



All Wales Health Visiting Service Best Practice Guidance for Management of No Access Visits, Was Not Brought and Families who Decline the Health Visiting Service.

N.B. Staff should be discouraged from printing this document. This is to avoid the risk of out of date printed versions of the document. The Intranet should be referred to for the current version of the document.

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1. Guidance for the Management of No Access Visits, Was Not Brought and Families who Decline the Health Visiting Service.

Guidance Statement

This right to good health care should be balanced with the wishes and feelings of children, young people, parents or carers and their right to take up surveillance and immunisation programmes offered. The significance of missed appointments has been highlighted by Woodman et al. (2011) who analysed serious case reviews in England between 2005 – 2007. This analysis identified that many of the children were in contact with multiple services and most of the children had contact with a Health Visitor. However, missed routine appointments with universal health services were a common feature. Health Visitors should be mindful that failing to attend for health appointments could be seen as failing to address the health needs of a child.

As health professionals provide a universal and specialist health service for children and their families, they have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people (Social Services & Well Being Act (2014)). The outlined guidance provides a framework to assess and identify any concerns, which may feature when health professionals cannot gain access to the child/children.

2. Aim

- 2.1 This guidance aims to ensure that children have every opportunity to meet all their health and developmental needs. It is the role of the Health Visitor to follow up those children whose health and development may be compromised because of their failure to attend all aspects of the Healthy Child Wales Programme (Welsh Government, 2016).

3. Scope

- 3.1 This Guidance applies to all Health Visitors and skill mix teams in Wales.
- 3.2 This guidance will assist the Health Visiting Service in meeting the following Health and Care Standards (Welsh Government, 2015):

Standard 1: Staying Healthy
Standard 2: Safe Care
Standard 3: Effective Care
Standard 5: Timely Care
Standard 6: Individual Care

4. Definition of No Access and Was Not Brought

- 4.1 No access is no reply or access to the home following a planned appointment where no prior notification has been received from the parent or carer to cancel the appointment.
- 4.2 Was not brought is when the parent or carer has not brought the child for a scheduled appointment and no explanation has been given.

5. Professional Responsibility

- 5.1 The Health Visitor will use their assessment and knowledge of the family to determine the action(s) to be taken following two consecutive non-attendances/no access. The Health Visitor's documentation must clearly reflect the decisions made following their assessment.
- 5.2 The follow up of missed appointments can be delegated to others (delegatee) but remains the responsibility of the Health Visitor who should ensure that the delegatee is fully aware of the expectations of their role in this matter. The act of delegation must be in accordance with the All Wales Guideline for Delegation (NLIAH 2010).
- 5.3 If the Health Visitor has any concerns regarding missed appointments, they should consider discussing their concerns with their Specialist Nurse for Safeguarding Children or Line Manager.

6. Failure to attend appointments generated by the Child Health System for immunisations

- 6.1 On receipt of notification indicating two missed appointments, the Health Visitor must:
 - Check that the child's details are correct, i.e. name, address, with GP records as the child may have moved.
 - An attempt should be made to contact the family to discuss the reason for non-attendance. Document in the Child and Family Record any action taken around the missed appointments i.e. home visits or reappointments. Provide parents with the World Health Organisation "Risks and Responsibilities" information leaflet (Appendix 1)
 - Document in the chronology section of the Child and Family Record (refer to the 'Standard for the use of Chronologies' in the All Wales Health Visiting Record Keeping Guidance (2017).
 - Return the missed appointment notification form to the Child Health Department within 14 days (Child Health Immunisation Process Standards (CHIPS) 2014) with instructions to reappoint/do not reappoint.

- For hard to reach families, domiciliary immunisations should be considered by the immunisation provider (See Public Health Wales guidance for Domiciliary Immunisation, 2016).
- If after giving the parents the World Health Organisation “Risks and Responsibilities” information leaflet (Appendix 1) and following discussion, they make it clear that they do not wish their child to receive the immunisations at this time, this must be documented in the Child and Family Record including the Chronology. The Child Health Department and Family GP must be informed
- If scheduled immunisations are still not completed following above actions and where there are no concerns for the safety and welfare of the child, the Health Visitor should send the parent and carer a letter (Appendix 2) detailing that no further immunisation appointments will be offered. The letter will give parents the option of them accessing the service in the future if they wish to do so.

7. Children who are Not Brought / No Access home visits

7.1 Following one missed scheduled appointment, the Health Visitor must:

- Check with the GP practice to ensure that the child’s details are correct, i.e. name, date of birth and address as the child may have moved.
- Document in the chronology section of the Child and Family Record.
- Make contact with the family to discuss the reason for non-attendance. Record in the Child and Family Record any action taken around the missed appointment i.e. home visits or reappointments.
- Following two missed appointments the family should receive a letter from the Health Visitor (Appendix 3) detailing the importance of the appointment.
- If no response is received from the letter, the Health Visitor will continue to appoint for future scheduled contact.

