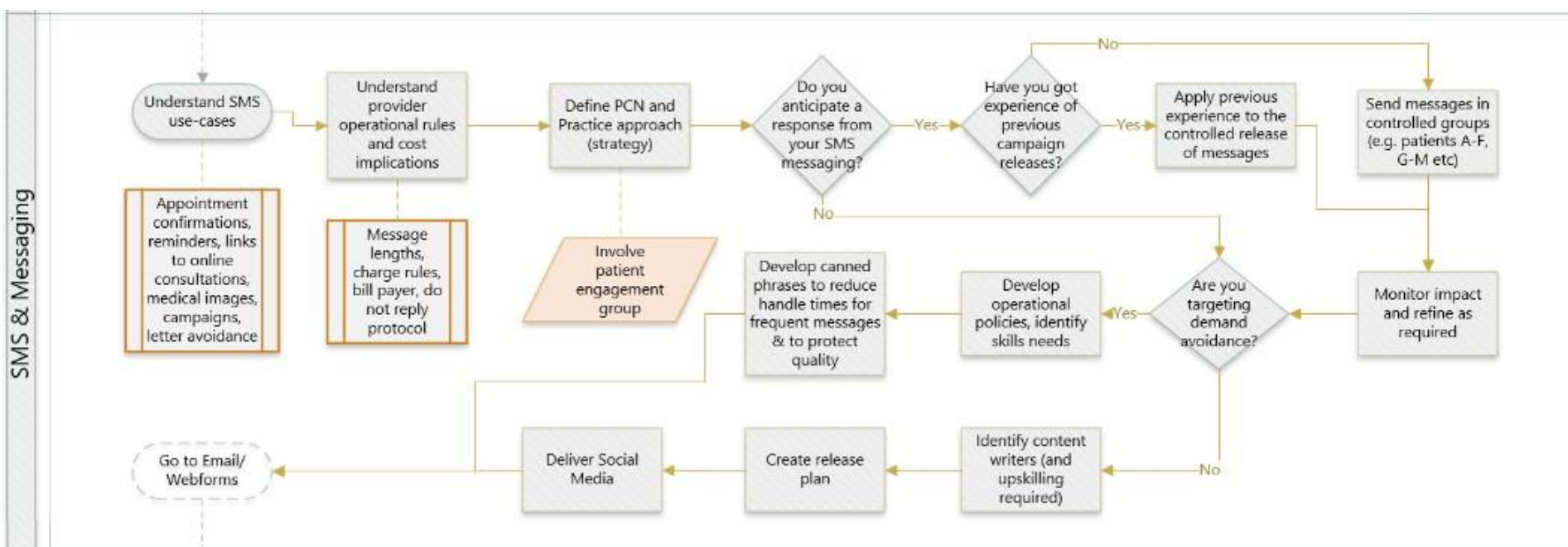


SMS and Messaging Apps

It is not recommended that SMS or messaging apps (Such as WhatsApp or Signal) are used where the patient is the instigator of the message. Delivery times or confidentiality can't be guaranteed.



Process 10. Managing Messaging

SMS and Messaging Apps

Quick Check: Is SMS and messaging adding value?	Yes	No
Is messaging being used to prevent unnecessary communication (e.g., “where and what are my results?” ‘phone calls)?		
Are messaging costs fully understood?		
Is there an understanding of the impact of messaging campaigns (e.g., “flu jabs available now”) on the wider operation (e.g., a spike in ‘phone calls)?		
Is the impact of messaging measured against outcome objectives (e.g., reduction of DNA)?		
<i>Answered no to any question? Consider making some changes</i>		

Good ways to use messaging in practices and across the PCN
✓ Instigating an online consultation
✓ Sending a link to a patient to a secure portal for image upload
✓ Reminders and campaigns where there is a specific call to action.
✓ Appointment reminders to reduce DNA rates.
✓ Informal (very short, yes/no) surveys
✓ Sharing links to health-related websites (instigated by clinicians only or by carefully controlled navigation protocols)

When sending outbound messages, don't forget to tell the receiver that they should not reply and that if they do, messages will not be read (unless it's a survey, in which case specify that the patient should not reply with medical issues).

Manage outbound message release carefully as any outbound call to action (e.g., a reminder to book a flu jab) will instigate an uncontrolled inbound response. So, if there is a patient cohort of 10,000, consider releasing messages in blocks of 2,000 over a defined period. Go slowly and cautiously at first, to understand the response rate, increasing the release speed at a pace that matches operational ability to respond.

It is easy to think forget about the cost of messaging as the system-led messaging used at practice-level can be detached from the billing process. Before using messaging at scale, take time to understand the cost implications.