practice if they continue to miss appointments or they may be offered service privately or on our "Complete Smile" scheme where missed appointment fees can be charged.

If more than two NHS dental appointments are missed or cancelled with less than 48 hours' notice, we do not guarantee being able to complete a patient's NHS treatment or offer them NHS treatment in the future. If the patient is new to the practice and this occurs in the first course of treatment no further NHS appointments will be offered.

There is a fee for private dental appointments that are missed or cancelled with less than 48 hours' notice. The fee is based on the length of the appointment and is charged at £1 per minute. This is payable before any further appointments can be made.

It is our aim to telephone or email patients after a missed appointment to understand the reason for non-attendance and to inform them about any fee or decision about their NHS dental care. We understand that cancellations are sometimes unavoidable due to illness or emergencies and we will take

account of all valid circumstances such as hospitalisation or death of a family member. Any decision to waive a missed appointment fee is at the discretion of management. Waivers are not possible for initial appointments at the clinic.

Any appeals about missed or cancelled appointment decisions by a patient should be made in writing to the Practice Manager, Rebecca Thorpe.