**NWL ICB SMS ‘Tips and Trick’s**

**Tips:** We'd like to offer some practical tips to help practices minimise the risk of overspending while maintaining high standards of patient care:

**Prioritise Email Communication:** Emailing patients is not only a safer method compared to SMS but also comes at no additional cost. Take advantage of [Accurx](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fsupport.accurx.com%2Fen%2Farticles%2F6867494-batch-messaging-how-to-use-guide%23h_8890c8373c&data=05%7C02%7Cb.liddell%40nhs.net%7C898e9593cb1447795f4d08dc89400843%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638536155277711778%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=kTk862Em6WsERxQ%2F44q6xGpMH7S1LJV1e7Rs4upvq%2Fo%3D&reserved=0) and [PATCH](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fhelp.patchs.ai%2Fhc%2Fen-gb%2Farticles%2F4413205621143-Sending-bulk-messages%2301HSWXRAS5RTPT5W0WMQESQB68&data=05%7C02%7Cb.liddell%40nhs.net%7C898e9593cb1447795f4d08dc89400843%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638536155277717544%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=fiS8FjCMvh7z2pZFcAhGMF4ckdQaSaG6w9m%2F0X2yIaA%3D&reserved=0)’s new "batch email" feature for efficient communication.

**Utilise** [**NHS App**](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.england.nhs.uk%2Flong-read%2Fnhs-app%2F&data=05%7C02%7Cb.liddell%40nhs.net%7C898e9593cb1447795f4d08dc89400843%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638536155277723222%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=wNfGO8bIElAFohbE0DcAOQWEl7vsvCv1kb63nn4R8dM%3D&reserved=0) **Notifications:** Encourage patients to enable notifications and [“Tap the App”](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdigital.nhs.uk%2Fservices%2Fnhs-app%2Ftoolkit&data=05%7C02%7Cb.liddell%40nhs.net%7C898e9593cb1447795f4d08dc89400843%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638536155277728598%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=D9KLF5zzD3hyw%2FhVBEyJttpjTuhgHRNCP9FHpDcpP6A%3D&reserved=0), which integrates with PATCHs, eConsult and Accurx. Regarding Accurx where a patient does not open a notification within 3 hours an SMS is generated. You can monitor your practice's [NHS App data](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdigital.nhs.uk%2Fservices%2Fnhs-app%2Fnhs-app-dashboard%23how-to-access-the-dashboard&data=05%7C02%7Cb.liddell%40nhs.net%7C898e9593cb1447795f4d08dc89400843%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638536155277733920%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=IOS644qWqeMcOR8Qk66bEKfyvBY0AUWbqWHVcsw8Oe8%3D&reserved=0) to track engagement.

**Optimise SMS Templates:** Take a fresh look at your SMS templates and find opportunities to reduce message fragments, possibly by utilising URL shorteners for longer content.

For SystmOne practices, NWL ICB helps you by already publishing many message templates in ‘Communications Annexe’ for you to use, which are also increasingly being integrated into your SystmOne data entry/condition templates. We are aware that more template messages could be added and current ones optimised. Please do provide suggestions and feedback via the ICB Servicedesk so we can collaboratively work together to save time to optimize messages at scale, rather than by each practice.

**Leverage PATCHs Features:** PATCHs can send large content messages into its patient account with just a short SMS message to link to the message, saving valuable message fragments used.

**Refer to SMS Efficiency Resources:** Review our "Tips for Being SMS Efficient" information document and ensure all staff members, including ARRS, are familiar with it.

**Stay Updated:** NWL Primary Care Bulletin which contains updates specifically addressing SMS improvements for TPP SystmOne practices.

**Here is advice from a GP IT Borough Lead:**

SMS is suitable for brief messages containing no sensitive personal information.

Phones are often shared or left visible on a table for anyone to see a pop-up message. Ideally, only generic SMS messages should be sent, as any personal information can be judged by some as sensitive and important and seen as a breach of confidentiality. Sending SMS with an attached document with such as a Fit Note mans this is easily opened and might contain unsafe information, so best choose to send via email if using Accurx.

The NHS App is a secure password controlled messaging system, though you may not know which patients have it and which have notifications activated. Until we have a notification in the patient record this may currently be an uncertain method.

If you use the NWL Online consultation system, Patchs, there is a secure password controlled patient portal to which you can send any information in whatever quantity, safe in the knowledge that the patient controls access. The only SMS the patient receives is a notification to open Patchs (unless Patchs is set to send by email and SMS – best not to select this setting). This also means saving those valuable SMS fragments. The other advantage is the patient has a complete record of all their interactions with the practice in the one portal.

If using eConsult, best to send any personal information by email rather than SMS.

**Support and Resources:** We offer tips to minimise overspending, including maximising email communication, encouraging NHS App usage, optimising SMS templates, and utilising PATCHs capabilities for longer message content. Implementing these strategies can help practices manage their SMS usage effectively while delivering optimal patient care.

We'll be providing support through SMS webinars, drop-in sessions, and targeted assistance for practices forecasted to exceed their allocation for additional change management support.

* Please find enclosed a recording of a previous presentation on SMS tips for SystmOne users: [https://youtu.be/yOkZwnbYmJ4](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2FyOkZwnbYmJ4&data=05%7C02%7Cb.liddell%40nhs.net%7C898e9593cb1447795f4d08dc89400843%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638536155277739312%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=q8kZpVClx2fh6CPQdpwww4dLyOUeY%2FEjrSWsJyr3tBQ%3D&reserved=0)
* Please find enclosed a recording Tips for EMIS practices on being SMS Efficient: [https://youtu.be/VY-MIewVl6k](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2FVY-MIewVl6k&data=05%7C02%7Cb.liddell%40nhs.net%7C898e9593cb1447795f4d08dc89400843%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638536155277744679%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=dP1kMaN8lLIZ9OJAa2VhiD7Za2l2wuRPt3XrNNqU63k%3D&reserved=0)