

diarybook

WHY DIARYBOOK

A practical guide for decision makers in public health services

The Problem

Ireland's health system loses more than €67 million every year to missed appointments. More than 525,000 outpatient appointments go unfilled annually — roughly 10,000 every week. Each one represents €129 of wasted clinical time and resource, a figure the HSE itself has formally recognised.



Every missed slot is also a slot that someone on the waiting list could have filled. With over 700,000 people currently waiting for a first outpatient appointment, the connection between missed appointments and waiting list pressure is direct and measurable.

The Department of Health's own research confirms that behaviourally informed SMS reminders alone can reduce DNA rates by 13% — saving an estimated €11.6 million annually if adopted nationally. Diarybook goes significantly further than a simple reminder service.

What Is Diarybook

Diarybook is an appointment management platform built specifically for public health settings. It has been in live use across the HSE, developed in close collaboration with the clinical and administrative teams who use it every day.

It operates in two distinct modes, which is what makes it genuinely flexible across different parts of a health service:

Mode 1: Complete Standalone System

For services that have no existing appointment or scheduling software, Diarybook provides a full end-to-end solution — from appointment booking and calendar management through to automated patient communication and reporting.

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Mode 2: Communication and Integration Layer

For services that already have a patient management or hospital information system, Diarybook integrates alongside it as a powerful messaging and scheduling layer — adding multi-channel reminders, automated communications, and appointment management without replacing existing infrastructure.

This dual-mode approach means Diarybook can be deployed across an entire health service — even where technology maturity varies significantly between departments.

What Diarybook Does

Multi-Channel Patient Communication

Diarybook automates patient reminders and communications across five channels, configured to match the needs of each service:

- Appointment reminders sent automatically via SMS, email, and voice call
- Automated letter generation for services requiring written communication
- Configurable reminder schedules — days or weeks in advance as required
- Opt-out management built in, fully compliant with data protection requirements

Appointment and Schedule Management

- Complex scheduling across multiple practitioners, locations, and appointment types
- Blocked times, time conflict detection, and work hours configuration
- Attendance status tracking and DNA recording
- Client file management and secure document sharing

Waiting List Tools

One of Diarybook's most significant capabilities for the HSE is its ExcelSend module, which allows waiting list coordinators to send appointment communications directly from standard Excel spreadsheets — no technical expertise required. This bridges the gap for services managing waiting lists outside of dedicated software.

Integration with Existing Systems

Diarybook integrates with hospital management systems already in use across the HSE, allowing it to function as a communication layer without displacing existing workflows or requiring staff retraining on core systems.

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The Evidence

The case for automated appointment reminders in public health settings is well established in published research. Diarybook's approach is directly aligned with the interventions the evidence supports.

Finding	Source
DNA rates in Irish hospitals range from 7% to 20% depending on specialty and location	Irish Times / FOI data
Behaviourally informed SMS reminders reduced DNA rates by 13% in a randomised controlled trial at Naas General Hospital	Dept. of Health — Better Letter Initiative (2024)
Applying that finding nationally could save €11.6 million annually	Dept. of Health (2024)
The HSE Outpatient DNA Strategy (2023) mandates SMS reminders as standard practice	HSE DNA Strategy
Each missed NHS outpatient appointment costs £165 in wasted clinical time and administration	NHS England (2023–24)
Advanced reminder optimisation reduced DNA rates from 10% to 4% at one NHS trust	Business News Today (2025)
Behavioural messaging interventions can reduce DNAs by up to 30%	NHS research synthesis

What Implementation Looks Like

One of the most common questions from decision makers is what deploying Diarybook actually requires — in time, resource, and disruption. The answer depends on which mode is being deployed, but in both cases the process is designed to be straightforward.

For services adopting Diarybook as a standalone system, onboarding involves configuration of the schedule, appointment types, staff accounts, and communication templates. This is completed collaboratively and does not require IT involvement in most cases.

For services integrating Diarybook alongside an existing system, the integration layer is configured to work with the existing data flows. Technical requirements are assessed at the outset and implementation is managed to avoid disruption to ongoing services.

In both cases, training is provided for clinical and administrative staff, and Diarybook's support documentation covers day-to-day operation in detail.

Why Now

The HSE's 2024 Waiting List Action Plan committed €360 million to reducing waiting lists — and despite that investment, waiting lists continued to grow. The reason is straightforward:

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adding capacity does not solve the problem of unused capacity. Every missed appointment is a slot that could have been reallocated to someone waiting.

The HSE's own DNA Strategy, published in 2023, sets out the obligation to send SMS reminders as standard practice. Diarybook provides the infrastructure to deliver that obligation — and to go significantly beyond it.

For services that are not yet meeting the DNA Strategy standard, Diarybook is the most direct path to compliance. For services that are, it provides the next level of capability — multi-channel communication, integration, scheduling, and waiting list management in a single platform.

Next Steps

Diarybook is available for demonstration at any time. A working demo can be arranged to show the platform operating in a context relevant to your service — whether that is outpatient scheduling, community care, or waiting list management.

To arrange a demonstration or to discuss your service's specific requirements:

Visit: www.diarybook.com

Sources: Department of Health Ireland — Better Letter Initiative (2024) | HSE Outpatient DNA Strategy (2023) | Irish Times / Irish Country Living FOI data | Donegal News (2026) | IHCA Waiting List Data (2024) | NHS England Missed Appointments Data (2023–24) | Esendex UK NHS DNA Analysis (2024)