

Practice Cost Questionnaire

Telefirst Practice Manager Telephone Cost Questionnaire

Practice details

Practice:	Date / Time commenced:
	Duration:
Interviewee:	Position:
Interviewer:	

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this short telephone survey. We wish to ask you about any changes you have made in your practice as a result of introducing the triage system. Specifically we are interested in any capital expenditure, that is, any set-up costs incurred in the run up to starting the scheme. We are also interested in any running costs, such as changes in staff working patterns. We will now ask you about resource costs and staff costs separately.

Part 1: Non-staff Costs

We are interested in any one-off set-up costs that were incurred to implement telephone triage in your practice.

1. We will firstly ask you about costs involved in purchase of the triage scheme from the commercial supplier, for example, payments to the supplier and equipment and services provided in return.

Please describe the equipment and services provided by the commercial supplier:	Please describe the costs involved:	On a scale of 1-10, how confident are you in these estimates:

2. We will now ask you about any other purchases or expenditures made over and above those provided by the supplier.

	Please describe what purchases were made:	What was the total cost (GBP)? (Please specify either total cost or annual cost if for a subscription service.)	Was the purchase intended solely for the implementation of telephone triage (yes/no)?	If not, how is the use shared between telephone triage and others services (%)?	On a scale of 1-10, how confident are you in these estimates?
1. Did you purchase any new equipment or services (e.g. additional telephone lines)					
2. Did you purchase any new computer systems (e.g. add-on, hardware, software)					

3. Did you incur any one-off staff-related expenses (other than salaries, e.g. recruitment or training)					
4. Did you incur any other costs, for example redecoration or redeployment of office space? (Please specify)					

We are also interested in whether any existing resources were used to implement telephone triage in your practice.

	Please describe the existing equipment or asset:	What is the total value/cost of the asset (GBP)? (either total value or annual cost for subscription services)	Please describe how this equipment or asset is used or has been modified for telephone triage services, and if possible, provide a % of its use that is attributable to triage.	On a scale of 1-10, how confident are you in these estimates?
1. Did you make use of any existing computer systems (e.g. existing computer hardware or software)?				
2. Did you modify any existing training programmes?				

3. Were any other existing resources modified or re-deployed to implement the triage scheme? (Excluding staffing changes. Please specify.)				
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Part 2: Staff Costs

Has your total non-clinical staffing changed since introduction of the telephone triage system?
Please include both increases and decreases in reception, administrative or dispensing staff where appropriate, as well as any redeployments of existing staff.

Yes ☐ No ☐

How many staff changes do you think are in any way related to introduction of the telephone triage system? (Please state the number of people)

Please describe each staff change below.

Staff member role / job title	Pay scale / band / approximate annual salary	Date the change was made (e.g. start date for new employee or date working hours changed for existing employee)	Please describe the change (e.g. new staff member, increase or decrease of 4 working hours per week, overtime of 2 hours per week)	In your opinion, how much of this change is due to introduction of the telephone triage system? (please describe or state an approximate %).	Please provide reasons for the change in staffing (e.g. extra receptionist hired to deal with call volumes).	On a scale of 1-10 how confident are you in your answers?

Has your clinical staffing changed since introduction of the telephone triage scheme? Please include both increases and decreases in GPs, nurses and allied health professionals where appropriate, as well as any redeployments of existing staff.

Yes ☐ No ☐

How many staff changes do you think are in any way related to introduction of the telephone triage system? (Please state the number of people)

Please describe each staff change below.

Staff member role / job title	Pay scale / band / approximate annual salary	Date the change was made (e.g. start date for new employee or date working hours changed for existing employee)	Please describe the change (e.g. new staff member, increase or decrease 4 hours per week)	In your opinion, how much of this change is due to introduction of the telephone triage system? (please describe or state an approximate %).	Please provide reasons for the change in staffing (e.g. extra nurse recruited to handle additional face-to-face contacts).	On a scale of 1-10 how confident are you in your answers?

Additional comments

Patient experience survey

Tele-First: Telephone Triage in General Practice
QUESTIONNAIRE: Speaking to a GP on the phone before arranging an appointment

As we've explained in the attached letter, you've been sent this questionnaire because you recently spoke to a GP on the phone when you asked for an appointment with a doctor or nurse at your GP surgery.

Please complete this questionnaire and return it to us in the Freepost envelope provided.

If you're completing the questionnaire because you spoke to the GP on behalf of someone else, please answer all the questions based on the care they received.

Please contact us if you have any questions or queries on: telephonetriage@rand.org, or by phone at 01223 353329.

Some questions about the telephone appointment

Please complete the following questions about your contact with the GP surgery on the date referred to in the attached letter.

