



# NEW STREET DENTAL CARE

## Appointment Policy

At our practice we will endeavour to manage our appointments system to avoid delays in appointment times and minimise loss of surgery time through cancellations and failed appointments.

### In our practice we

- Communicate with patients in a courteous, friendly, professional manner.
- Make sure that patients receive full information about our services, their treatment and its cost.
- Provide advice and treatment outside normal surgery hours where necessary.
- Refer patients for further professional advice and treatment where appropriate.

### In our practice we will

- Manage our appointments system so that treatment appointments are booked no more than 6 months ahead.
- Ensure that patients should have to wait no longer than 30 minutes to be seen. Where there is a further delay, we will explain the reasons.
- Remind patients of their appointment by phone, email or text (as preferred) where the appointment time exceeds 30 minutes.
- Monitor our waiting times for (i) treatment and (ii) for booking appointments.
- Provide as much notice as possible when appointments have to be changed or cancelled and explain the reasons.
- Advise patients if there is a change of dentist.
- Treat all patients with dignity and respect and provide a high quality of dentistry.

### In return, we would like you to

- Arrive on time for your appointment. Please give the practice at least 1 working days notice and on some occasions, we will require more than 1 days' notice if you are unable to keep your appointment. We will charge for missed appointments where we have not been notified. If you miss an appointment on more than one occasion without letting us know, we may need to review future provision of treatment for you at the practice.
- Treat all members of staff equally and respectfully over all areas of communication, e.g. telephone, email and in person. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour over any method of communication with our staff. Breach of this may affect your registration at our practice.
- Participate in your dental treatment, particularly any advice about prevention and diet that we have asked you to continue at home.
- Advise us of any changes to your contact details (address, telephone numbers, email) to help us keep our records up to date and ensure that we are able to contact you.

### Missed Appointments and Short Notice Cancellations

We do not charge for altering an appointment as long as we receive **1 working days notice** for all appointments unless we have specified the need for a longer notice time. This allows us to offer the appointment to another patient. 'Working days' exclude Saturday. We ask that if patients need to late cancel, we will need you to call us, text messages or emails may not be sufficient enough.

Patients who fail appointments or cancel without giving the corresponding prior notice, unless under exceptional circumstances, will be expected to pay a charge, this charge will reflect upon the amount of

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### New Street Dental Care

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time the appointment was booked for at a rate of £120.00 per hour. This charge will need to be settled prior to the patient's next appointment. Any accounts sent out in respect of these charges must be paid on receipt.

### **Why do we have to charge for missed appointments?**

We need to charge as we still have surgery running costs if a patient does not attend, many of our patients attend their appointments and so we don't feel it's fair to pass on the extra costs to them - instead we think it's fair to ask the small minority of patients who miss appointments to cover those costs.

Missed appointment charges are not a punishment - they are merely covering the cost of the wasted time. We know that in some cases missing an appointment is unavoidable and that is why we do not charge the full appointment fee. Charges are based on the hourly cost of running each surgery, including equipment and staffing, whether or not a patient is seen. Our surgeries are fitted with the latest high-tech equipment and our running costs are therefore high.

Also, as a busy dental practice, missed appointments can mean that surgery and staff are unoccupied when they could be helping a patient who is in urgent need of our care.

We wish to continue offering all our patients excellent value for money and to keep the general fees to a minimum, it is therefore essential that we continue to recover the cost of missed appointments.

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