

# The use of Florence Telehealth Text Messages within the Healthy Lifestyle in Pregnancy Service



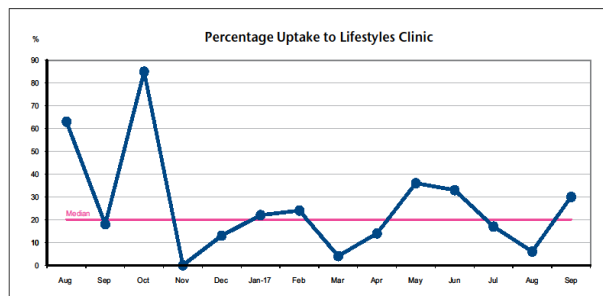
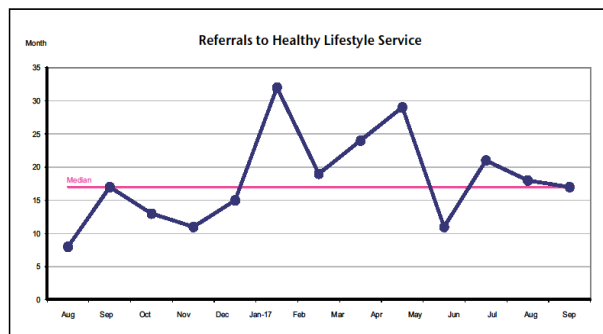
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## Background

Since September 2010, a multidisciplinary weight management service called the "Healthy Lifestyle in Pregnancy Service" for pregnant and post natal women has been running within Lanarkshire. Sessions are facilitated by a specialist midwife, dietitian and physiotherapist. Women are empowered to make healthier lifestyle changes, care of their body and exercise opportunities and how to minimise risks associated with a higher body mass index (BMI) in pregnancy and receive the specialist support throughout their pregnancy and into the initial post natal period.

The service operates mostly through referrals directly received from community midwives and is offered to all women with a booking BMI of 30 and over. Women then receive a letter from the service inviting them to opt in and phone a central line to make an appointment.

Although referrals have been on the increase in the last year (see Fig. 1), at best, a third of the number of women referred then go on to make an appointment and engage with the service. (see Fig. 2).



## Florence (Flo) Telehealth messaging system

The service has recently engaged with the Telehealth team to develop a message system that is designed to support the following:

- Prompt and encourage those referred with making appointments and engaging with the service
- Send key healthy lifestyle messages from Flo in-between their appointments to further embed the information they received from the 3 health professionals when they attend

## Engaging with the Healthy Lifestyle Service

Previously if women didn't opt in following their invite letter, no further contact would be made until the referring midwife was advised that there was no engagement however, if the woman consents she will receive a text such as:

Hi! Flo here. Have you made your appointment with the Healthy Lifestyle in Pregnancy Service yet? Text #1 for yes #2 for no

Depending on the answer, she will then receive a text confirming the team are looking forward to meeting her or the telephone number to allow her to call and make that appointment.

A free text option is available in the system so that the team can send reminders of their appointment date and time and the option to reschedule.

Texts are free to send and receive and the patients use their own mobiles.

## Healthy Lifestyle in Pregnancy Messages

Following their first session with the team, women will receive messages from Flo both throughout their pregnancy and into the postnatal period on having a healthy lifestyle and are designed as a reminder from the information discussed with the team and to support behaviour change. Flo will provide a key message and/or tip around nutrition, care of the body or activity in pregnancy in a friendly, non-judgemental manner.

Some examples of healthy lifestyle messages from Flo:

You may be entitled to vouchers for free fruit, veg and milk. Ask your midwife about the Healthy Start scheme and they will sign an application form for you. Flo

Hi, It's Flo. Regular gentle exercise is good for you and your baby. Aim for 30 minutes five days a week. Ask at your appointment for some ideas.

It is important to eat regularly (every 3-4 hours). If you can't face a big meal then a light snack of toast or a plain scone may help. Take Care, Flo

Think about buying a gym ball. Most supermarkets and outlets stock these. Use it to help stretch and get comfy and keep your baby in a good position for labour.

Keep sugar to a minimum. It may give an energy boost when tired but will be short lived. Fruit, diet yoghurt or unsalted nuts can give longlasting energy.

Some of the messages will also ask questions that require the women to text back a response which will then lead to some further information and advice from Flo.

Q1:  
Doing pelvic floor exercises will help in pregnancy, labour and forever after. Are you doing your pelvic floor exercises regularly? Text #1 for yes or #2 for no

If response is yes:

Great, try to do them regularly and create a habit in the car, on the bus. Do them when you remember. You will benefit in the long term. Take care Flo

If no:

Don't worry, sometimes setting an alarm or using an app as a reminder can help. Try and create a habit, in the car, on the bus. Do them when you remember. Flo

Q2:

Fruit and Veg are an important source of nutrients. How many portions of fruit and/or vegetables have you had today? text #1 >5 #2 3-5 or #3 <3 #4 0

Response for all answers:

Always aim to have at least your five a day. Your body and your baby will thank you for all those extra vitamins and minerals. Look after yourself, Flo

## The Aim of Introducing Flo

The aim of Flo is to increase percentage uptake and provide a more personable approach to engaging with the service. It is hoped that the supportive messages of healthy lifestyle changes and care of the body in pregnancy enhance the experience women have by providing a focus for discussion at appointments thus improving meaningful discussions and then supporting their behaviour change out with face-to-face contact, both throughout their pregnancy and into the postnatal period; the impact of which will be evaluated following the pilot period.

