

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY THE CONNÉTABLE OF ST. LAWRENCE
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 5th JULY 2021
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 12th JULY 2021**

Question

Given that missed appointments incur costs in time and money within Health and Community Services (H.C.S.), will the Minister explain why text messages to remind patients of forthcoming appointments are sent from some, but not all departments, within H.C.S.?

Answer

Sending appointment text reminders is currently a manual process. Reports are run to extract appointment details from the HCS patient administration system (TrakCare). These data are then uploaded into a Jersey Telecom application – ‘Soprano’ – which holds department-specific templates and is used to generate the messages. A small number of services operate their appointment system separately from TrakCare e.g. Radiology, Clinical Investigations. 93% of all clinics on TrakCare send patients text message reminders.

The appointment reminder system has an opt-out function. The use of this function is decided at specialty level. Reminder text messages may not be suitable if the message relates to a particularly sensitive clinic e.g. sexual health; a clinic where patient confidentiality may not be assured e.g. some learning disability clinics; or where other people may have access to the telephone of the patient. For some clinics, the text reminder system is not needed e.g. where specialties are operating telephone clinics and the clinician phones the patient or where a patient has a recurrent appointment at the same time and place e.g. some physiotherapy clinics. Finally, a patient may decide they wish to be excluded from receiving text reminders.

The fact that 93% of all TrakCare clinics send patients text message reminders is a strong foundation. However, the Connétable’s question is a timely reminder that for the further benefit of patients we may be able to improve on the extent of such reminders being sent. I have therefore asked the HCS operational lead managing the text reminder system to revisit with the relevant clinic leads their reasons for opting out.