



## SMARTMED™ MESSAGING



With ever increasing costs and more demanding patient satisfaction measures, the NHS in the UK is under significant pressure to continue delivering high quality, value for money health services. For over 9 years SmartMed™ has been helping the NHS meet this challenge head on.

# A CASE STUDY: NHS APPOINTMENT REMINDERS

Research by Imperial College estimates that SMS based appointment reminders could save the NHS in England between £240 - 380 million.

In 2013, incidents of "did not attend" (DNA), where patients do not show for booked appointments with hospitals, GPs, dentists, clinics etc, averaged 40% across industry today - resulting in a considerable cost the NHS, the UK tax payers and the economy.

At the same time the UK Government demanded closer engagement with patients, shorter treatment waiting times and an overall enhanced service level. A daunting mission for any business. **Here's how SmartMed is helping the NHS face this challenge.**

In partnership with

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## How it works...

SMS and Email based bulk messaging.  
One to one or one to one appointment reminders.

Integrated with back end appointment management systems using developer API.

Messages can be personalised with patient name, appointment date, clinic contact details etc.

Simple to use web based portal for sending messages and viewing reports etc.

Patient receives scheduled or one off reminder.

Patient replies to SMS or email or calls the number provided to cancel, re-arrange or confirm attendance.

Better healthcare for everyone requires an effective and cost efficient deployment of the latest technologies, in a way that makes it easy to use & exploit.

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## THE REAL COST OF MISSED APPOINTMENTS

So how did Imperial College estimate the cost of missed appointments to be up to £380 million per annum?

The Royal Medical Association and Royal College of Nursing ratify this estimate, stating that the cost of missed appointments in GP surgeries alone, so ignoring Hospital Outpatients and other NHS services, was £160m in 2004.

A staggering 6 million NHS hospital appointments, 13.5 million GP appointments and 6.5m practice nurse appointments are missed every year.

The NHS itself estimates the average cost of each missed appointment, each Did Not Attend or DNA, to be around £108. This obviously varies depending on the nature of the appointment

When you consider the implications of a patient not turning up for a prearranged appointment, it becomes clearer. Whether the patient turns up or not, the hospital trust still has to pay for the consultant's or specialist's time, which can be charged out at anything up to several thousand pounds per day. However, it's the indirect, knock-on costs that are more difficult to estimate. For example, for every DNA, there is a new appointment to be

## REDUCING DNAs USING SMS

According to NHS England, the use of SMS (or email) for reminding patients of imminent appointments reduces outpatient DNAs significantly.

Across England, where SMS is used as an appointment reminder, DNAs in outpatient clinics has reduced from 10.5% in 2009 to 9.1% in 2013.

Our own experience shows that where SmartMed Appointment Reminders are used, reductions in DNAs can be significantly higher. Since 2007 NHS University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire (UHCW) has used SmartMed Appointment Reminders to remind those with outpatient appointments to attend and minimise the number of DNAs. The trust was reminding about 35% of it's patients using this service and by doing so the proportion of patients who did not attend fell from 7.7% to 9.9% representing a saving of around £2m per year, whilst costing less than a few thousand pounds to setup and run.

Lynn Neat, General Manager for Patient Access at UHCW said "Our text reminding service is an exciting development which has been beneficial to both patients and the organisation". She went on to say that "...patients experience a more responsive and enhanced overall quality of service, whilst allowing the trust to maximise its use of resources and generate potential income".

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## OUR NHS CLIENTS

Other NHS hospital Trusts have also realised the benefits of SmartMed Appointment Reminders, including:

- Barking, Havering & Redbridge PCT
- Luton & Dunstable PCT
- George Elliot Hospital
- Moorfields Eye Hospital
- Nottinghamshire Healthcare
- South Staffordshire Trust
- Wathwood Hospital
- Worcester PCT
- NHS 24 Smoke Line
- Arnold Lodge Hospital

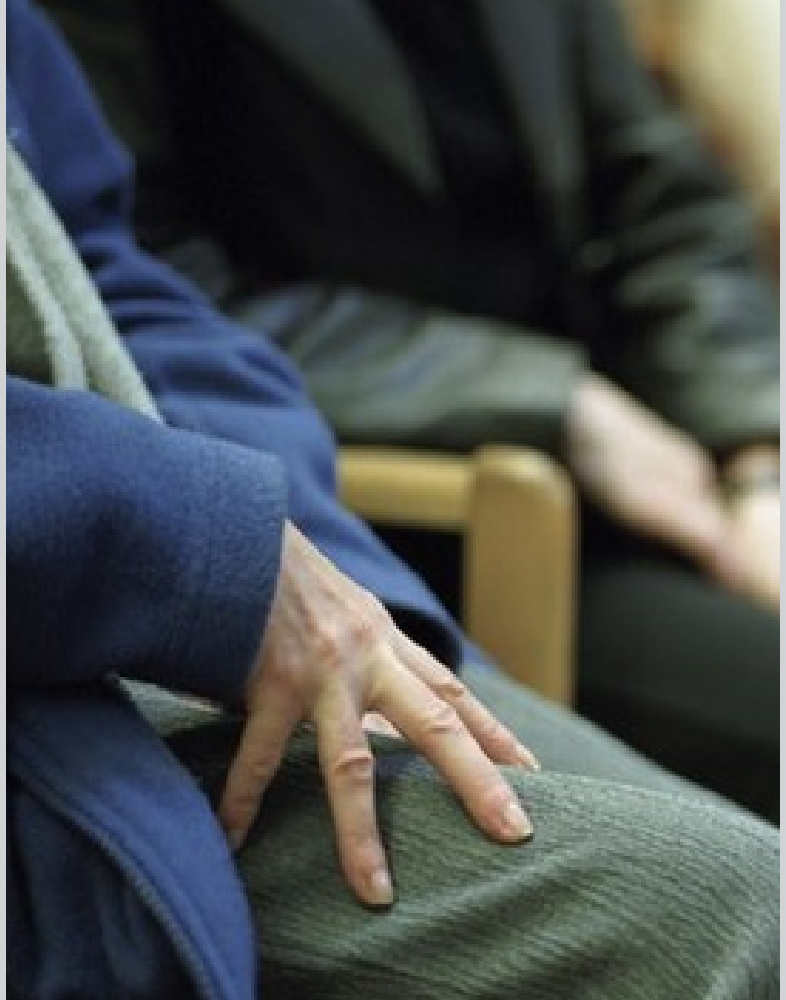
## ADDITIONAL SERVICES

NHS UCHW were so pleased with the results they received from the SmartMed Appointment Reminders service that they also deployed SmartMed Messaging (SMS) to survey patient satisfaction in both their Accident & Emergency and In Patient departments.

We are now working closely with NHS UHCW to extend the appointment reminders and surveys service to other departments and other hospital trusts across the UK.

We also offer a range of smartphone based mHealth services including HomeCare (for patient self-managed monitoring of chronic illness and post-operative recovery) and HealthWorker, enabling quality health checks to be provided in the community.

For more information speak to your Harrington Consultants representative.



Missed  
Appointments  
Down by 2/3<sup>rds</sup>



Smart Apps for Smarter Health

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