



## Electronic Communication –Texting

East Quay Medical Centre has a comprehensive Information governance and security policy and processes to ensure the protection of patient information.

### Texting

East Quay Medical Centre has had two trials of text messaging since this became a popular method of communication. The advent of the NHSMail service which enables free text messaging brings an opportunity to communicate with patients in a new way which many welcome. It is often a low cost communication tool and thus may be useful for health promotion to a wide audience.

Our current software enables large batches of texts to be sent to patients. It holds no patient information but groups of patients can be gathered in our clinical computer system (for example all people eligible for the flu vaccine) and then mobile numbers of these exported to the text software so we can send general information relevant to these patients.

### Opting out

Before commencing the software use, all patients with a recorded mobile number were sent a text to explain the service and to give them the option to opt out by replying or phoning the surgery. On receipt of these the patients who opted out were manually opted out of the service.

Patients can opt out at any time by letting the Practice Manager or Deputy Practice Manager know. New patients are informed we use the service on the new patient form and can opt out as they complete the form.

### Use of the Text Service

We do not use the text service for patient specific messages or appointment reminders. We only use the text service to inform patients about services or for health promotion campaigns. For example:

- Telling carers about carers support.
- Trying to recruit a target population to the patient group.
- Informing patients who are eligible for a flu vaccination
- Advising patients of local services they may find useful.

All texts sent are recorded in the patients' record.  
We only send a maximum of one text a week to patients



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