

## Was Not Brought (WNB) guidance for RACH out-patient areas

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### Background

*CHILDREN DO NOT FAIL TO ATTEND – THEY ARE NOT BROUGHT TO APPOINTMENTS*

Repeated WNBs may be part of a bigger picture of neglect/other forms of abuse. Serious case reviews consistently refer to children not being brought to appointments. The CQC requires trusts to have guidance around paediatric non-attendance.

#### Reasons for WNBs include:

- admin errors/confusion over changed appointment dates
- medical problem has resolved,
- parents forgetting.

UHSussex has a text service to remind parents of their appointments (if contact number held is correct). Parents have option to cancel or reappoint by text. The Hub *aims* to contact all new patient referrals by phone to arrange time.

Ask yourself the questions: Is this child visible? Are their needs being met? Might they be the victim of neglect?

**You must consider the social risk and the medical risk for the child if they are not brought for medical review.**

#### **NICE guidance Child Maltreatment: when to suspect maltreatment in under 18s 2017**

1.3.10 Consider neglect if parents or carers repeatedly fail to bring their child to follow-up appointments that are essential for their child's health and wellbeing.

#### **Your role as a clinician:**

- assessing medical and social risk
- attempting to contact family
- communicating your concerns with GP and family
- referring where appropriate

#### **Assigning social risk**

The clinician must decide whether the child in question is high risk based on their medical history and the social information they have available to them.

- PANDA will have alert with the patients record if the child has safeguarding notifications.
- If a child is not brought check CAREFLOW – When clicking on the patient, if the child is on a CPP plan this will be clear under alerts.
- If a child WNB/cancels you can review the number of missed appointments on the PANDA system under appointments.

## Management

### Whenever a low risk child is not brought to clinic appointment

1. Admin to check contact details. Consultant to review notes and risk assess based on the symptoms/differential diagnosis and other relevant information in the notes/referral. Letter to inform of the WNB and decision to reappoint.
2. If child WNBs a 2<sup>nd</sup> time: Write to GP (copying to parent, HV & social worker if they have one) to inform of WNB and decision to reappoint or not. [See template 1.](#)

### Whenever a high risk child is not brought to clinic appointment

1. Doctor to contact the parents / carers by telephone. If this fails, contact social worker.
2. Failing this, doctor to dictate letter clearly explaining to parent / GP (copy in HV) attempts to telephone and the clinical concern and consequence of non-attendance (e.g. *untreated squint, repeated WNBs and potential for resultant amblyopia*).
3. If child WNBs a 2<sup>nd</sup> time: dictate a letter reiterating above clinical concerns and expectations and outcomes if child not brought for further appointment. [See template 2.](#)

### Children with > 3 consecutive WNBs

Should be referred to social services by the treating clinician. Referral to state clearly any medical consequences for non-attendance

#### ***BOTTOM LINE:***

Repeated WNB is worrying, if you fail to contact family and you are concerned about negative health or social consequences then referral to social services is indicated.

You do not need to wait for 3 WNBs if you have a concern.