8. Vulnerable Children

8.1 In the case of children on the Child Protection Register, subject to Child in Need of Care and Support or considered vulnerable, a more robust approach must be adopted in situations where families fail to attend appointments, the Health Visitor is unable to gain access or the family decline the Health Visiting Service. The Health Visitor will liaise with all relevant professionals/agencies and document in the Child and Family Record.

8.2 The Health Visitor will continue to try to access the family and will liaise with members of the multi-agency team until contact with the family is re-established.

9. Families who Decline the Health Visiting Service

- 9.1 The Health Visitor or Line Manager will contact the family to discuss which aspects, if any, of the HCWP programme they wish to receive. This will be confirmed in writing (Appendix 4 may be adapted).
- 9.2 Where parents have indicated that they do not wish to receive the Health Visiting service and where there are no concerns for the safety, health or wellbeing of the child, the family should receive a letter from the Health Visitor (Appendix 4) detailing that no further contact will take place, leaving open the option for them to access the service in the future. Child Health Department to be informed that no further developmental appointments should be generated.
- 9.3 Where there are concerns for the child's safety, health or wellbeing, then the Specialist Nurse for Safeguarding Children should be contacted and an action plan agreed, implemented and documented in the Child and Family Records.

10. Implementation and Monitoring

Health Visiting staff will be made aware that this guideline will be available electronically on individual Health Board's Intranet Site.

11. References

National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare. All Wales Guidelines for Delegation. 2010. Available at:

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1096/NLIAH%20All%20Wales%20Guidelines%20for%20Delegation.pdf> Accessed 6th June 2018

Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act,(2014)

Welsh Government (2015) *Health and Care Standards*. Available at:

http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1064/24729_Health%20Standards%20Framework_2015_E1.pdf (Accessed 10 May 2018).

Welsh Government (2016) *The Healthy Child Wales Programme*

<https://gov.wales/topics/health/publications/health/reports/healthy-child/?lang=en>

Welsh Government. Child Health Immunisation Process Standard. 2014. Available at:

[http://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk:8080/vaccinationsimmunisationprogsdocs.nsf/61c1e930f9121fd080256f2a004937ed/aeccb7e88f70bb8680257863002f377e/\\$FILE/CHIP%20v2%20-%205th%20March%202014%20final.pdf](http://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk:8080/vaccinationsimmunisationprogsdocs.nsf/61c1e930f9121fd080256f2a004937ed/aeccb7e88f70bb8680257863002f377e/$FILE/CHIP%20v2%20-%205th%20March%202014%20final.pdf) Accessed 29th June 2018

Woodman, J; Brandon, M; Belderson, P; Sidebotham, P. and Gilbert, R. (2011). Healthcare use by children fatally or seriously harmed by child maltreatment: analysis of a national case series 2005 – 2007. Archives of Disease in Childhood, Vol. 96, pp. 270 – 275.

World Health Organisation (2007) *The Right to Health*

http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs323_en.pdf

World Health Organisation *If you choose not to vaccinate your child, understand the risks and responsibilities*

http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/160753/If-you-choose_EN_WHO_WEB.pdf?ua=1

[Public Health Wales Immunisation Domiciliary Guidelines](#)

Appendix 1

Information for parents



If you choose not to vaccinate your child, understand the risks and responsibilities

If you choose to delay some vaccines or refuse some vaccines entirely, there can be risks.

Please follow these steps to protect your child, your family, and others.

With the decision to delay or refuse vaccines, you are taking on an important responsibility that could put your child's health and even life into risk

Any time that your child is ill and you:

- make an emergency call;
- ride in an ambulance;
- visit a hospital emergency room; or
- visit your child's doctor or any clinic

you must tell the medical staff that your child has not received all the vaccines recommended for his or her age. Keep a vaccination record easily accessible so that you can report exactly which vaccines your child has received, even when you are under stress.



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Telling healthcare professionals your child's vaccination status is essential for two reasons

- When your child is being evaluated, the doctor will need to consider the possibility that your child has a vaccine-preventable disease, such as measles, mumps, pertussis or diphtheria. These diseases still occur, and the doctor will need to consider that your child may have one.
- If your child has a vaccine-preventable disease, the healthcare workers who help your child can take precautions, such as isolating your child, so that the disease does not spread to others.

Some people are at higher risk of infection

One group at high risk for contracting disease is infants who are too young to be vaccinated. For example, the measles vaccine is not usually recommended for babies younger than 9-12 months. Very young babies who get measles are likely to be seriously ill, often requiring hospitalization.

Other people at high risk of contracting disease are those with weaker immune systems, due to other existing diseases or medications they are taking (such as some people with cancer, autoimmune diseases or transplant recipients).



Information for parents



Before an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease occurs in your community

- Ensure that your child is adequately immunized for his or her age according to the routine immunization schedule.
- Talk to your child's doctor or nurse to be sure your child's medical and immunization records are up to date regarding vaccination status. Ask for a copy of the updated record.
- Keep your child's school, childcare facility and other caregivers updated on your child's vaccination status.
- Be aware that unimmunized children can catch diseases from people who don't have any symptoms. You cannot tell who is contagious.

