Introduction & Aim:
- Backlog of elective cases following the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Processes changed in response to COVID-19 including virtual pre-assessment / consenting clinics.
- Despite the backlog, it was noted that theatre utilization was below target.
- Theatre cancellations have a big impact on theatre utilization so we aimed to identify measures to reduce them.

Methods:
- Single centre study at a specialist elective orthopaedic hospital
- Retrospective audit: June to October 2020
- Review of all cancellations for Foot & Ankle Patients

Results:
- 36 cancellations out of 193 patients listed over the 5-month period (19%).
- These were grouped into COVID and non-COVID related cancellations.
- The biggest cause for cancellation was patient-driven, due to last-minute fears regarding surgery during the pandemic (25% of all cancellations).
- The second biggest cause was problems relating to swabs (17% of all cancellations).
- These 2 causes were felt to be modifiable causes.

Changes Instituted:
- Additional pre-operative counselling to include COVID-19 related specific risks.
- Patient counselling regarding importance of isolation and having pre-operative swab.
- Designated team for COVID swab management
- Early reinstatement of face-to-face pre-operative assessments to facilitate these changes

Conclusion:
- A number of changes in the way we work were instituted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This meant a number of key processes changed and it is important to monitor the effect of these changes and institute rapid solutions to new problems this creates.
- It is also more important than ever to involve patients in their care and arm them with knowledge about risks early in their surgical treatment.
- Further re-audit is planned to determine the efficacy of these changes
- We hope our experience can be used to help other trusts identify key areas for quality improvement