

Outpatient appointment reminder service

Every year, thousands of patients miss their appointments because they forget when they are. Each missed appointment costs NHS Grampian money, delays treatment and increases waiting times for all patients.

It has been shown that text message and automated call message reminders significantly help patients to remember their appointments, and reduces the number of missed appointments.

Our new service

NHS Grampian are implementing a new free text (SMS) reminder service to remind you in advance of your appointments.

You will still be sent a letter when you make your appointment with all of the details on it. You should keep this letter for your reference.

Your first text reminder will arrive seven days before your appointment and the second will arrive two days before your appointment. You will be given a telephone number to call if you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment.

What do I need to do?

When arranging your outpatient appointment you will be asked whether you wish to receive this service. If you decide to opt in to the text reminder service, patients with a mobile telephone number registered with the hospital will receive two text messages to remind you of your appointment. Staff will ask you to confirm your mobile number.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you keep us updated if your mobile number changes.

If you change your mind, you can opt out of the text messaging service at any time. Just inform the receptionist or health professional that you wish to withdraw your consent.

Frequently asked questions

What will the text or automated call reminder message contain?

The message will inform you of the date and time of your appointment and hospital site you are visiting as well as a telephone number to call if you need to speak to someone.

You will need to refer to your appointment letter for the specialty of the appointment and the exact clinic location.

Will all outpatient appointments be covered by this new service?

The majority of departments will be included; however some have decided to opt out of the service because of the nature of their service.

I don't have a mobile phone. Will I still get a reminder message?

No, you will not receive a reminder message, so please keep your appointment letter which will have all the details of your appointment, and how to cancel or reschedule.

Does NHS Grampian send the reminder to me or is from another company on your behalf?

We are working with a third party company to provide the service.

How can I be sure that it is a confidential and secure service?

The service operates via a secure NHS approved connection between us and the third party company. No personal information is processed by the third party and they do not have access to view your information as it is stored on a secure NHS Grampian server. We will not send any sensitive or identifying information by text.

I am the parent/carer of a vulnerable child/adult - will I get a message? Can someone else receive my reminders for me?

If you are a parent, guardian or carer and we have your contact details on the patient's electronic file, we will send the message to you. If the child/adult has their own contact details, we will send the message directly to them.

If you would like to update the contact information for the person you care for, you can either contact the department (details can be found on your appointment letter) or alternatively inform the receptionist at your next appointment.

I need to update my contact details with you. How do I do that?

Please contact the appropriate department via the telephone number on your appointment letter. Alternatively, let us know the next time you visit the hospital.

I don't want to receive a reminder message. What do I do?

You can opt out of the service at any time.

If you do not wish to receive a reminder message about your appointment, you can either contact the department (details can be found on your appointment letter) or alternatively inform the receptionist at your next appointment who will make the necessary changes on our patient administration system.

Please note that opting out of the Text Reminder Service will mean you will not receive reminder messages from any outpatient clinics you may be attending.

I have received a reminder message and want to change my appointment to another date. Do I need to do anything?

Yes. The text message will give you a telephone number to ring to change your appointment.

Does it matter if I cancel or change my appointment?

We would ask you to try to attend your allocated appointment, but we do realise that this is not always possible. If you cannot avoid changing or cancelling your appointment, please give us as much notice as possible so that we can offer the appointment to another patient. You do not have to wait until you receive a reminder to change or cancel your appointment.

Can I reply by text if I need to cancel or change my appointment?

No we do not offer this service. Please call the number on the text message or your appointment letter if you need to change or cancel your appointment.

I have more than one appointment over the next few days/weeks. Will I receive more than one reminder message?

Yes. You will receive a reminder message(s) for each appointment (so long as the department is participating in the service).

Will I have to pay for the messages?

No, unless you are outside the UK in which case your mobile phone provider may charge you to receive the text.

Where can I find out more information about this service?

To find out more about this service please contact the number on your appointment letter, or email our outpatient administration team nhsg.outpatientsmanagementteam@nhs.net

How will we use your information?

Your contact details are used to contact you regarding appointment bookings, cancellations and to remind you of forthcoming appointments.

To find out more about how NHS Grampian gathers and uses your information please see the Data Protection Notice on NHS Grampian website at the following link:

http://www.nhsgrampian.org/nhsgrampian/gra_display_hospital.jsp?pContentID=10088&p_applic=CC&p_service=Content.show&