1. Who was the patient whose health was discussed in the telephone call? (Please tick one box only)
☐ Me

☐ My child

☐ An adult for whom I
am carer

☐ Other
(Please specify)

2. Who spoke to the doctor on the telephone on that day? (Please tick all that apply)
☐ The patient

☐ The patient's
parent/guardian

☐ The patient's carer

☐ Other
(Please specify)

3. How did you first contact the practice that day to ask for an appointment? (Please tick one box only)
☐ Telephone

☐ Online

☐ In person

☐ Other
(Please specify)

4. Before you contacted the practice, were you expecting to receive a telephone call back from your GP? (Please tick one box only)
☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

5a. How long did it take for a GP to call you back? (Please tick one box only)
☐ Less than 20
minutes

☐ 20 - 60 minutes

☐ More than 1 hour

☐ GP did not call back

5b. How do you rate this? (Please tick one box only)
☐ Very poor

☐ Poor

☐ Acceptable

☐ Good

☐ Excellent

6a. What was the outcome of the telephone call? (Please tick all that apply)

I received telephone advice only, no further follow-up

I was given a prescription

An appointment with a GP in the surgery was arranged

An appointment with a nurse in the surgery was arranged

A follow-up telephone appointment with a GP was arranged

A follow-up telephone appointment with a nurse was arranged

Other (Please specify): _____

6b. Were you satisfied with this outcome? (Please tick one box only)

Yes, I was satisfied

No, I thought I should have had a face-to-face appointment in the surgery

No, I thought a follow-up telephone appointment should have been arranged

Other (Please specify): _____

Your opinions on the telephone appointment

7. Did you find the telephone appointment more or less convenient than just attending a face-to-face appointment, without being able to talk to the doctor on the phone first? (Please tick one box only)

More convenient

Less convenient

No difference

8. Did you find it more or less difficult to communicate with the GP over the phone than in person? (Please tick one box only)

More difficult

Less difficult (Please go to
question 10)

No difference (Please go to
question 10)

9. If you answered 'More difficult' to the previous question, why do you think it was more difficult to communicate over the phone? (Please tick all that apply)

English is not my
first language

The doctor really
needed to see
me

The telephone line
was not clear

I have impaired
hearing

I found it difficult to
explain the
problem

Other (Please specify)

If you wish to give more detail, please add additional comments at the end of the form.

Some questions about the patient

We would now like to ask some questions to help us see how experiences of telephone appointments vary between different groups of people.

If you are completing the questionnaire for someone else, please answer the questions about the person who was the patient.

10. Are you (or the patient, if you are responding on his or her behalf) male or female?

Male

Female

11. How old are you (or is the patient, if you are responding on his or her behalf)?

Under 18	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54
55 to 64	65 to 74	75 to 84	85 or over	

12. In general, would you say your health (or that of the patient, if you are responding on his or her behalf) is...?

Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
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13. Do you (or the patient if you are responding on his or her behalf) have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity? By long-standing I mean anything that has troubled you over a period of time, or that is likely to affect you over a period of time.

Yes	No
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14. What is your ethnic group (or that of the patient if you are responding on his or her behalf)? (Please choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background)

A. White

English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British

Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Any other White background, *please describe:* _____

B. Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background, *please describe:* _____

C. Asian / Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, *please describe:* _____

D. Black / African / Caribbean / Black British

African

Caribbean

Any other Black / African / Caribbean background, *please describe:* _____

E. Other ethnic group

Arab

Any other ethnic group, *please describe:* _____

15. What is the main language you (or the patient, if you are responding on his or her behalf) speak/s at home?

English (go to question 17)

Other, write in (including British Sign Language)

16. If you answered 'Other' to the previous question, can you tell us how well you (or the patient, if you are responding on his/her behalf) can speak English?

Very well

Well

Not well

Not at all

17. If you (or the patient, if you are responding on his or her behalf) need to see a GP at the GP surgery during typical working hours, can you take time away from your work to do this?

Yes, I can easily
take time away
from work

Yes, I can take time
away from work
but with some
difficulty

No, I can't take time
away from work

Not relevant as I do not
work (child,
unemployed,
retired)

Overall satisfaction with the telephone appointment system

18. Would you like to go back to the old system, where most GP appointments were face to face?

Yes

No

Don't mind

Please add any additional comments in the box on the next page.

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

Please return in enclosed Freepost envelope – no stamp required.

Tele-First Project Team, RAND Europe, Westbrook Centre, Milton Road, Cambridge CB4 1YG

Please add any additional comments here

We would like to contact a small number of people to interview in more detail about their experiences with telephone consultation. If you would be happy to be contacted, please provide your contact details and tick the box below.

☐ I am happy to be contacted for an interview

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Email address: _____

Please underline the method that you would prefer us to use for contacting you.

