PROCEDURE FOR CHILD FAILURE TO ATTEND APPOINTMENTS
NO ACCESS at Planned Home Visit

Child Protection Action Group

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Lead Reviewer: Lead Advisor Child & Family Protection
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Distribution

- Directorate Managers
- GP Practice Managers
- GP Subgroup
- Paediatricians
- Allied Health Professionals
- Dental Leads
- Lead Nurses
- Professional Leads for Children and Families including Child Protection and Looked After Children
- CPAG (Child Protection Action Group)
- Public Health Practitioners/Health Visitors/Public Health Nurses (Schools)/Community Health Nurses/Family Health Nurses/Team Leaders
- Children’s Specialist Services
- Nursing, Midwifery & AHP Committees
- Child Health Surveillance (Morven House)
- Raigmore Appointments Office
- A&B CPAG

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Version 2 Date of Issue: April 2011
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For the Attention of all NHS Staff who work with/for children, including those who make appointments for children

RELAUNCH OF DID NOT ATTEND/NO ACCESS (DNA/NA) PROCEDURE
REF: SH/CP/03/2011/V2

The attached procedure has been operational since April 2010 for NHS Highland. It is intended to identify and reduce risk to vulnerable children who miss planned appointments and/or when no access is granted to a planned home visit and to promote a consistent approach in all areas within NHS Highland in managing and reducing that risk.

It is crucial that each included person, ward, department, clinic, service etc: 

a) Check compliance of their local procedures/protocols with this procedure 
b) Bring to the attention of the Lead Advisor Child & Family Protection (LACFP) where any conflicting issues are apparent 
c) Identify any benefits to children as a result of the implementation of this procedure within your area and pass these onto the LACFP

Following the relaunch for a 3 month period any comments should be sent to: NHSHighland.DNANA@nhs.net.

An audit is planned during the Summer period to check compliance.

A Public Health Nurse Base Directory is now available on the intranet http://intranet.nhsh.scot.nhs.uk/Org/DHS/ChildrensServices/Pages/Default.aspx. This will support this procedure through identifying the team base for the Health Visitor/School Nurse for notification of non attendance by a child in their area.

Thank you for your co-operation in implementing this procedure.

Kathleen Clarke
Lead Advisor Child & Family Protection
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1.1 BACKGROUND

Failure of a child to attend for any health appointment must be taken seriously by all health professionals.

As children are under the care of adults, the responsibility for attendance at appointments rests with the carer. Non-attendance at appointments may be an indicator of child welfare concerns; therefore child failure to attend at appointments should receive special consideration. This procedure has been developed regarding formal notification to Primary care professionals of child failure to attend at appointments; for Primary care professionals to respond when a child fails to attend a primary care appointment; and when primary care professionals do not get access, from a previously arranged appointment.

In agreement with the Child Protection Action Group this guidance has been developed to ensure that notifications of all child failure to attend at appointments and no access visits are handled in a uniform manner. It is anticipated a standard process will reduce risk to the most vulnerable children.

Sharing information is a critical component in safeguarding children.

1.2 REFERENCES

1) Watson M, Forshaw M. BMJ 2002; 324: 739 Child Outpatient non-attendance may indicate welfare concerns

2) Lord Laming 2003 (following the inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbie)


4) Highland Children’s Services Practice Guidelines August 2010

5) Scottish Executive, Protecting Children: a Shared Responsibility January 2000

6) Scottish Executive, Sharing Information about Children at Risk: A guide to good practice 2003

7) Scottish Executive, Protecting children and young people: Framework for Standards 2004
2.1

CHILD FAILURE TO ATTEND AT SECONDARY CARE APPOINTMENTS

PROCEDURE FOR

Referring Practitioners, General Practitioners, Health Visitors and Public Health Nurses (Schools), Allied Health Professionals and Dental Professionals.

“A child is a person under the age of sixteen years”

Non Attendance at appointments may be an indicator of child welfare concerns

- Upon receipt of the “Failure to Attend” letter (Appendix 2), the Referring Practitioner should initiate discussion with the other health professionals/named person/lead professional* informed of the failure to attend and agree the action to be taken and by whom. Contact with the family is recommended.

- A summary of the discussion will be documented in the child’s notes by the Referring/General Practitioner/Community Paediatrician and in the Public Health Nursing Child and Family Health Record by the HV or SN so that this discussion becomes part of the child’s permanent record.

- If the Health Visitor for the surgery is different from the Named Health Visitor, the Health Visitor for the surgery will forward the information to the Named Health Visitor.

- The Referring Practitioner should re-refer should another appointment be required.

- If further appointments are to be offered, they will be copied to the General Practitioner/Community Paediatrician, the HV or SN and the Practice Manager.

- At every stage of the process consideration must be given to communication issues such as literacy, language, understanding ability and retention, mental health issues, hearing or visual impairment; in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act and with NHS Highland Equality and Diversity Policy.

If there are child protection concerns the Highland (or respectively Argyll and Bute) Child Protection Policy Guidelines must be followed.

* Named person/lead professional may not yet apply in Argyll and Bute

Child protection guidelines can apply to Looked After Children until they reach the age of 18 years
2.2

CHILD FAILURE TO ATTEND AT SECONDARY CARE APPOINTMENTS

ACTION FOR SECONDARY CARE PROFESSIONALS

WHERE THERE ARE CONCERNS THAT A CHILD MAY BE AT IMMEDIATE RISK FOLLOW HIGHLAND CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE GUIDELINES (HCPC), OR ARgyll and Bute GUIDELINES

Child Fails to Attend Second Appointment

Requires Further Appointment?