Communities depend on high immunization coverage to keep vaccine-preventable diseases from spreading. The more parents who choose not to vaccinate their children, the greater the risk of spreading diseases.

You put not only your child but also your community at risk when you decide not to vaccinate.

When there is vaccine-preventable disease in your community

- It may not be too late to get protection by getting vaccinated. Ask your child's doctor.
- If there are cases (or, in some circumstances, a single case) of a vaccine-preventable disease in your community, you may be asked to take your child out of school, childcare or organized activities (for example, playgroups or sports).
- Your school, childcare facility or other institution will tell you when it is safe for an unvaccinated child to return. Be prepared to keep your child home for several days or up to several weeks.
- Learn about the disease and how it is spread. It may not be possible to avoid exposure.
- Each disease is different, and the time between when your child might have been exposed to a disease and when he or she may get sick will vary. Talk with your child's doctor to get their guidelines for determining when your child is no longer at risk of coming down with the disease.



BEWARE

- Any vaccine-preventable disease can appear at any time in the European Region because all of these diseases still circulate either here or elsewhere in the world.
- Sometimes vaccine-preventable diseases cause clusters of cases and outbreaks, i.e. an increased number of cases in a given time and area.
- For some diseases, one case is enough to cause concern in a community. An example is measles, which is one of the most contagious diseases known. This disease spreads quickly among people who are not immune.
- In most cases, there is no way to know beforehand how severe diseases will be in your child.

Learn more by asking your health care provider for the sheet titled "Vaccine-preventable diseases: signs, symptoms & complications"





Information for parents



If you know your child is exposed to a vaccine-preventable disease for which he or she has not been vaccinated

- Learn the early signs and symptoms of the disease.
- Seek immediate medical help if your child or any family members develop early signs or symptoms of the disease.



IMPORTANT:

Notify your doctor, local medical facility, ambulance or emergency room personnel that your child has not been fully vaccinated before medical staff have contact with your child or your family members. They need to know that your child may have a vaccine-preventable disease so that they can treat your child correctly as quickly as possible. Medical staff also can take simple precautions to prevent diseases from spreading to others if they know ahead of time that their patient may have a contagious disease.

- Follow recommendations to isolate your child from others, including family members, and especially infants and people with weakened immune systems.
- Be aware that for some vaccine-preventable diseases, there are medicines to treat infected people and medicines to keep people they come in contact with from getting the disease.
- Ask your healthcare provider about other ways to protect your family members and anyone else who may come into contact with your child.
- Your family may be contacted by the state or local health department that tracks infectious disease outbreaks in the community.

If you travel with your child

- Review the WHO travellers' information website (www.who.int/topics/travel) before travelling to learn about possible disease risks and vaccines that will protect your family. Diseases that vaccines prevent remain common throughout the world.
- If you are aware that you or your child have a vaccine-preventable disease, do not spread disease to others. Do not travel in such condition, as you or other family members could still be infectious. If an unimmunized person develops a vaccine-preventable disease while travelling, to prevent transmission to others, he or she should not travel by a plane, train or bus until a doctor determines the person is no longer contagious. In certain instances, public health authorities may prevent you from travelling, due to the risk of disease spreading.

Check your own status

- Make sure to check your own immunization status, as you are putting your child at risk of disease when you are not fully vaccinated.

For more information on vaccines, visit:
www.euro.who.int/vaccine/resourcecentre

Appendix 2



Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian

It appears that your childhas not received the following immunisations:

.....
.....

No further appointments will be sent for these immunisations. However, if you wish your child to receive another appointment, please contact the Health Visitor on the number below. If the child health clinic runs on a day that is not convenient for you please let us know and we would be able to discuss this with the surgery

If you would like to discuss an alternative venue for your child to receive their immunisation we can discuss the option of home immunisations. Please find enclosed a leaflet with further information.

Yours sincerely

Health Visitor

Telephone:

Enc.
cc GP

Appendix 3



Date:

Dear

Your child has been offered two appointments for their but unfortunately you were not available.

The purpose of this appointment is not only to assess your child's health, growth and development but to give you an opportunity to discuss any issues regarding your family's general health and wellbeing.

No further appointments will be sent for this review. However, if you wish your child to receive another appointment, please contact the Health Visitor on the number below.

Yours sincerely

.....
Health Visitor

Appendix 4



Date:

Dear Parent / Carer,

Following our conversation on _____ you advised me that you do not wish to access the Health Visiting Service at this time.

You have informed me that you will access your GP for any health needs your child and family may have.

If you decide you would like to access the Health Visiting Service in the future, please do not hesitate to contact the Health Visiting Service or your GP.

Yours sincerely

.....
Health Visitor



Swansea Bay University Health Board

Authorisation Form for Publication onto COIN

PLEASE ENSURE THAT ALL QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED – IF NOT APPLICABLE PLEASE PUT N/A

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(1) All policies need to comply with the Policy for the production, consultation, approval, publication and dissemination of strategies, policies, protocols, procedures and guidelines

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