

# IMPLEMENTING ‘Was Not Brought’ in your practice

A tool for safeguarding children who miss appointments

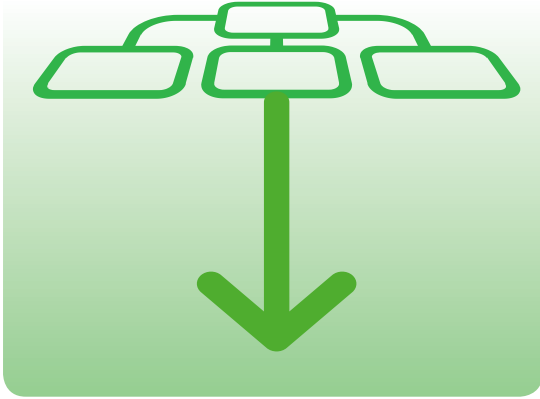
## How to use this pathway:

Share the guidance amongst the team via a team meeting

Download and file to an appropriate place on your system

Download the template letters using the file naming conventions

Ensure your team has access to the flowchart when logging WNBs



## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This pathway was developed by Jenny Harris and Jen Kirby for Community & Special Care Dentistry, Charles Clifford Dental Services, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and was evaluated with funding from the Future Leaders Programme, Health Education England working across Yorkshire and the Humber.

This implementation guide is supported by the British Dental Association as a service to members and the profession, in order to encourage and promote safeguarding.

# WHY WORRY ABOUT MISSED APPOINTMENTS?

**Dental neglect and missed appointments are the most common reasons for dentists to make child protection referrals.**

They cause concern because they:

- May be an alerting feature that a child or young person is being neglected
- Are often found when a child has died or been seriously harmed by maltreatment, when a 'serious case review' is conducted

Should be followed up rigorously but that isn't always easy to do.

## Why 'Was Not Brought'? What's wrong with DNA?

Describing children and young people (CYP) as 'was not brought' (WNB) instead of 'did not attend' (DNA) encourages us to:

- Think about the situation from the child's perspective
- Identify any impact on the child's wellbeing
- Plan what support would help the child to receive the dental care they need
- Consider whether we need to share safeguarding information with other health or social care professionals.

## The Sheffield 'WNB-CYP' pathway

In 2015 Sheffield community dental service developed a new WNB-CYP pathway consisting of three component parts:

1. An explanatory flowchart (page 5)
2. Templates for clinical notes with prompts for action (page 6)
3. Editable template letters (see [bda.org/safeguarding](http://bda.org/safeguarding))

## How could following this pathway help you?

- Prompt you to take a consistent approach to missed appointments
- Give you peace of mind that children are less likely to 'slip through the net'
- Help meet the safeguarding children requirements of standards guidance and commissioning guidance.

*"Consider neglect [when] parents/carers who have access to but persistently fail to obtain NHS treatment for their child's tooth decay"*

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)  
CG89, 2009

*"Local systems should be in place to ensure rigorous follow-up of all children who have dental disease but fail to attend their treatment appointments."*

British Society of Paediatric Dentistry policy document on dental neglect in children, 2009

# IMPLEMENTING THE WNB-CYP PATHWAY

So you've decided to implement the WNB-CYP pathway. What next? How do you go about it?

## ON YOUR MARKS

- Choose a team member as 'WNB champion' to lead the project
- Decide how quickly you want to change things. Will one dentist pilot the system first then include others, or will everyone start using it at once?
- Discuss at an upcoming team meeting.



### TOP TIP

Create and communicate a vision for change

## GET SET

- Download the flowchart, template notes and template letters, all at [bda.org/safeguarding](https://bda.org/safeguarding)
- Laminate copies of the flowchart for reference in surgeries and at reception
- Start including an explanation in all appointment letters for children and young people:  
*Health professionals are required to share information about missed appointments and repeated cancellations for the benefit and safeguarding of children. Other people we may inform of any concerns include the child's family doctor (GP), school nurse, health visitor and/or the dentist (or other professional) who referred you to us.*
- Add the template letters and notes to your practice record keeping software
- Reception staff discuss and plan how they will monitor replies, e.g. set up a spreadsheet or log
- Your practice safeguarding lead to update your local contact details for safeguarding advice and referral.



### TOP TIP

Contact local networks to find out if your local safeguarding children professionals know about this; check if you'll have the support of the local Named GP for Safeguarding Children; and what about the local managed clinical network (MCN) for paediatric dentistry?

## GO!

- Set the date to start using the pathway and go for it!
- Your 'WNB champion' should set aside time to encourage and support the team



### TOP TIP

Keep talking to each other, sharing any problems and finding solutions.

# Was Not Brought

Child aged 0-17 years<sup>1</sup>

(where no child protection plan is in place\*)

## Receptionist to:

- Telephone parent within 24 hrs
- Ask if any special reason why was not brought
- Offer new appointment
- Listen and document if any obvious worries about the planned treatment, offer further discussion with dental nurse or dentist if necessary.

