



Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Reduces Missed Appointments and Waiting Lists using the Telephonetics VIP Remind+™ solution.

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust manages five NHS adult hospitals, offering almost every kind of treatment available through the NHS and providing around one million appointments and operations each year. The Trust has two major sites and a number of minor sites or clinics sharing locations. The Trust was experiencing problems with patients who 'Did Not Attend' appointments (DNAs).

The Issues

DNAs are a well publicised problem within the NHS; they waste scarce resources, cost money and lengthen patient waiting lists. The NHS anticipates an annual loss of over £600 million from DNAs.

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals were experiencing similar problems to varying degrees in a number of departments and had calculated an average DNA cost of £101 per missed appointment, based upon potential tariff income if the appointment had been filled. The average Trust-wide DNA rate was 7.6% for new patients and 8.9% for follow ups. Some Directorates had experimented with SMS reminders, but achieved varied success.

The Trust came to the decision that an appointment reminder solution would have considerable benefits if it was used Trust-wide and if it was given sufficient internal support. They considered a number of solutions during a tender process in 2008.

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals objectives were to ensure patients received their required care in a timely manner and reutilise 'wasted' appointment slots. The Trust wanted to implement a solution to manage reminders for 850,000 appointments per year across 54 site specific specialities, as well as provide the potential for using automated technology for other forms of patient and non-patient contact.

The Solution

Telephonetics VIP were the chosen supplier because the Trust felt that their suite of

solutions offered more strategic possibilities than other suppliers. Telephonetics VIP's Remind+ solution would meet their needs for DNA reminders and the inclusion of Result and Confirmer would allow for future contact developments.

Remind+ is a message broadcast solution which delivers voice and SMS messages to patients quickly and easily. The solution receives responses and logs the patient's intention, saving staff time and money and providing a rich speech-based interaction.

"Remind+ addressed our range of requirements and was more cost effective as it had lower revenue costs. This was a big advantage due to the reminder volumes we anticipated"

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals saw that, overall, Remind+ would be more cost-effective than competitor solutions, because as an onsite solution there are minimal ongoing costs once the solution has been purchased. Sheffield Teaching Hospitals planned to utilise the solution to deploy a large volume of reminders, so they realised that a solution which charged per reminder would become vastly more expensive in the long term. Remind+ gave a significantly lower cost per reminder than alternative products, and as more Remind+ campaigns are deployed, the cost per reminder reduces further.

Remind+ can also be utilised for staff notifications in areas such as Occupational Health and, when combining the capability of the other key applications on the

Telephonetics VIP SEMAP+ platform, other strategic savings could be obtained throughout the Trust.

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals looked at a range of DNA reductions from 10%-50%. Within each range, the savings outweighed the Remind+ cost.

Paul Harriman, Assistant Director at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, was involved in the supplier selection process. He commented: "It became clear that Remind+ addressed our range of requirements to include group and individual reminders and it was more cost-effective than the competitors, as it had lower revenue costs. This was a big advantage due to the reminder volumes we were anticipating."

Like an SMS or postal reminder of an appointment, Remind+ helps to reduce DNAs by reminding the patient to attend. However, a critical advantage of Remind+ is the ability to gather information on the patient's intention to attend, re-book or cancel the appointment. This information is collected in real time via landline or mobile telephones. This element was crucial to the Trust; more than just a reminder, the ability to confirm patients' attendance has enabled the Trust to re-book appointment times which had become available again and increase efficient use of resources.

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals also liked Remind+ over alternative products because it offered the flexibility needed for a Trust-wide solution, as specific departments could define the level of contact, the message content, and control the configuration of the



Telephonetics VIP is a leading provider of hosted and customer premises speech recognition and voice automation solutions. From voice diallers that automate the operator function and deliver hands-free mobility, to MovieLINE[®], our cinema information and booking system, we have consistently demonstrated our ability to deploy market tailored speech solutions into very demanding environments,

delivering real business benefits to our customers. Our solutions for self-service, call steering, mobility, outbound messaging and business continuity deliver all the potential that speech has to offer.

