Cathedral Dental Practice

NHS Attendance Policy

This is policy is to clarify Cathedral Dental Practice’s position on patients who repeatedly fail to attend appointments or cancel appointments at short notice, or lapse in their attendance.

Our practice follows a policy of preventive dental care and we recommend regular check-ups to minimise the need for dental treatment in the future.

In order to maintain healthy teeth and gums and to prevent dental problems in the future, we advise all patients to attend the recommended regular examination & hygiene recall. This is advised and set by their dentist and hygienist in line with NICE Guidelines.

Non attendance within a 2 year period will affect the patient’s registration at the practice.

Cathedral Dental Practice offers NHS dental treatment and its dentists try hard to provide a good standard of treatment in a caring environment. We are one of increasingly few dental practices who are continuing to work in the NHS. Many other practices provide only private care and their charges are more than 4 or 5 times greater than the set NHS charges.

We are a small business whose running costs increase every year and our income is fixed by the constraints of our NHS contract. The last few years have seen overheads at this practice increase far in excess of inflation due to extra staff, equipment, materials, outside services and training required to comply with CQC demands.

Cathedral Dental Practice can only continue working within NHS terms of service if the dentists have full appointment books and patients keep their appointments. If this does not happen then the practice may go the way of many other NHS practices in the last few years and become private only.

It is our policy that if existing patients repeatedly choose not to attend their appointments or cancel at such short notice (within 24 hours) that their appointments cannot be filled with someone else, they will lose their place with the practice.

We are supported by the Cornwall Area Team who endorses any decision to refuse to see a patient who has failed to attend or short notice cancel only **twice**.

Please note that while we aim to provide reminders by email, text or letter, these are a courtesy service only and it remains the responsibility of the patient to ensure they maintain regular attendance, keeping appointments and complying with practice requirements.

Should any patients’ attendance lapse for two years or more, Cathedral Dental reserves the right to review provision of their dental care. These patients may then lose their place with the practice without further notice, and therefore need to make alternative arrangements for their dental care.

Given the current extent of the NHS dental waiting list, it is unreasonable that we keep places for those patients who do not maintain regular attendance. We do not hold a waiting list within the practice but in the event that we become able to increase our patient capacity we will obtain details of prospective patients from the NHS list.