

NHSBSA Dental Services

In the spotlight Article 5: Incomplete Treatment October 2019

What is a complete course of NHS dental treatment?

A course of treatment (COT) is considered to be complete when the provision of any planned treatment (including any treatment planned at a time other than the time of the initial examination) for that patient has been carried out. Full details of the NHS Regulations can be found in Article 1 of this series '[A course of treatment and examination](#)'.

When can a claim for a course of NHS dental treatment be submitted as a Failed to Return (FTR) / Incomplete treatment? ⁽¹⁾

Where a patient repeatedly fails to attend for planned care, or cancels at short notice, the following considerations should be applied:

- a) Where a Provider's contract agreement with the local commissioners of NHS Dental treatment (Health Board in Wales) stipulates how many opportunities a patient should be given to fail to attend for treatment before a course of treatment claim is submitted as 'Incomplete Treatment', these contractual obligations should be complied with. For example, the contract might state that a claim cannot be submitted as 'Incomplete Treatment' unless the patient has failed to return for completion of treatment on 2 consecutive occasions. NHS England's guidance is that the provider should have made at least one attempt to contact the patient (letter or phone) and not submit the COT claim for between 6-8 weeks to afford the patient a reasonable opportunity to complete treatment. We would advise noting, in the patient records, such attempts to contact the patient including the date and time. After this period, should the patient have failed to contact the practice an 'Incomplete Treatment' claim could be submitted.
- b) The practice should have an agreed 'Fail to Attend'/'Short Notice Cancellation' Policy in place to ensure a consistent, fair and transparent process is undertaken when a patient fails to attend for an appointment or cancels at short notice. All members of the practice team should be familiar with, and comply with, the practice policy.

If a patient misses an appointment but wishes to rebook, this would not be considered incomplete treatment.

Key point:

1. Clinical notes should record that the practice policy was adhered to where a claim for incomplete treatment has been submitted.

Claiming Incomplete treatment on an FP17 claim⁽¹⁾:

To ensure that incomplete courses of treatment claims are identified clearly, a Contract Performer should, ensure that the following claim entries are made in the Incomplete Treatment and Treatment Dates area of the claim.

- a) The date of the patient's last visit is recorded;
- b) **Incomplete treatment** – For banded courses of treatment commenced but not completed, indicate one of the Bands 1, 2 or 3 to show the work that has been completed. The patient charge will be calculated against whichever of these boxes is crossed.
Date of Acceptance – Enter date of acceptance for the course of treatment. This is required on every claim.
Last Visit – Enter the date of last visit if it was not completed. If a decision is made to mark the claim as incomplete, it should be submitted as quickly as possible.
- c) In the Treatment Category, indicate the Band appropriate to the treatment actually started, but remains incomplete. As an example, mid-denture provision with laboratory construction under way would be appropriate to the Band 3. In this example, if the denture is planned but not started, it would be inappropriate to select Band 3. UDAs are credited to treatment actually started but remains incomplete rather than treatment planned. As with all claims that involve a laboratory prescription, this should be retained as part of the clinical record. A charge band must also be present showing the treatment that has been started, so the band indicated in the Treatment Category must be the same as, or higher than, the band indicated in the Incomplete Treatment field

Key points:

1. If a claim is submitted as incomplete and the patient re-attends shortly afterwards, the original incomplete claim could be amended to re-open the course of treatment.
2. Should the patient return after the submission of an incomplete claim which has satisfied the FTA policy and is recorded, a new course of treatment will have to commence, for which a patient charge will be raised, if applicable.
3. Continuation of Treatment regulations do not apply when the previous claim has been submitted as incomplete.
4. The 'Late submission' rule does not apply to claims submitted as 'Incomplete Treatment'. However, claims are credited to the financial year in which treatment was provided, rather than the year in which the claim is submitted. Therefore, in order for incomplete UDAs to be counted, they must be submitted prior to the year-end process taking effect each year.

References:

1. NHS Dental Services 'Ask Us' Incomplete treatment Claiming:-
https://contactcentreservices.nhs.uk/selfnhsukokb/AskUs_Dental/en-gb/search?query=incomplete+treatment&action=search&