

## Reducing 'Did Not Attend's (DNAs)

In Sussex, every year, around 75,000 patients do not turn up to their Outpatient appointment. This has a significant impact on services and means that appointments go to waste.

If this number of DNAs could be reduced, it would mean less appointments go to waste and more patients can be seen.

### **Why do patients DNA?**

All groups should be given equal opportunities to access healthcare and as with any type of healthcare, outpatient care should not be 'one size fits all'. By understanding the many causes behind DNAs and working to reduce them, we can ensure appointment slots are not wasted.

Some causes of DNAs:

#### **Within patients' control:**

- Patient forgot about the appointment
- Patient felt they no longer needed the appointment

#### **Outside of patients' control:**

- Patient unaware of appointment
- Unclear, inaccessible or incorrect appointment information
- Patient unable to attend but had difficulties cancelling appointment
- Appointment booked a year or more ago without a recent reminder
- Difficulty taking time off work (particularly when face-to-face appointment)
- Transport issues
- Difficulty arranging carers (either for the patient or for people they care for)
- Cost issues
- Limited clinic hours available
- Issues with virtual appointments e.g missed call or technical issues
- Patient was not brought to the appointment by a carer or guardian responsible for their care ('was not brought')

We have also looked at DNAs from a health inequalities perspective in Sussex and found that the number of DNAs is higher in the following groups:

- Patients from areas of high deprivation
- Patients aged between 18-22 years
- Patients from Black, Black British, Caribbean or African ethnic group

### **How can we reduce DNAs?**

Some ways we can reduce DNAs include:

- 2-way text reminders (patient can reply confirming or cancelling an appointment)
- Patient portals on an app and patient led bookings
- Improved booking processes
- Accessible information e.g. appointment letter in the right format or language
- Financial support to attend appointments
- More choice regarding type of appointment (face to face or virtual)

### **Workshop focus:**

- Review of patient letters and text reminders
- Discussion around causes and ways to reduce DNAs
- Focused ideas based on health inequalities – how can we support patients to attend their appointments?