Blank Page

Patient interview guide

Patients

Introduction:

Please can you tell me a little bit about yourself, including whether you work

How long have you been at the practice?

How is your health in general? How regularly do you need access the GP?

Process of booking an appointment:

How do you make an appointment with your GP?

Has this changed since you have been a patient at the practice? (What used to happen?)

Have you had to call the surgery on behalf of someone else / or has someone else called on your behalf? How did that work?

When you call the surgery, how long does it take to get through? Have you experienced any difficulty in getting through?

Do you have to provide any information to the reception staff concerning the call? [could prompt here for how comfortable they feel speaking to receptionist?]

If offered a call back do you get it within a reasonable time period? Do you get to specify when you would like the call back? Have you had any difficulties around the call back?

Is it always a doctor that calls you back? If you have a preferred doctor, do you get to speak to them? [prompt on continuity of care]

Have there been any changes in how the telephone consultations have been run since they were introduced? Has that improved the service/ made it more difficult for you?

Your experience with telephone consultations:

How have you found the experience of using this system?

Is there anything about your lifestyle that makes it more or less difficult for you to use? [prompt: working hours, caring responsibilities etc]

What was the outcome of your last telephone consultation with the GP? (led to a face-to-face appointment, directed to another health-care professional such as nurse, or another service eg. Social services etc. or just given advice over the phone)

If not offered a face-to face appointment with GP:

Were you happy with this outcome? Do you feel the service was satisfactory? Did you seek care elsewhere instead? (e.g. at A&E)

If offered a face-to-face appointment:

If you have a preferred doctor, did you get to see him/her?

Have you noticed any change in the actual appointment [get more time with GP, GP better prepared etc]? Has the quality of the appointment changed?

Have you had other telephone consultations where something different happened? What was the outcome? [repeat prompts as above])

How you feel about the system and what it means for you:

What do you like about the current system for making appointments? ([prompt on convenience, chance to speak to GP when don't want appointment – reassurance, practice seems more organised, get an appointment when want one, appointments not being booked by people for unsuitable use])

What do you dislike about the current system for making appointments? [don't get an appointment when want one, can't communicate well using phone – lost personal connection, elderly – loss of social contact, safety concerns]

Is there anything you miss about the old system (e.g. being able to plan in advance)?

How do you feel about talking to the doctor on the phone? [prompts: Do you feel comfortable talking about your medical condition / do you have any concerns over confidentiality? Do you feel that you are able to make yourself understood?]

How did you feel about the system when it was first introduced? Has this changed over time? [i.e. have they got used to the system]

Has the telephone appointment system changed the way you seek health care services? [prompts: are they thinking about alternative services more before contacting GP? i.e. is this right for the GP should I be going to nurse or don't bother go straight to A&E?]

Has your contact with the GP surgery changed? (i.e. ring more often as know can speak to doctor etc). [prompt on whether offered an appointment, if not with GP who with? Just given advice over phone etc]

Wrap up:

If you had the choice would you go back the old system or keep the new system? Why would you make that choice?

Do you think other patients share your view?

Overall are you happy with the care you receive at the practice?

Is there anything else about the telephone appointment system that you'd like to discuss that we haven't spoken about?

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today.

Staff interview guides

Interview with GP

1. How long have been with surgery?
2. So you are a GP are you a partner/salaried/locum?
3. How long has the practice been using the telephone triage system?
If new to practice had they used it elsewhere?
4. Does the practice use the telephone triage system alongside other initiatives such as an online platform enabling patients to communicate with GPs?
5. What were practices' reasons for change to telephone triage system?

Setting up of systems

6. Please can you describe the setting up process. How was the setting up process for you?
Time it takes to set up?
What did it entail?
7. Where there any barriers or enablers to the setting up process?
Process of clearing backlog?
Role of/support provided by company in process?
Cost implications? (including company fees, new phones, telephone bills etc)
Infrastructure implications? Have they had to change the practice to accommodate changes?

Process of TT and working day

8. Please describe how the telephone triage system works.
9. How has your working day changed since the system of telephone triage started?

How many patients do you now compared to before?
How much time do you spend on phone?
How has the day to day atmosphere changed in the practice?

How busy is the practice now? How does this compare with before?

10. How has the role of receptionist changed since the introduction of telephone triage?
Has it freed up more time for them to do admin tasks?

Questions to GP – telephone consultation

11. How do you feel about new way of practising, what are the pros and cons?
How has it changed your ways of working with other colleagues (more time to discuss or less time?)
12. How comfortable do you feel using the telephone to communicate with patients?
Do you feel you have received adequate training to consult by phone rather than face-to-face?
13. Do you feel you're able to adequately address patients concerns over the phone? Do you feel patients can adequately express themselves/describe symptoms etc.?
14. Are there challenges with certain groups - both negatively and positively (disabled/non-english speakers/elderly etc)
15. Do you have any concerns over patient safety?
If yes in what ways?