### WNB 1

#### Phone contact made and appointment rebooked

Send letter **CYP\_WNB\_letter1\_rebooked** to home address.

Use template note **WNB1** to document actions taken.

### WNB 2

#### No reply to phone call after 2 attempts at different times

Send **CYP\_WNB\_letter2\_to\_parent** to home address.

Use template note **WNB2** to document actions taken.

AWAIT RESPONSE

### WNB 3

#### Parent contacts within 3 weeks:

- Ask if any special reason why not brought
- Offer new appointment
- Listen and document if any obvious worries about the planned treatment, offer further discussion with dental nurse or dentist if necessary.
- Send letter **CYP\_WNB\_letter3\_rebooked** to home address

Use template note **WNB3** to document actions taken.

### WNB 4

#### No response within 3 weeks:

- Inform clinician
- Clinician to review records and assess risk of harm
- Consider sharing information with referring dentist, other health professional<sup>2</sup> or local children services, and GP
- Send letter to GP **CYP\_WNB\_letter4\_to\_GP**, first completing concerns and adding information on any other known vulnerabilities, copying in others as decided
- Archive record OR decide on further action required.

Use template note **WNB4** to document actions taken.

### Multiple cancellations or repeated WNBs with rebooking or no response to recall letter

#### Treat as WNB4

Make a note to discuss with parent at next visit

Use template note **WNB4** to document actions taken.

\* or equivalent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland | <sup>1</sup> Includes all children and young people up to 18th birthday | <sup>2</sup> This may include health visitor, school nurse or paediatrician

# WNB TEMPLATE NOTES

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**WNB1**



Phone call

- Person informed of WNB:
- Any special reason for WNB:
- Further appointment arranged:  
 yes  no  other plan (specify)  
 .....
- CYP\_WNB\_letter1\_rebooked sent

**WNB2**



Phone calls x2  
no response

- CYP\_WNB\_letter2\_to\_parent sent

**WNB3**



Parent responded  
to WNB letter 2

- Any special reason for WNB:
- Further appointment arranged:  
 yes  no  other plan (specify)  
 .....
- CYP\_WNB\_letter3\_rebooked sent

**WNB4**



No response to  
WNB letter 2

(or multiple cancellations/  
WNBs/no response to  
recall letter)

- Clinician reviewed records:  yes  no

**CONSIDER:**

Why was the child attending?  
 Was any treatment required?  
 What is the impact of the child not attending?

- Clinician assessed risk of harm:  
 yes  no  at risk  not at risk
- Need for information sharing considered:  
 yes  no
- Decision to share information with:
- CYP\_WNB\_letter4\_concerns\_to\_GP letter sent:  yes  no  
 Copied to: .....
- Record to be archived OR note here any further action required:  
 .....

# WNB4 LETTER TO THE GP

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## Assessing risk

A key element of the pathway is the WNB4 letter to the child's family doctor. Writing a good WNB4 letter is about assessing risk and communicating that to the doctor in a useful way.

Is the child in pain/not sleeping/missing school? Perhaps they are requiring repeated antibiotics because they attend as an emergency but never follow through on treatment? Maybe you have already made a child protection referral to social services.\*

However if they are simply missing check ups or prevention appointments and it is not serious, then say so to the GP: "I have no serious concerns but she is missing the opportunity for dental care to help prevent dental decay."

\*Note that using the WNB-CYP pathway is an addition to your usual safeguarding measures, not a substitute. If you have concerns about abuse or neglect to a child you still have a responsibility to contact social services to share information or make a referral.

## SPECIAL VERSIONS

Amended versions of the WNB-CYP pathway have been developed for use in the following special circumstances:

### Children who are the subject of a child protection plan (CPP) or who are looked after (LAC)

- The 'pink pathway'
- WNB-CPP/LAC
- Emphasises that you must ALWAYS share information and concerns with the child's social worker
- Includes a prompt to escalate to the local safeguarding named professionals if you do not receive a response



### Children who are receiving orthodontic assessment or treatment

- The 'blue pathway'
- WNB-CYP-O
- Suggests optional paragraphs for explaining the risks of missed appointments in orthodontics
- With extra guidance notes on assessing risk in orthodontics and completing the WNB4 letter



These additional flowcharts, template notes and template letters are also available to download at [bda.org/safeguarding](https://bda.org/safeguarding)



With special thanks to the authors and Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust where the original work took place, and to the British Orthodontic Society for helping develop the blue pathway.

Other resources:

**BDJ**

**Development and evaluation of a ‘Was Not Brought’ pathway: a team approach to managing children’s missed dental appointments**

Kirby J, Harris JC. British Dental Journal volume 227, pages 291–297 (2019)  
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41415-019-0621-z>.



**Rethinking ‘Did Not Attend’**

Nottingham City Council, NHS Nottingham City CCG and the NCSCB created a two minute animation which encourages practitioners to identify children as ‘Was Not Brought’ instead of ‘Did Not Attend’

<https://bit.ly/2osOTUQ>