



Vision+ SMS Text Messaging Hints and Tips

What types of SMS Text Message can I send?

SMS Text Messaging provides an effective way to communicate with patients. You can send:

- SMS messages to individual patients from **Consultation Manager**.
- Recall/healthcare invitations to a group of patients.
- Questionnaires to patients.
- Appointment reminders.

SMS Text Message content - Best practice guidance

- Keep the message short and concise, a long SMS could cost two texts or more, rather than one. The maximum number of characters in a text is 160.
- Publish larger 'information' updates on your practice website and shorten a message by including the URL to the information. A URL can be included but be aware of the character length.
- Text messages should not contain patient identifiable data.

Creating SMS Templates

Before you can send an SMS Text Message you need to create an SMS Text Message template which contains your required content. Please view the following useful help topics and quick reference guides:

- [Creating an Appointment Reminder SMS Message Template](#)
- [Creating an SMS Recall Template](#)
- [Creating an SMS Questionnaire Template](#)

Sending Texts to Groups of Patients

SMS texts can be sent to any **Vision Patient Group**, see [Sending SMS texts using Patient groups](#) for details.

When sending bulk text messages to larger groups of patients, it is advised to send these in smaller cohorts, for example, groups of no more than 200 to 300 patients.


Viewing Sent SMS Text Messages

From **Vision+ Practice Reports** you can easily view lists of patients to whom you have sent SMS text messages. Sent SMS Text Messages and SMS logs are selectable from the **Appointments** menu and by selecting **Merge Indicator** when choosing any report.

➔ See [Practice Reports](#) for more details.

Recording that a patient does not want to receive practice text messages

If you record the Read code **9NdQ.00 – Declined consent for short message service text messaging** in the patient's journal, they will not receive SMS text messages from your practice.


 **Note** - If a patient opts out and then decides to opt back in, you can record the Read code **9NdP.00 – Consent given for communication by SMS text messaging**. The last recorded Read code is used when checking if the patient has declined or not.

➔ See also [SMS Text Message Explicit Consent](#).

Will the patient know who has sent the text message?

You can customise practice-wide SMS Text Messaging settings in **Vision+ Configuration** and **Settings**:

1. Login to Vision as usual, do not select a patient in **Consultation Manager**.
2. From the Windows Notification Area, right click **Vision+** and select **Settings**.
3. The **Settings** screen displays. Select **SMS** from the menu on the left.
4. **SMS From** - When text messages are sent, the text in this box displays as the message sender on the patient's phone. We recommend you enter **NHS_NoReply** so the patient knows where the SMS has come from. This also tells the patient they cannot reply to the automated SMS messages.

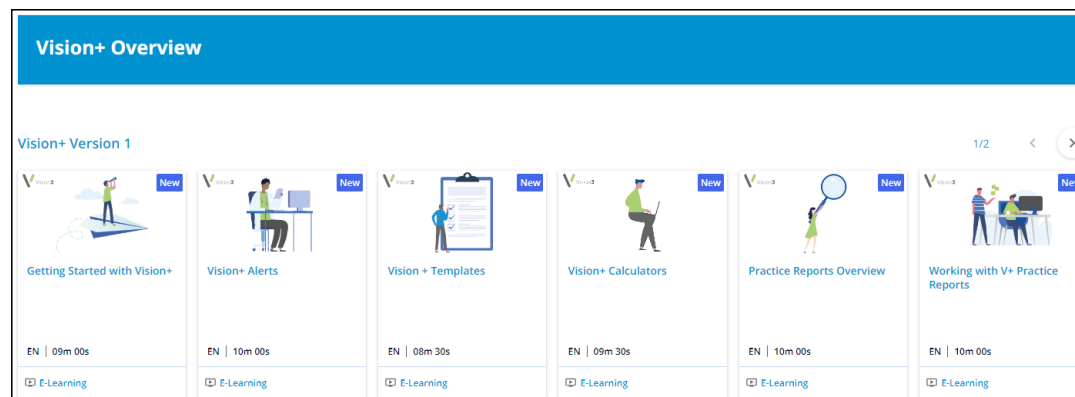
 **Note** – The two-way text messaging service displays a generic mobile number and ignores the **SMS From** box. We recommend you include your practice details in the content of the SMS template.

How do I know if I have the correct mobile telephone number for a patient?

Use the [Clinical Audit for SMS Validation](#) to help you identify mobile numbers that may need your attention.

Useful Resources:

- Click [here](#) for the **Vision+ Appointments SMS Text Messaging Help Files**.
- The **Learning Zone** contains bitesize elearning and video tutorials on all aspects of the Vision Solution. Register for the Learning Zone [here](#) and browse the **Vision+** courses:



- We hosted a webinar that covered how to send texts to your patients to keep them up to date with the latest surgery, local and national advice. Watch the **SMS Text Messaging** webinar [here](#).