Overall

16. What do you think patients like/dislike about the system?
17. What are the advantages?
- Are the appointments being made are more suitable,
able to talk to a lot more people
able to prepare better for appointments as know why patient coming in
spend longer with those patients that need it?*
18. What are the disadvantages ?
- Spending the day on phone,
missing interaction with patients,
patient safety implications?*
19. If you had the choice would you go back the old system or keep the new system?
Why would you make that choice?

Interview with Nurse

1. How long have been with surgery?
2. Can you tell me about your role and what it involves?
3. How long has the practice been using the telephone triage systems?
If new to practice had they used it elsewhere?
4. Does the practice use the telephone triage system alongside other initiatives such as an online platform enabling patients to communicate with GPs?
5. What were practices' reasons for change to telephone triage system?

Setting up of systems

6. Please can you describe the setting up process. How was the setting up process for you?
Where there elements which impacted on your role?

Process of TT and working day

7. Please describe how the telephone triage system works.
8. How has your working day changed since the system of telephone triage started?

How many patients do you see now compared to before?
Has the amount of contact you have with patients changed?
How has the day to day atmosphere changed in the practice?
How busy is the practice now? How does this compare with before?

Overall

9. What do you think patients like/dislike about the system?
10. Are there challenges with certain groups - both negatively and positively (disabled/non-english speakers/elderly etc)
11. What are the advantages of the telephone triage approach?
Does it affect the sorts of patients you see?
12. What are the disadvantages of the telephone triage approach?
Does it change the dynamic of the practice?
13. If you had the choice would you go back the old system or keep the new system?
Why would you make that choice?

Interview with Practice manager

1. How long have been with surgery?
2. Can you tell me a bit about your role and what it involves?
3. How long has the practice been using the telephone triage system?
If new to practice had they used it elsewhere?
4. Does the practice use the telephone triage system alongside other initiatives such as an online platform enabling patients to communicate with GPs?
5. What were practices' reasons for change to telephone triage system?

Setting up of systems

6. Please can you describe the setting up process. How was the setting up process for you?
Time it takes to set up?
What did it entail?
7. Where there any barriers or enablers to the setting up process?
Process of clearing backlog?
Role of/support provided by company in process?
Cost implications? (including company fees, new phones, telephone bills etc)
Infrastructure implications? Have they had to change the practice to accommodate changes?

Process of TT and working day

8. Please describe how the telephone triage system works.
9. How has your working day changed since the system of telephone triage started?

How has the day to day atmosphere changed in the practice?
How busy is the practice now? How does this compare with before?
10. How has the role of receptionist changed since the introduction of telephone triage?
Has it freed up more time for them to do admin tasks?

Overall

11. What do you think patients like/dislike about the system?
12. Are there challenges with certain groups - both negatively and positively (disabled/non-english speakers/elderly etc)

13. What are the advantages of the telephone triage system?

*Are the appointments being made are more suitable,
Does it avoid busy periods in reception?*

14. What are the disadvantages of the telephone triage system?

Does it impact on the feeling of the practice?

15. If you had the choice would you go back the old system or keep the new system?

Why would you make that choice?

Interview with Receptionist

1. How long have been with surgery?
2. Can you tell me about your role and what it involves?
3. How long has the practice been using the telephone triage systems?
If new to practice had they used it elsewhere?
4. Does the practice use the telephone triage system alongside other initiatives such as an online platform enabling patients to communicate with GPs?
5. What were practices' reasons for change to telephone triage system?

Setting up of systems

6. Please can you describe the setting up process. How was the setting up process for you?
Time it takes to set up?
What did it entail?
7. Where there any barriers or enablers to the setting up process?
Process of clearing backlog?
Role of/support provided by company in process?
Cost implications? (including company fees, new phones, telephone bills etc)
Infrastructure implications? Have they had to change the practice to accommodate changes?

Process of TT and working day

8. Please describe how the telephone triage system works.
9. How has your working day changed since the system of telephone triage started?

How many patients do you now compared to before?
How much time do you spend on phone?
Has the amount of contact you have with patients changed?
How has the day to day atmosphere changed in the practice?
How busy is the practice now? How does this compare with before?
Has it freed up more time for you to do more admin tasks?

Overall

10. What do you think patients like/dislike about the system?
11. Are there challenges with certain groups - both negatively and positively (disabled/non-english speakers/elderly etc)

12. What are the advantages to the telephone triage approach?

*Are the appointments being made are more suitable,
Are patients happier being able to talk to a doctor?*

13. What are the disadvantages to the telephone triage approach?

Less patient contact?

14. If you had the choice would you go back the old system or keep the new system?

Why would you make that choice?

