

Sending out PREM surveys by SMS – What do I need to know?

1. An overview of the service

- SMS provides an additional means of reaching service users alongside existing methods, service users who use a mobile phone can receive a text message following contact with an ELFT service, offering an opportunity to take the Friends and Family test and complete the local patient experience survey (PREM)
- The service is entirely automated, and is driven by data extracted from the relevant patient record system (RIO or EMIS)
- Under the NHS England Supplementary Guidance for GDPR and the FFT, NHS services are not required to gain consent before asking for feedback: “..processing personal data for this purpose is part of exercising the organisation’s official authority, and using a person’s health data as part of this exercise is part of managing a healthcare system”.
- Aspects of the service can be bespoke to individual services and the QA team can support services to design their specification

2. Which services is this for?

- At the moment the service can only be provided to services whose primary patient record is EMIS or RIO. We hope to be able to include services using System One in the future.
- All such services are invited to try the system out to see how it works for them, but it is worth considering your service user group and how this fits with their preferred means of communication and their expectations of the service

3. How it works

- In summary, an extract of data from the patient records system, including key details, is securely provided to the supplier of our PREM system (Healthcare Communications).
- They will configure the report according to the specification of the team to generate automated text messages that will include a link to your PREM survey
- Texts will go out to service user at a ‘touch point’ you determine (identified in the patient record), and a frequency decided by you.
- There is the option to simply send a text that includes the link to your PREM survey, or to text the FFT question, and follow this up with the link to the PREM survey and an invitation to click through to complete it. Services may choose which option they prefer.
- **Texts are free to the service user.**

4. What do we need to do to prepare

- There are a number of things for a service to consider ahead of trying out PREM via SMS

- This system is not a 'silver bullet'. We expect reasonable response rate where there is a good match of the method with the service user group, but it is only effective as part of a wider effort to collect feedback
- Make sure your service users are expecting it, unexpectedly receiving text messages reduces the likelihood of receiving a response, and may upset some service users. The system operates on an 'opt out' basis, so all service users who have a mobile number in their patient records will be included unless they choose to opt out (they can do this simply by replying STOP to the text they receive, and will always be invited to do so).
- The effectiveness of the system relies on the accuracy of the patient record, so, if possible, some housekeeping of patient demographics will be helpful
- You will likely want to try this for a period before committing longer term, have a think about what period would work for you

5. Costs

- There is a cost associated with the service, and teams will be charged for each text sent and received.
- Costs are fairly modest (around 3p per text), and any team will be provided with a quote to illustrate likely cost before proceeding to using the system.
- Costs will be linked to caseload, the event(s) you choose to trigger texts, and how frequently you wish people to undertake the survey. The QA team are happy to advise you on these choices and help you obtain your quote.
- If you choose to go ahead we would advise a review of your feedback and costs within a few months to consider the value of the service to you in light of cost v quantity and quality of feedback received.

6. Getting started

- Getting started is pretty simple. Contact your Quality Assurance Manager to find out more, and work through your specification, or submit it now using the link below.

[Register your interest in using SMS for PREM collection](#)