

# Choose and Book

By empowering patients to make appointments at a time and place that is most convenient for them, Choose and Book is a prime example of the patient-focused agenda that is at the heart of NHS modernisation.

Atos ™  
Healthcare

The vision of Choose and Book was to move forward from the bureaucratic, paper-based booking processes used by 30,000 GPs and almost 300 hospitals in England, and provide a truly joined-up service that would empower patients and reduce the administrative burden on the NHS.

## Introduction

In October 2003 we were awarded a five year contract to provide an electronic booking service – the first of four suppliers awarded service provision contracts under the National Programme for IT. The Programme is delivered through NHS Connecting for Health.

Choose and Book is designed to support GPs in offering patients a choice of provider and to enable patients to electronically book an appointment at their convenience. The appointment can be booked there and then in the GP's surgery, or – if the patient prefers to consult their family or colleagues before making an appointment – later by 'phone or over the internet.

As a core component of the National Programme for IT, the project is at the forefront of the political agenda and subject to much public scrutiny.

## Our service

We work closely with NHS Connecting for Health to ensure that the vision of Choose and Book is realised. This strong working relationship is a central factor in our team's ability to continue designing, implementing and managing Choose and Book. Our integrated delivery covers:

- > **Consulting** – change management support, communications support, business process mapping and training management at both a national and local level
- > **Systems Integration** – programme management, management of Cerner subcontractor, technical and business assurance, infrastructure technical design in association with Managed Operations, test management and release management
- > **Managed Operations** – design, build and support of production and test environments in primary and disaster recovery data centres, training, helpdesk, including incident and problem management

- > **Cerner** (managed by our technology consultants) – application design, build, test and support.

## Our approach

The development and roll-out of Choose and Book is absolutely dependent on forming and maintaining close relations with NHS Connecting for Health, local NHS organisations and stakeholder interest groups. From day-to-day consultation in a collaborative and transparent working environment to excellent communication channels for managing pan-project risks and issues with third-party suppliers, we drive forward Choose and Book in a coordinated, efficient and inclusive way.

We have a reciprocal, responsive and durable partnership with Cerner, based on strong project governance and shared risk, which is constantly reinforced by sharing our practical experience as the project grows and progresses.

Ultimately, the success of Choose and Book is founded on ever-increasing adoption of the service by patients and the NHS community, as well as on sound technology. We work within both primary and secondary care to encourage and explain the business and cultural change needed to deliver new healthcare services and get the most out of the investment they represent for patients.

## The benefits

Choose and Book was launched on time and to budget in July 2004. Since then we have delivered four major upgrades and 42 minor releases. Since January 2006 patients requiring a first out-patient appointment have been offered a choice of at least four hospitals. Release 4 introduced in May 2008 supports the new national Free Choice Policy, providing the functionality to support electronic booking of specialist out-patient appointments wherever in the country the patient chooses to go.

Choose and Book revolutionises the way in which patients experience the NHS, by offering them a service tailored to their needs. It delivers the ability for patients to:

- > Choose and receive medical services and healthcare when it is most convenient for them, according to their home, family and work commitments
- > Choose from a list of different providers
- > Leave their doctors' surgery with a printed appointment letter in their hand
- > Book their appointment later at a time convenient to them.

Choose and Book also allows GPs to send confidential referral information to secondary care clinicians in a secure electronic document.

"Choose and Book is making strong progress in becoming the everyday method of referral across the NHS while delivering greater certainty and peace of mind to thousands of patients daily. Atos Healthcare and NHS Connecting for Health work very closely together to ensure that the Choose and Book service evolves to meet the needs of patients and the NHS"

