

Reference Number: UHBOS040 Version Number: 3	Date of Next Review: Previous Trust/LHB Reference Number:
Non-attendance for maternity care guideline	
Introduction and Aim <i>It is the responsibility of each pregnant woman to attend for antenatal care, however just over a quarter (26%) of women who received antenatal care, receive the recommended level of care according to NICE antenatal care guidelines (booking at 10 weeks or less and no routine antenatal visits missed) (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence 2017). Inadequate utilisation of antenatal and postnatal care services has been shown to be associated with increased risk of maternal death in the UK (Nair, Kurinczuk et al. 2015, Nair, Knight et al. 2016) and poorer outcomes therefore involved staff must ensure that care is made readily available to all pregnant and postnatal women including hard to reach client groups.</i> <i>In the context of this guideline DNA stands for did not attend.</i>	
Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that all women are offered routine antenatal and postnatal care • Midwives to be aware of the increased risk to women and their babies of frequent non-attendance for midwifery care. • Improve identification of barriers to antenatal and postnatal care and offer alternatives if appropriate • To standardise the management of all missed antenatal and postnatal appointments 	
Scope This policy applies to all healthcare professionals in all locations including those with honorary contracts	
Equality Health Impact Assessment	<i>An Equality Health Impact Assessment (EHIA) has not been completed.</i>
Documents to read alongside this Procedure	<i>All Wales child protection procedures 2008</i> <i>Safeguarding an unborn child: A guideline for practice (maternity guideline)</i> <i>Antenatal care guideline (maternity guideline)</i> <i>Postnatal care guideline (maternity guideline)</i>
Approved by	<i>Maternity Professional Forum and Obstetrics & Gynaecology Quality & Safety</i>
Accountable Executive or Clinical Board Director	<i>Ruth Walker, Executive Nurse Director</i>
Author(s)	<i>Alice Louise Fairman, Safeguarding midwife</i>

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Disclaimer

If the review date of this document has passed please ensure that the version you are using is the most up to date either by contacting the document author or the [Governance Directorate](#).

Summary of reviews/amendments			
Version Number	Date of Review Approved	Date Published	Summary of Amendments
1	<i>Dec 2011</i>	<i>Dec 2011</i>	
2	Oct 2014	Oct 2014	
3	November 2019	December 2019	Reviewed by Alice Fairman

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Non-attendance for antenatal care

The majority of pregnant women attend for antenatal and postnatal visits without any difficulty, following the standard visiting schedule outlined in the NICE Antenatal Care and local guidelines. However a small number of women do not attend (DNA) appointments. Non-attendance for any care is associated with poorer outcomes and whilst it is the woman's responsibility to attend for maternity care, midwives are responsible for ensuring that services are accessible to women in the local community; that women and their families are aware of the services available to them and that women who do not attend for appropriate care are followed up and given every reasonable opportunity to receive midwifery care.

Barriers or reasons for not accessing care

A woman may not attend for antenatal care because;