Telephonetics VIP has built a large customer base, including 80% of the major UK multiplex cinemas, nearly 60% of the NHS acute health trusts, more

than 50 local councils and emergency service operations, along with significant financial and legal company representation. Telephonetics VIP – making sound business sense for over 16 years.

For further information,
contact us today on
01442 242 242
and say "Remind+"

- ▶ reminder profiles. Furthermore, with Remind+, patient data does not leave the hospital site, which also offers clear data protection advantages.

Working together with Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, Telephonetics VIP installed Remind+ and initiated a trial involving 19 specialities over an initial six week period, representing 20% of total outpatient appointments.

The Results

The trial was very successful. The reduction in DNA rate generated by the trial, averaging 20%, equated to a projected £460,000 annual saving for the specialities that had been involved in the trial.

During the trial, Remind+ called over 30,000 patients and 4.8% of patients indicated that they would not attend their appointment. This amounted to over 1,000 appointment slots which could be reallocated to other patients, demonstrating that **Remind+ can assist in reducing waiting lists as well as DNAs.** 61% of the patients that could not attend wished to rebook for another time; their response was reported by Remind+ and a member of staff was able to call them to rearrange an appointment.

Telephonetics VIP and Sheffield Teaching Hospitals actively worked together during the trial to best maximise patient responses, to ensure best possible results during roll out. Using the highly configurable architecture of Remind+, the Trust were able to implement subtle changes to the times when patients are contacted, the voice messaging used and demographic filtering of the patients, which all led to significant increases in response rates and contributed to better than expected DNA reductions.

Sue Gregory, Deputy General Manager for Head and Neck Group, which was involved in

the solution trial says: "The initial pilot identified a number of issues which needed to be resolved both in our own admin processes and changes within the system. Telephonetics VIP and Sheffield Teaching Hospital staff worked together to resolve these issues very quickly.

The majority of patients have given positive feedback and where we have received negative feedback, all of these have been actively investigated."

"We aim to obtain a 30% DNA reduction using Remind+ which should equate to a £1m saving per year for the Trust"

Return on Investment

After five weeks of using Remind+, the Trust had identified such significant savings that they could see that the solution had already paid for itself. This fantastic return on investment is underscored by the fact that the Trust owns the solution and the cost per reminder will continue to reduce as more campaigns are deployed.

Paul enthuses, "Presently we are aiming to obtain a 30% DNA reduction, which should equate to a £1 million saving for the Trust in the first year, likely to rise to a greater saving in subsequent years. Like all solutions, we have encountered teething problems and have proposed modifications to the core system. Telephonetics VIP staff responded to these requests and the system changes should help us to further improve our DNA reduction."

Remind+ has already reduced DNA rates at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals between 20% and 40%. In general, the variance in improvement rate is directly proportionate to the availability and quality of the contact data that is used. This improvement has

brought a drastic increase in the number of patients that Sheffield Teaching Hospitals can treat due to appointment slots which had become available.

Given the success of Remind+, the usage of the other Telephonetics VIP solutions are now being planned so that Sheffield Teaching Hospitals can offer other forms of automated patient and staff contact.

How Remind+ Made a Difference

- **Secure, fast, accurate** - Patients receive a fast, consistent and secure reminder service to their landline and / or mobile, without the possibility of human error
- **Easy admin** - Patient data is easy to import into Remind+ campaigns, for Sheffield Teaching Hospitals' staff to manage and control and reports are easy to interpret
- **Multiple campaigns** - Multiple call campaigns can be operated from various departments at the same time
- **24 x 7 availability** - Calls can be scheduled at any time, based around patient convenience rather than staff working hours. Unanswered calls are retried and alternative numbers are tried, based on selected rules
- **Reduces waiting lists** - Cancelled appointment slots can be re-allocated, so there is less wasted resource and reduced waiting times for other patients
- **Support** - Telephonetics VIP provided initial training plus ongoing maintenance support.
- **Onsite** - Minimal reminder cost and no data protection issues
- **Flexible and scalable** - Trust-wide with departmental configurability



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