**Guy Dickie**, Programme Director for Choose and Book

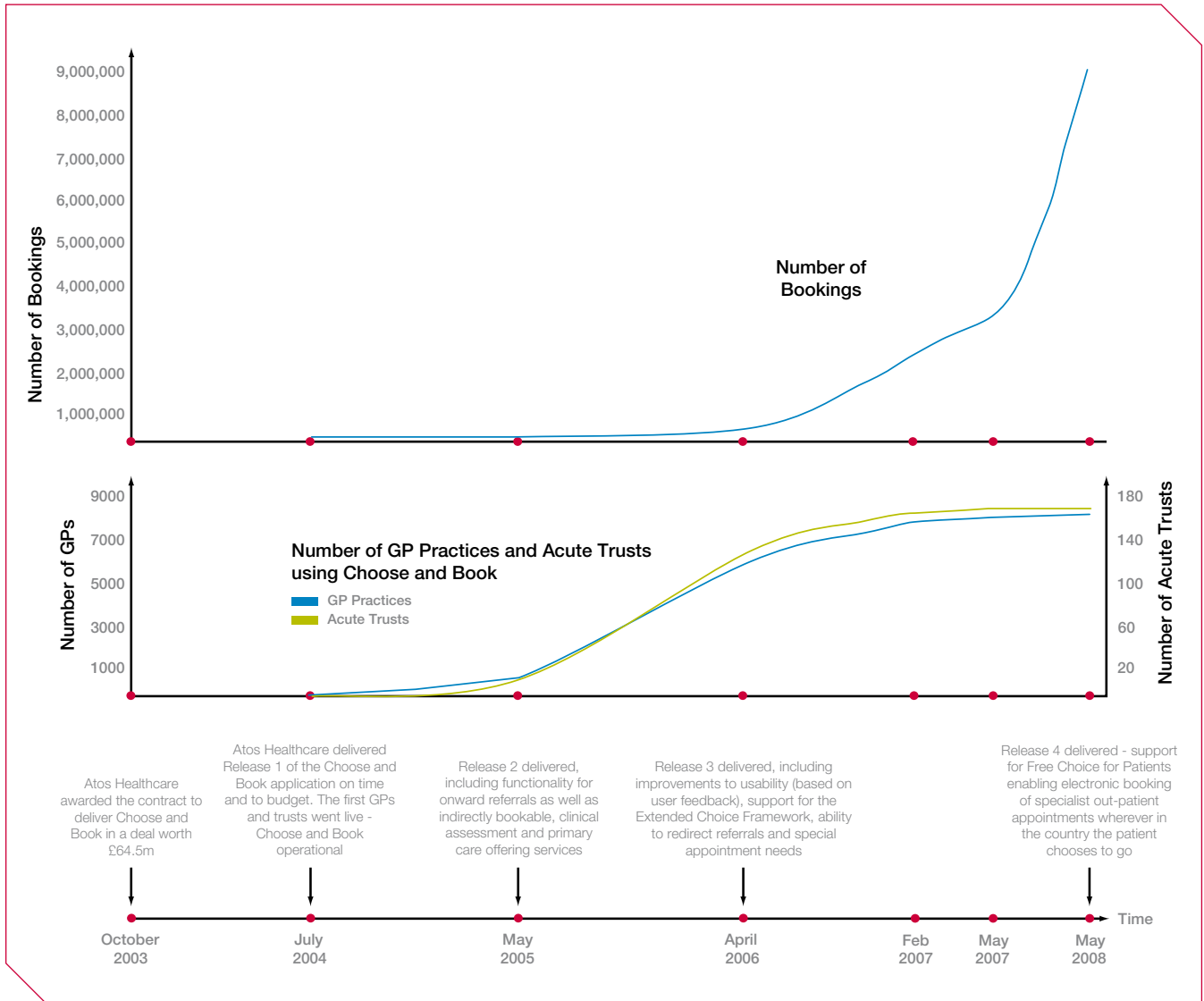
## Measured in millions

Appointments made through Choose and Book have increased dramatically as millions of patients experience the personal benefits it delivers. By August 2006 there had been one million electronic bookings. By May 2008 this figure had risen to over nine million bookings.

Trusts are reporting that Choose and Book has helped increase efficiency in hospitals. For example, at Kettering General Hospital NHS Trust, Did Not Attend appointments have been reduced by approximately a third and waiting times by nine working days, when referrals are made through Choose and Book.

“Choose and Book saves us time and money, and our patients leave happy and with their confirmed appointment. There are no more follow-up ‘phone calls and consultations, and no more cases of me forgetting to write their referral letter, because with Choose and Book, I know exactly what I need to do.”

**Dr Amir Hannan, GP, Tameside**



### Looking to the future

By working closely with NHS Connecting for Health we are releasing further enhancements for Choose and Book, based on feedback from healthcare professionals, patients and the British Medical Association – all of whom help us to ensure that upgrades and enhancements are relevant and timely.

Take-up of the service, as well as feedback, clearly shows Choose and Book is improving the way in which clinicians and staff across the NHS are able to fulfil their roles more effectively.

We are committed to making sure that Choose and Book continues to provide value and convenience for trusts, hospitals, clinics, GPs, and above all for patients themselves. We fully support the National Programme for IT and are committed to its success.

We recognise that Choose and Book, as part of the wider National Programme for IT, is radically changing the way clinicians and staff work across the NHS.

And we will continue to engage in productive relationships with all the parties involved in the National Programme for IT to ensure that the changes deliver benefits for the NHS and value to patients.

### Going forward

If you would like to find out more about our technology solutions for healthcare, please call 020 7830 4931 or visit [atoshealthcare.com](http://atoshealthcare.com)



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