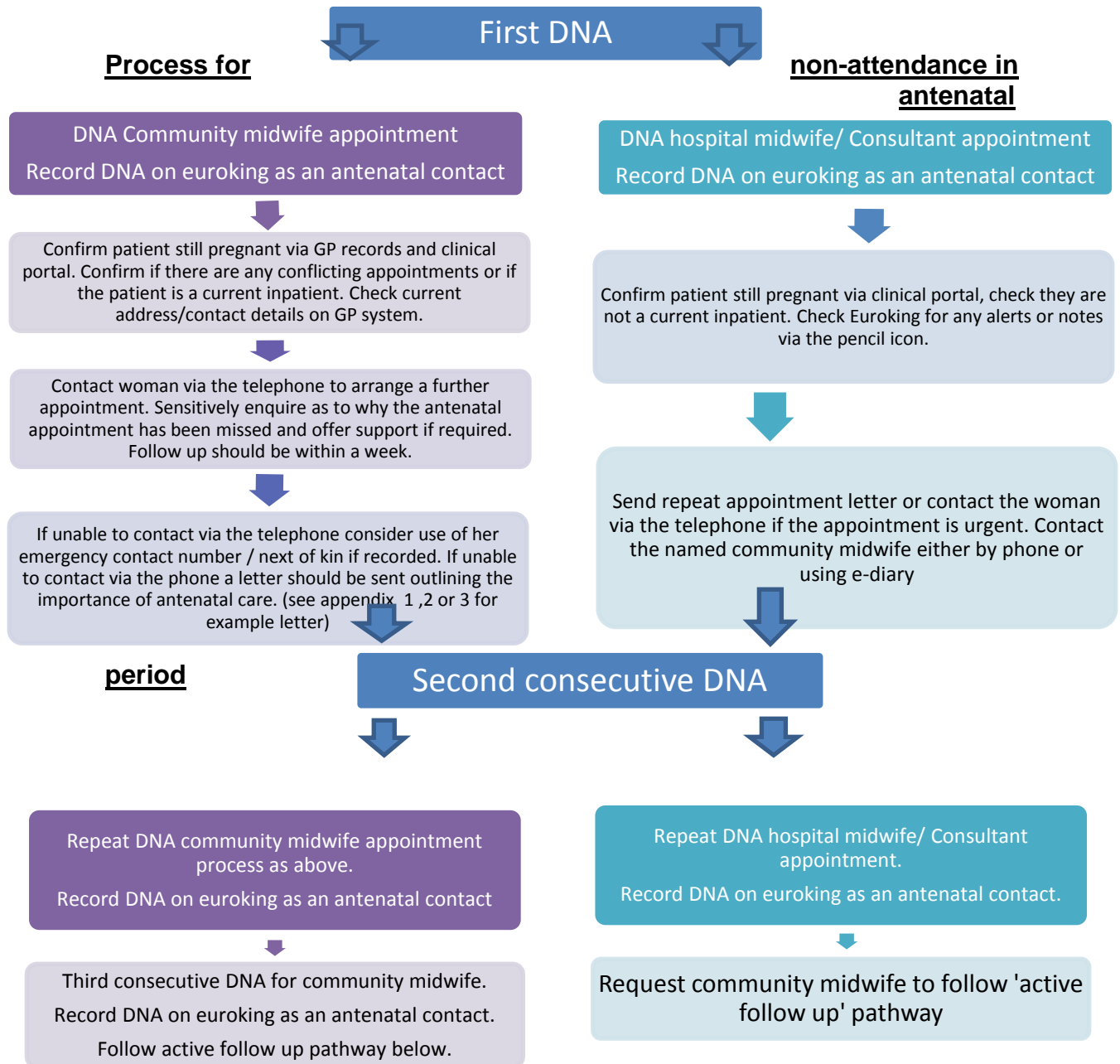
- She is unclear about the value of attending appointments
- She is unable to understand the request (language/capacity to consent)
- She may have suffered a miscarriage or undergone a termination of pregnancy that the named midwife was not updated about.
- Pregnancy complications requiring inpatient stay
- Alternative health beliefs leading to lack of engagement in antenatal care.
- Change in booking hospital or relocation to another area
- She does not want other people to know about the pregnancy
- She is avoiding contact for social reasons, including hiding evidence of domestic abuse or not wanting health to notify social services.
- She is physically unable to attend due to financial constraints, competing demands (i.e. childcare problems) or physical disabilities.

This list is not exhaustive

Process for non-attendance

Please follow the relevant flowchart for antenatal or postnatal care. This is a guideline and if any antenatal or postnatal care is considered urgent or there are known concerns, earlier commencement of the 'active follow up' pathway should be considered.

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Appendix 1



Community Midwives Office UHW 029 20745030
Vale Community Midwives Office 02921 824231

Date

Dear

I am sorry you were unable to attend your scheduled antenatal appointment on <insert date> at <insert time> at <venue>.

