

Frequently asked questions – The Friends and Family Test SMS Service

Using SMS to deliver the Friends and family test survey to the patient's phone gives them the ability to give fast, anonymous feedback, free of charge. Here are some frequently asked questions about the service;

[What number is the FFT survey sent from and does this remain the same each time?](#)

The SMS is sent from number '80870' and this is consistent each time.

[How is the service free to reply?](#)

To enable the user to respond free of charge we purchased the short code number '80870' and dedicated this number to the FFT service. This number gives the ability to accept replies from patients at no cost to them and for us to be billed for the reply.

[A patient has received a warning when replying to '80870' which states they will be charged for this reply. What do we advise them?](#)

Contrary to any warnings the replies are free of charge. Some network providers have implemented a blanket warning message for all short code numbers. This was in response to an influx of companies using short code number for premium rate services. Although we can not influence this blanket warning on our free service, we can offer the assurance no charges are passed onto the patient.

[A patient has advised they can not reply to '80870'. What do we advise them?](#)

In addition to some network providers adding a blanket warning when replying to short codes, some have also applied a default barring to the user's phone to stop the replies to short code numbers unless authorised by the user. Again, this is controlled by the network provider and only the patient would be able to authorise this by contacting their provider. If the patient does not want to lift the barring, feedback can be given by other modes for example on paper.

[How can a patient opt out of the service?](#)

The quickest way to opt out is to reply STOP to 80870. As above, this reply is free of charge.

How can a patient opt out if they have barring to short code number replies?

If a patient doesn't have the ability to reply to 80870 because of phone barring they can contact the hospital either by phone or on their next visit to express that they would like to opt out of the feedback service. The hospital can then opt the patient out at the source of the feedback data or on Envoy messenger.

A patient is advising they never gave consent to be sent a feedback SMS. What should we advise them?

The NHS Act 2006 Section 13E (inserted by Health and Social Care Act 2012) specifies that the NHS has a duty to secure continuous improvement in quality of services to individuals, particularly the quality of experience undergone by patients.

NHS England discharges this duty via the NHS Standard Contract. Organisations undertaking the FFT as part of the NHS Standard Contract are therefore 'exercising official authority' in doing so and this is the legal basis under the GDPR.