

What does the ICB fund for GP Practices?

North West London ICB has committed to fund SMS costs in Primary Care, for 3 years (from April 2023-March 2026). This funding covers:

- License costs for Accurx for 3 years for all GP practices in NWL.
- 67.5 million SMS fragment costs over the 3 years. The number of fragments that are funded reduces each year.

The total ICB budget for text messaging covers various components, including:

- AccurX SMS Fragments
- Clinical system messages (TPP and EMIS)
- PATCHs generated SMS
- eConsult generated SMS (in Ealing only)
- Accurx Plus licenses, AccuBook functionality

National change in pricing per fragment:

As mentioned last month, from April 2024 all messages sent via the clinical system and online consultation providers have been billed at £0.022 per fragment (160 characters), this is a slight increase from £0.0185. This increase will also be applied to Accurx messages from the 31st August 2024. Messages sent from Accurx will be £0.0225. This increase in price is taking place nationally and is not within the control of the ICB to change. This will not change your GP practice allocation but it may mean that the practices reach their allocation at a slightly quicker rate. We have shown a prediction of GP practice usage on the data dashboard provided.

NHS App SMS messaging to patient:

The NHS App allows patients to submit Online Consultations, book appointments, order repeat prescriptions and get advice; without contacting their GP practice. It also allows GP practice the functionality of sending messages directly to patients without having to pay for the SMS cost, once their NHS App notifications are switched on.

We are asking all NWL GP practices to send the following email out to all patients over 13 years old, via the patients email address:

“Our gift to you is the NHS App! You can book appointments, submit online consultations, access your record, view results and request medications including regular prescriptions. Don’t forget to keep notifications switched on! This helps us to message you in a more secure way: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/>”

For any queries, please contact us at nhsnwl.digitalfirst@nhs.net.

Thank you for your continued dedication to safe, efficient, and effective patient messaging.