

# A randomised controlled trial to measure the impact of behavioural SMS reminders messages on missed appointments among IAPT patients

<b>Submission date</b> 06/02/2018	<b>Recruitment status</b> No longer recruiting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered
<b>Registration date</b> 15/02/2018	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Last Edited</b> 04/04/2023	<b>Condition category</b> Mental and Behavioural Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan
		<input type="checkbox"/> Results
		<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data
		<input type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

The NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services currently experience a relatively high rate of missed appointments (roughly 11%). This imposes a cost on the services and increases waiting times for others. The aim of this study is to test whether changes to the content of SMS (text message) reminders sent to IAPT patients before their appointments can reduce the rate of missed appointments. More specifically two different messages are tested against the existing business as usual message; one based on implementation intentions and the other on reciprocity. In addition to this, the study tests whether the behavioural messages can increase completion of treatment and ultimately improve mental health outcomes.

### Who can participate?

Patients of one of the three participating IAPT services who have an appointment during the study period

### What does the study involve?

Participants are randomly allocated to receive either the business as usual SMS reminder message or one of the two new messages. One of the new reminders asks the patient to take a moment to ensure that they are able to make their appointment. These messages are based on the psychological insight that asking people to consider the when, where and how of their behaviour can help translate intentions into action. The other new reminder lets the patient know that an appointment has been booked for them by their therapist. These messages are based on the concept of reciprocity whereby when someone does something on our behalf we reciprocate by going along with their request. All SMS messages are sent to patients 1-2 days before their appointment. The message also contains a prompt to rearrange the appointment if necessary. The messages purposely contain no message content that is clinical in nature. Appointment attendance and completion of treatment are recorded by the IAPT services at the end of the study period.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

The new messages aim to increase the likelihood that patients attend their appointments.

Attending an appointment should increase the likelihood that the patient recovers and also help them recover sooner. Given that this study is being conducted with participants referred to or undergoing mental health treatment the main risk is that the new messages backfire and increase missed appointments or dropout. The messages have been carefully worded to guard against this happening.

Where is the study run from?

The study will be run at three participating NHS IAPT providers:

1. West London Mental Health Trust (UK)
2. Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust (UK)
3. Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust (UK)

When is study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

January 2017 to September 2018

Who is the main contact?

Edward Flahavan

Edward.Flahavan@bi.team

## Contact information

### Type(s)

Public

### Contact name

Mr Edward Flahavan

### Contact details

Behavioural Insights Team

4 Matthew Parker Street

London

United Kingdom

SW1H 9NP

+44 (0)7521035452

edward.flahavan@bi.team

## Additional identifiers

### Protocol serial number

2017175

## Study information

### Scientific Title

A randomised controlled trial to measure the impact of behavioural SMS reminders messages on missed appointments among IAPT patients

### Study objectives

The hypothesis is that changes to the wording of SMS appointment reminders informed by behavioural science can reduce the missed appointment rate among IAPT patients.

**Ethics approval required**

Old ethics approval format

**Ethics approval(s)**

Not provided at time of registration

**Primary study design**

Interventional

**Study design**

Randomised controlled trial

**Study type(s)**

Other

**Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Mild to moderate anxiety or depression

**Interventions**

The intervention in this trial is a change to the wording of the SMS appointment reminders sent to patients 1-2 days prior to their IAPT appointment. Method of randomisation is a random allocation mechanism with SQL. This will be carried out by our partner on the trial Mayden (the company who send the SMS messages). Patients of participating IAPT services will be allocated 1:1 to receive either the business as usual SMS reminder messages or one of the two behavioural SMS treatment arms. Once allocated to a trial arm, the patient will receive messages from that arm for the duration of the trial period.

1. Control - this is the business as usual SMS reminder message.
2. Implementation plans - these reminders ask the patient to take a moment to ensure that they will be able to make their appointment. These messages are based on the psychological insight that asking people to consider the when, where and how of their behaviour can help translate intentions into action. The concept was developed by psychologist Paul Gollwitzer.
3. Reciprocity - these reminders let the patient know that an appointment has been booked for them by their therapist. These messages are based on the concept of reciprocity whereby when someone does something on our behalf we reciprocate by going along with their request. The Behavioural Insights Team found this to be effective in encouraging job seekers to attend careers fairs.

These SMS messages will be sent to patients 1-2 days before their appointment. The message will also contain a prompt to rearrange the appointment if necessary. The messages purposely contain no message content that is clinical in nature.

The trial will run for 4 months, data collected during this period will be collected for analysis. After that point no new data will be collected for the trial.

**Intervention Type**

Behavioural

**Primary outcome(s)**

Recorded by the IAPT services at the end of the trial period:

1. Appointment attendance - whether or not a patient misses their appointment
2. Completion of treatment - whether or not a patient completes their treatment

### **Key secondary outcome(s)**

Reliable recovery, assessed using the PHQ-9 and/or the GAD-7 at initial assessment and at the end of treatment (or last available appointment where an assessment was taken)

### **Completion date**

01/09/2018

## **Eligibility**

### **Key inclusion criteria**

1. Patients of all conditions, age and gender will be eligible
2. Patients has an appointment with one of the participating IAPT services during the trial period
3. Patient has consented to receive SMS communication from the service
4. Patient has supplied a valid mobile phone number to the service

### **Participant type(s)**

Patient

### **Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

### **Age group**

Adult

### **Sex**

All

### **Key exclusion criteria**

Does not meet inclusion criteria

### **Date of first enrolment**

01/03/2018

### **Date of final enrolment**

01/07/2018

## **Locations**

### **Countries of recruitment**

United Kingdom

England

**Study participating centre****Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust**

Room 208 3rd Floor South Wing  
St Pancras Hospital  
4 St Pancras Way  
London  
United Kingdom  
NW1 0PE

**Study participating centre****Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust**

Drayton High Road  
Norwich  
United Kingdom  
NR6 5BE

**Study participating centre****West London Mental Health Trust (Ealing)**

3rd Floor  
84 Uxbridge Road  
West Ealing  
London  
United Kingdom  
W13 8RA

**Study participating centre****West London Mental Health Trust (Hammersmith and Fulham)**

1 Hammersmith Broadway  
London  
United Kingdom  
W6 9DL

**Sponsor information****Organisation**

The Behavioural Insights Team

**ROR**

<https://ror.org/03mk5b468>

**Organisation**

Mayden House Ltd

**Funder(s)****Funder type**

Industry

**Funder Name**

Behavioural Insights Team

**Funder Name**

Mayden House Limited

**Results and Publications****Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan**

The participant level data is being shared with BIT for the trial in accordance with a data sharing agreement agreed with the participating IAPT providers. In this it is agreed that the raw data will not be made public. Though the data is anonymous the services are understandably very conscious of data protection issues.

**IPD sharing plan summary**

Not expected to be made available