

# SMS in Healthcare

Reduce cost, improve communication and stay in touch with patients and staff using handy SMS text messages.



## SMS IN HEALTHCARE

Everything you need to know to get started with SMS marketing.



Many modern-day hospitals are using SMS as a communications tool, and it's easy to understand why.

SMS is a fast, effective means of reaching hospital employees and patients. Open rates for messages are high and the majority of texts are read within a few short moments of receipt.

If your healthcare business uses the NHS SMS messaging system frequently to reach patients and employees, you may be currently searching for an alternative mobile solution. Integrating a new mobile tool for your hospital can help you reduce the total amount of missed patient appointments and stay on budget.

This guide will give you some reasons to consider using another mobile platform when the NHS messaging system is no longer available.

**6.9 million** (NHS England)  
out-patient hospital appointments are missed each year in the UK costing on average £108 per appointment

**Motivational text messages double the chances of quitting smoking**

(The Guardian)

**Over 50%**  
of 'no-shows' are due to simple forgetfulness

(British Journal of Healthcare Computing)

**12 million**  
GP appointments are missed each year in the UK costing over £162 million. (NHS England)



## How can SMS improve your service

The global healthcare industry has gone mobile. As technology has advanced over the past decade, doctors and hospitals have begun using mobile in a variety of ways to reach patients.

Some physicians are using mobile apps to help simplify the lives of individuals suffering from chronic health conditions, while others have adopted the National Health Service's SMS messaging system to send appointment reminders out to patients. Unfortunately, the NHS SMS platform is no longer available for some healthcare businesses. If you are a hospital administrator searching for a new text messaging solution, here are a few reasons to consider FireText as an alternative.

### Significant Cost Savings

According to recent data from the Health & Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC), over 200 million SMS messages are sent by NHS hospitals each year. The service has become popular because sending patients an SMS reminder can help cut down on missed appointments. Hospitals and general practitioners that are no longer able to use the NHS SMS system may be losing money due to patient no-shows.

On average, missed appointments cost healthcare businesses in the UK nearly £162 million each year. A survey from The British Journal of Healthcare Computing estimated that 50 percent of missed appointments are due to patient forgetfulness. If you are searching for effective ways to cut costs and reduce the amount of missed appointments, FireText can help you get started with an SMS reminder system for your patients. Not only will

your patients benefit from a mobile solution, your business will see a reduction in costs.

### Ease of Use

One of the most common concerns among businesspeople getting started with mobile is that the platform they choose will be complicated. While this may be true with some companies, it isn't the case with FireText. Businesses that choose FireText can easily create, schedule, and distribute messages to customers in a variety of different ways. Whether you are hoping to send your SMS messages online or via email, FireText offers an intuitive platform and a helpful, knowledgeable support team. Team members are available to provide guidance over the phone and over email. Once you've distributed your messages, you can also use the platform to track deliveries and receive replies from patients.

### Proven Effective Service

If you are searching for a reliable, established mobile company to help you get started with an SMS program for your hospital, FireText may be the exact solution your hospital needs. FireText has received multiple awards in the past for excellent service. FireText provides a reliable mobile solution for healthcare companies seeking an alternative to the NHS SMS service.



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# Why send a text message?

Patients Can Forget. According to data obtained from NHS England, in the UK approximately 12 million general practitioner appointments are missed every year, and 6.9 million hospital appointments are missed.

Nearly half of these no-shows are due to patients forgetting appointment times, says the British Journal of Healthcare Computing. If you've used the NHS SMS system in the past as a reminder tool for patients, it may be worth exploring an alternative solution to help reduce the instance of missed appointments. Your patients will appreciate the ongoing reminders because it's easy to forget a scheduled appointment.

### Missed Appointments Are Expensive

General practitioners in the UK that aren't using an SMS solution lose nearly £162 million each year due to missed appointments. It isn't just general practices that are affected either. Hospitals lose an average of £108 per missed outpatient appointment. The NHS SMS system has helped healthcare providers reduce their costs, and if your business has relied on it frequently you've probably seen a positive change in your budget over time. FireText's SMS system can help you avoid the potential costs of an increase in missed appointments with their easy to use mobile solution.

### Organising Staff

Managing shift work can often be a nightmare, if a shift needs covering, having to call around can be really time-consuming. Sending a group SMS message can dramatically decrease time spent organising rotas and increase valuable time with patients.

With staff members coming and going and working opposite shifts, getting people together for meetings or training can be difficult. With an open rate of 98%, SMS is an effective solution to reach all of those people at once, guaranteeing the message has been seen.

**200 million**  
SMS messages are sent by  
NHS trusts every year.

(HSCIC)

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# Why FireText?

Aside from our amazing support and customer service, we have a few more reasons why FireText are the best choice for sending your SMS messages.

### G Cloud Registered

FireText are a registered G Cloud supplier of NHS SMS services and use only the highest quality UK Tier-1 connections to deliver your message.

### Direct Placement

The FireText platform is a direct replacement for the existing NHS SMS service and so there is no new software to learn, you simply need a FireText account and we'll give you the new email address to send to. Easy!

### Buying Credits

FireText has a simple pay-as-you-go pricing structure. Message credits can be purchased in quantities that suit you making it really flexible to manage. Credits you purchase don't expire and there is no contract or commitment with FireText, simply top up when required.

### Free Trial

You can sign-up and try the NHS SMS service for free, we'll give you some text message credits so you can try it out for yourself. Don't worry, we'll be on the end of the phone to answer any questions you might have to get you up and running.



Over 50% of 'no-shows' are due to simple forgetfulness

(The Guardian)

98% of SMS messages are opened. Ensure your message will be seen!

(Frost & Sullivan, 2011)



## Let's chat

Don't worry if you still have some questions; at FireText we're always talking SMS.

We'd love to talk to you. You can get in touch on:

Text us  
**GCLOUD to 82228**

Talk to us  
**0800 038 55 22**

Visit us  
**[firetext.co.uk](http://firetext.co.uk)**

Write to us  
**[hello@firetext.co.uk](mailto:hello@firetext.co.uk)**

Join the conversation

