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## About us and our work

LINKs (Local Involvement Networks) are networks of local people and voluntary and community groups and work independently.

We work to enable local people to have greater influence on how local NHS and adult social care services are delivered and commissioned.

Coventry LINK looked at local GP appointment systems by sending about a questionnaire and talking to some practice managers.

We found some really good practice which we wanted to share with other GPs and practice managers. This leaflet summarises some of what we found. We have also published two reports.

If you would like to find out more information on this work please visit our website or contact the staff team.



If you would like more information on this or any work carried out by Coventry LINK please contact one of the team.

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Coventry LINK is an independent network supported by the charity Voluntary Action Coventry, which acts as LINK's Host



# Practical tips and hints for GP practices

## Our findings about GP appointment systems



# Top Tips

## 1 Using the Internet

LINK believes that enabling patients who can to make use of email and the internet in the way they interact with GP practices is very important to promote both patient satisfaction and enable practices to manage demand.

**For example** a practice operating an email queries system which has been publicised to its patients.

## 2 Patient Panels

Having an active patient panel which provides feedback from patient surveys gives patients a voice.

One practice in Coventry introduced Thursday afternoon surgeries and early morning and evening surgeries following feedback from patients to a survey it carried out.

## 3 Adapting your appointments system

A local Medical Centre has adapted its appointment system to make it more user friendly. In the past patients were told to phone back the next day if they called after 11 am. The practice has found that booking for the day and the next day and in advance reduces patient stress and has reduced the 'do not attend' rate.

## 4 An automated booking system

A local Centre has an automated telephone booking system which patients can use when the surgery is closed to make appointments. The practice feels that this has a positive impact on satisfaction because a patient, relative, or carer can take action during the out of hours period. This system also reduces the need for patients to phone when the surgery opens. LINK thinks this is an innovative idea which brings benefits to patients and to the surgery.

## 5 Texting reminders

One practice had been working to address wasted appointments by asking more questions over the phone, using text message reminders to patients, and contacting those patients who have not attended more than 3 appointments in a three month period.

LINK believes that reminders and follow up are a good idea.

## 6 A mobile phone service

**Could you provide a mobile phone service to specific patients with a disability so that they can text in requests to the practice?** One local practice has developed pre-booked appointments which includes the use of pictures for people with learning disabilities. Longer pre-bookable appointments of up to 1 hour are available too.

## 7 Phone consultations Could your practice adopt this?

One local practice offers pre-booked phone consultations with a GP. Online repeat prescription requests are becoming more common. This has been particularly successful for one practice who now have 10% of their practice list registered to book online.