Yes

- Confirm details with referring practice
- Consider any communication difficulties
- Send/telephone/text further appointment
- Record in patients notes

Fails Again to Attend

No Concerns

Concerns (Health or Welfare)

Yes

- Send ‘Failure to Attend’ letter Appendix 2 and new appointment to family, stating necessity of attendance
- Copy letter and new appointment to Referring Practitioner, GP, Health Visitor or School Nurse, Practice Manager and Community Paediatrician if involved
- Consider discussion with Community colleagues
- Referring Practitioner: on receipt of contact see page 3

No

- Consider further appointment
- Send ‘Failure to Attend’ letter Appendix 2 to family with either a new appointment or state no further appointment will be sent
- Copy letter to Referring Practitioner, GP, Health Visitor or School Nurse, Named Person* (where appropriate), Practice Manager and Community Paediatrician if involved.

*Named Person – Midwife, Health Visitor for under school age. School Nurse and School (when appropriate) for school aged

For services which invite the family to arrange an appointment, and where no appointment has been made after two invitation letters have been sent, correspondence should be copied to the same professionals above.

If the child has not been brought to arranged appointments the flowchart above should be followed.

- Contact Child Protection Advisor to discuss any concerns at any stage.

RECORD ALL ACTIONS

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3.1 Guidance for Community Practitioners

When prior arrangements have been made and there is ‘No Access’
(Where there is concern that a child may be at immediate risk, follow Highland Child Protection Committee (HCPC) Guidelines, or Argyll and Bute Guidelines)

‘Consider any communication difficulties’

No Concerns
- Leave a further appointment for within four weeks/and contact details
- Clarify Address/Contact details including with Child Health
  - Send letter Appendix 2 with new planned visit/contact details

Concerns
- • Clarify Address/Contact details including with Child Health on return
  • Inform Named Person and/or Lead Professional*
  • If known to social work inform social worker or consider referral
  - Assess risk and plan further visit ie within day/week following risk assessment

Child Not located and/or Not at Known Address
1) Re-assess risk
2) Discuss with Child Protection Advisor (CPA)
3) Share concerns/refer to social work
4) Complete ‘Missing From Known Address Protocol’
5) Discuss Missing Family Alert with CPA
6) Inform Health Colleagues/including Team Leader
7) Inform Named Person and/or Lead Professional*
8) Inform other Agency colleagues involved
9) Consider referral to police

- • Risk Assess
- • Inform and discuss with Health Colleagues/Named Person and/or Lead Professional*
- • Discuss with Team Leader
- • Continue with agreed service level

- No Access at next visit

Should circumstances change, or concerns arise at any stage follow concerns pathway
(*Named person or Lead Professional roles may not yet apply in Argyll and Bute)

RECORD ALL ACTIONS INCLUDING CHRONOLOGY
SAMPLE CHILD ‘FAILURE TO ATTEND’ LETTER 1

If you require this document in an alternative format please contact the clinic directly

If you require this document in an alternative format please contact the clinic directly

Dear Mr and Mrs Bloggs

CHILD’S NAME, DOB, ADDRESS
It appears from our records that ‘Joe Bloggs’ was not brought to a second appointment for:

• Insert additional information if desired

Our NHS Highland policy regarding non-attendance at hospital appointments is that correspondence regarding non-attendance is sent to the family, General Practitioner, Health Visitor or School Nurse, Named Person or Lead Professional (not A&B) co-ordinating planned care, and Community Paediatrician if involved. This non-attendance may require follow up in the community.

and/or

A further appointment has been made for: (add details)

Should you have any difficulties attending this appointment it is important you contact: (add details)

Yours sincerely

Name
Title

cc General Practitioner
Health Visitor/ Public Health Nurse (Schools)

Chairman: Mr Gary Coutts
Chief Executive: Elaine Mead

NHS Highland, Assynt House, Beechwood Park, INVERNESS IV2 3HG
Highland NHS Board is the common name of Highland Health Board

Consider communication difficulties ie reading ability, literacy, visual impairment
SAMPLE CHILD ‘FAILURE TO RESPOND TO INVITE’ LETTER 1

If you require this document in an alternative format please contact the clinic directly

[Insert department here]
[Insert address here]
[Insert address here]
Telephone [Insert number here]
Fax [Insert number here]
www.show.scot.nhs.uk/nhshighland/

Date
Your Ref
Our Ref
CHI
Enquiries
Direct Line
Email [firstname] [surname]@nhs.net

Consider communication difficulties ie reading ability, literacy, visual impairment

Dear Mr and Mrs Bloggs

CHILD’S NAME, DOB, ADDRESS

It appears from our records that you have not responded to an invite asking you to make contact for Joe to attend an appointment with:

• Insert additional information if desired

Our NHS Highland policy regarding failure to respond to an invite letter is that correspondence is sent to the family, General Practitioner, Health Visitor or School Nurse, Named Person or Lead Professional coordinating planned care, and Community Paediatrician if involved. This non compliance may require follow up in the community.

and/or

A further appointment has been made for: (add details)

Should you have any difficulties attending this appointment it is important you contact: (add details)

Yours sincerely

Name
Title

cc General Practitioner
Health Visitor/ Public Health Nurse (Schools)

Chairman: Mr Gary Coutts
Chief Executive: Elaine Mead

NHS Highland, Assynt House, Beechwood Park, INVERNESS IV2 3HG
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