



The Orchard Partnership Late Arrivals Policy

Introduction

This protocol sets out the procedure to follow where a patient:

- Is late for their appointment, but is less than 5 minutes late
- Is more than 5 minutes late, and less than 10 minutes late
- Is more than 10 minutes late

General Policy

Patients have a duty to attend pre-booked appointments promptly, and to consider logistical difficulties or the time involved in travelling to the surgery. The practice will, as far as practicable, see patients who arrive late, however this may be at the end of surgery and will therefore likely involve a considerable wait for those who do not wish to re-book.

It is generally inappropriate to delay patients who have arrived on time to accommodate earlier patients who have arrived late, however where an opportunity develops (for example where an earlier patient has been seen quickly, and the GP becomes “ahead of time”) it may be possible to see a late arrival in the gap.

The practice will monitor and record the incidence of patients who are late for appointments within the clinical system. Persistent late attendees will be issued with a series of warning letters.

The following general provisions will apply:

- **Less than 5 minutes late:** The patient will be marked as an arrival in their pre-booked “slot”. The doctor or nurse will call them in at the first available opportunity. The patient should be advised of this and that there may be some delay while they are fitted in.
- **More than 5 minutes, less than 10 minutes late:** The patient will be advised that as they are a late arrival the doctor/nurse will have to see punctual patients first, and that they will be added on to the end of the surgery list and will therefore have a considerable delay (depending on the time). They may be seen during the surgery only if the doctor has an unexpected gap, in which case they will be called in. The patient should be encouraged to re-book. In all cases, the doctor will be sent a message advising them that the patient has reported late, and what the outcome regarding future appointments is.
- **More than 10 minutes late:** The patient has clearly missed the appointment and should be encouraged to rebook. Where there is an indication of clinical urgency then they may be added to the end of the surgery list. In all cases, the doctor will be sent a message advising them that the patient has reported late, and what the outcome regarding future appointments is.



The practice will not, at this stage, differentiate between patients who are persistent late attendees and others. This will be dealt with, should the need arise, by individual letter.

Clinical System Coding

Patients who arrive late should be coded in all cases as:

- 9N4P – Late for Appointment

This will enable individual patient review, should this be appropriate.