Active follow up

- Liase with allocated health visitor to ascertain if the baby has been seen since midwife's last visit.
- If postnatal checks were arranged in community clinic, community midwife to visit the woman at home and carry out postnatal check if present.
- Phone safeguarding team for follow up advice on 02921 832001. Ascertain via safeguarding if a MARF is required. If the missed appointment has an impact upon the baby's health, i.e. missed appointments for re-weigh following weight loss, this could be considered a form of neglect. Please outline clearly the purpose of the visit to the safeguarding advisor, so that accurate advice is given.
- If MARF submitted outcome to be followed up by the midwife completing this by phoning relevant social services department within 10 working days or earlier if health needs are urgent. Update health visitor.
- If no previous safeguarding concerns, no outstanding known health concerns and still unable to locate, update euroking accordingly. No further active follow up required, letter to be sent requesting postnatal pathway to be returned to hospital.

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Looking after yourself during pregnancy is important and your antenatal appointments are the best way we can help you by monitoring your health and that of your developing baby.

Another appointment has been made for you on the <insert date> at <insert time> at <venue>.

If you are unable to attend or are now receiving care elsewhere please let me know on <insert telephone number> so I will not be concerned. Alternatively please contact your GP surgery or the hospital you are due to deliver at.

Yours sincerely

Community Midwife.

Appendix 2



Community Midwives Office UHW 029 20745030
Vale Community Midwives Office 02921 824231

Date

Dear

I am sorry you were unable to attend your scheduled antenatal appointment on <insert date> at <insert time> at <venue>.

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This is now the second appointment that you have not attended. Your antenatal care is important so we can help you monitor your health and that of your developing baby. All research shows that not attending for antenatal care is linked to poor outcomes for Mothers and their babies, so please make every effort to attend.

Another appointment has been made for you on the <insert date> at <insert time> at <venue>.

If you are unable to attend or are now receiving care elsewhere please let me know on <insert telephone number> as soon as possible so I will not be concerned. Alternatively please contact your GP surgery or the hospital you are due to deliver at.

Yours sincerely

Community Midwife.

Appendix 3



Community Midwives Office UHW 029 20745030
Vale Community Midwives Office 02921 824231

Date

Dear

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I am sorry you were again unable to attend your scheduled antenatal appointment on <insert date> at <insert time> at <venue>.

This is now the third appointment that you have not attended. I am now concerned that you are not prioritising your health and that of your unborn baby. Your antenatal care is important so we can help you monitor your health and that of your developing baby. All research shows that not attending for antenatal care is linked to poor outcomes for Mothers and their babies, so please make every effort to attend or contact me for support if needed.

In line with local guidelines I will now offer you a home visit to perform an antenatal check. This will be offered on the <insert date> at approximately <insert time range>. If this is not convenient please contact me on <insert telephone number> or your local hospital.

If you are not present for this home visit I will have to have a discussion with the health boards safeguarding midwifery advisor to determine if I need to refer these concerns on to any other agencies. No routine follow up appointments will be offered if you are not present for this home visit.

Yours sincerely

Community Midwife

Appendix 4



Community Midwives Office UHW 029 20745030
Vale Community Midwives Office 02921 824231

Date

Dear

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I am sorry I missed you for your postnatal appointment on <insert date> at <insert time> at <venue>.

Your postnatal care is important so we can help you monitor your health and your new baby's health and development.

Another appointment has been made for you on the <insert date> at <insert time> at <venue>.

If you are unable to attend or are now receiving care elsewhere please let me know on <insert telephone number> as soon as possible so I will not be concerned. If you do not wish for any further contact from midwifery services and wish to just continue with health visiting and your GP, again please let me know so that I can discharge you from my caseload. Your postnatal pathway (documents given on discharge from hospital) need to be returned to the hospital, in order to be filed with your antenatal record, please could you drop these off in an envelope to your GP surgery for my attention, if you do not wish any further contact.

Yours sincerely

Community Midwife.