### **Cancellations** (Action for Hub / Admin)

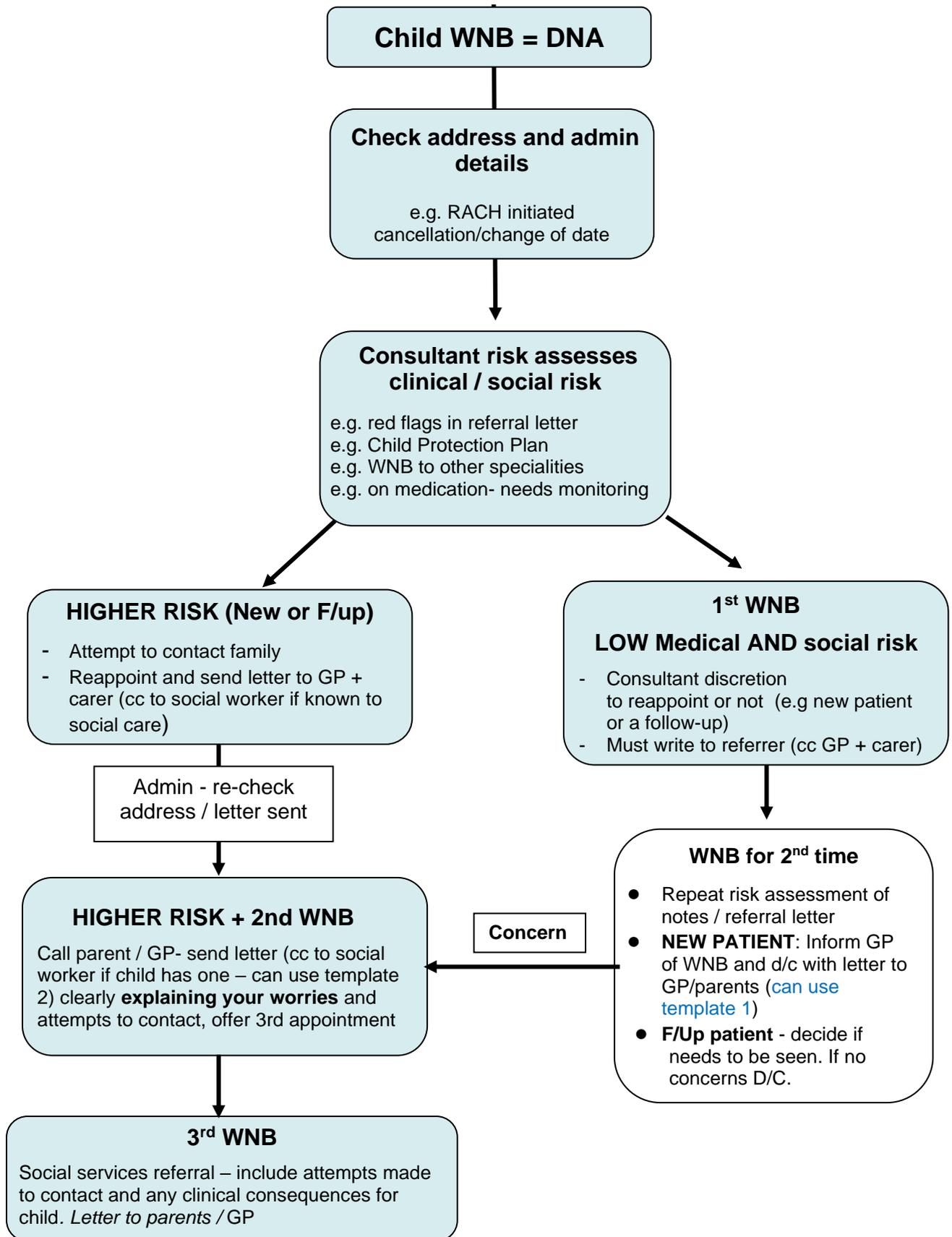
Parents can cancel an appointment by text message (if UHSussex hold a phone number for them) or over the phone.

- **New patient** - if parent phones/texts to cancel, booking hub sends a letter to GP and parent saying that cancellation requested.
- **F/up appointment** - parent wishes to cancel. Admin staff to **contact the consultant** (attaching last clinic letter) - consultant to decide whether to reappoint or not.

*Frequent cancellations can also represent risk if you feel the child needs to be seen – if this is the case follow the flow chart above.*

***When writing clinic letters if you book an appointment with a view to possible cancellation if condition improves - please state this clearly on your letter.***

**Flowchart for WNBs**



## Template Letters

### WNB template letter 1 – LOW RISK

Patient X has not been brought to two outpatient appointments at the Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital. In reference to our local guidelines and current NICE recommendations, we have assessed the medical and social risk of non-attendance for this child to be low. We have therefore discharged the patient into your care, however if you have any concerns regarding this child either medical or social, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Cc – GP/Parents

### WNB Template letter 2 – HIGH RISK

We are writing to you as patient x has not been brought to (number) appointments at the Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital. As health professionals we have a duty to protect children and follow current national guidance and we therefore have a clear pathway to identify children who are not brought to their appointments.

Whilst we appreciate that there may be many different reasons for this, we have clinical concerns and believe that patient x requires further follow-up (*be clear what is risk*).

For this reason we are offering you a further appointment and we expect attendance, this is important to prevent any deterioration.

If patient x is not brought to this appointment it may be considered a safeguarding issue. In some instances referral to our colleagues in social care is necessary. If you feel you have received this letter in error or your child has improved please do not hesitate to contact us.

Cc – GP/Parents/Social care - if known social worker

## References

[Recommendations | Child maltreatment: when to suspect maltreatment in under 18s | Guidance | NICE](#)

Did not attend in Children 0-10 years : Scoping Review Child Care, Health and Development [Arai et al. Full text](#)

Lisa Arai, Terence Stephenson and Helen Roberts. The unseen child and safeguarding: 'Did not attend' guidelines in the NHS, *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, **100**, 6, (517), (2015).