

The 7 tips practices need for effective patient messaging

Short Message Service (SMS) text messaging is a fast, cost-effective and secure way for GP practices to communicate with patients. Follow our top tips to ensure your SMS text messaging **achieves maximal impact** and **follows best practice**.

1. Has your patient **opted in**?

- Patients need to **actively agree** to receive texts
- Patients need to be aware of the types of messages they should expect to receive
- Patient consent to SMS text messaging must be clearly marked on their records
- Providing the practice with a mobile number is **not deemed consent** for this purpose

2. Can your patient **opt out**?

- Patients should be able to 'opt out' of receiving text messages in a timely fashion if and when they ask to

3. Are their contact details **up to date**?

- Ensure your patient is aware of the importance of keeping the practice up to date with changing contact details

4. Who '**owns**' SMS text messaging at your practice?

- Nominate a staff member within the practice responsible for sending and co-ordinating text messages to eliminate the risk of a data breach and provide structure within your team.

5. Are your SMS text messages **short & concise**?

- To maximise impact, keep text messages concise, preferably within 160 characters.

6. Do you constantly **review your SMS strategy**?

- Review your SMS message templates and distribution frequency every **three** months.
- Get feedback on your SMS programme from your Patient Participation Group
- Review the frequency of sending duplicate messages

7. Have you kept **potential pitfalls in mind**?

- Patients may share a mobile phone and view sensitive information meant for another
- Messages must always reach the intended recipient

Follow our top tips for effective patient messaging and best practice!

