

Welcome to the Patients Association's Weekly News



We're now members of the Maternal Mental Health Alliance



We have joined the Maternal Mental Health Alliance (MMHA) so that we can work in partnership with other organisations to improve mental health services for pregnant women, new mums and their families.

The MMHA is a UK-wide charity that focuses on the period during pregnancy and the first year of a child's life - known as the perinatal period - working to ensure women and families affected

by [mental health problems](#) have access to high quality services designed to meet their very particular needs. Maternal mental health issues affect one in five women and their families.

The MMHA is calling for all women and families across the UK to have equitable access to comprehensive, high-quality care perinatal mental healthcare, including and beyond specialist services. This aim aligns with our purpose, to ensure patients can access and benefit from the health and care they need to live well.

The MMHA's specific goals are:

- A confident, well-equipped [workforce](#) delivering excellent, safe perinatal mental healthcare and support
- Care for all women, including those impacted by [inequalities](#)
- Specialist perinatal mental healthcare services that meet [national standards](#) and act as a catalyst for change within the wider system of care.

The MMHA brings together more than 100 organisations representing patients and clinicians. Being involved in the MMHA will increase our knowledge of how patient partnership could support improved care and outcomes for this group of patients. It will also help us to campaign for patient partnership in maternity services with clinicians and service members of the Alliance.

[Learn more](#)

Social prescribing - what you know and want to know about it



We're considering if we should have information on our website about social prescribing and want to know what you think.

Social prescribing is a model of care in which a doctor or nurse refers a patient to a range of local, non-clinical services such as volunteering, arts activities, or a range of sports.

The services are often provided by voluntary and community sector organisations, which is why social prescribing is sometimes called community referral. It also aims to support people to take greater control of their own health and recognises that people's health is determined by a range of social, economic and environmental factors.

To find out what you think, we have a one-minute questionnaire that asks if you feel you know what social prescribing is and what information we should include in any information we may develop.

We'd also be interested in hearing from people who have experienced social prescribing; what information would have been helpful to you when you were first offered social prescribing? Write to weeklynews@patients-association.org.uk and tell us.

[Answer the questionnaire](#)

We support calls for men's health strategy



We're lending our support to the Men's Health Forum's campaign to introduce a men's health strategy in all four home nations.

When the Department of Health and Social Care announced the Government's intention to introduce a women's health strategy in 2021, the Men's Health Forum welcomed it, saying it strengthened its belief "that sex and gender play a critical role in healthcare and that policies are needed to address them: the case for a men's health strategy is now unanswerable".

It has now launched its campaign to introduce a UK-wide men's health strategy. The Forum says similar policies and strategies already work effectively in many countries including Ireland and Australia while here in the UK, on a local level, cities such as Leeds have introduced a gender-informed approach to health.

[Learn more and sign up to support the campaign](#)

New guidance on end of life treatment



The General Medical Council has updated its guidance on [Treatment and care towards the end of life](#) for doctors.

Originally published in 2010, the principles in the guidance remain; the updates reflect recent changes to the law and clinical practice. Amendments have been made to sections referring to organ donation, clinically assisted nutrition and hydration, and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation. The text more closely aligns with the GMC's guidance on [Decision making and consent](#), which was published in 2020.

It has also updated its guidance on [Good practice in prescribing and managing medicines and devices](#); and its joint guidance with the Nursing and Midwifery Council on [The professional duty of candour](#). This latter document has guidance on when and who doctors, nurses or midwives should apologise to; what to include in an apology; and how to say sorry.

From the helpline
Breaking up is hard to do



Bobby* called our freephone helpline to ask if there was any way he could stay with his GP practice, even though he was no longer living in its catchment area.

Bobby has been with the same GP surgery for over 50 years. But when he recently moved, he was told by the practice he'd have to register with another GP practice.

Bobby told our adviser he had a good relationship with the surgery and really wanted to stay on its patient list and asked - did he have a legal right to choose his GP surgery?

The answer is no, there is no legal right for patients to choose their GP practice. Patients can try to register with any surgery, for example one that's closer to where they work, but the practice is not obliged to accept any patient that wants to register with it.

Our adviser suggested Bobby speak to the practice manager to see if the surgery could make an exception to its rules and keep him on its list. Our adviser also shared information on [registering with GP practices outside your area](#).

*Name changed to protect privacy.

To contact our helpline team, call 0800 3457115 between 9.30am and 5pm on weekdays or email helpline@patients-association.org.uk. See [our website](#) for more ways to get in touch.

And remember, we have a [range of information](#) on our website from our very popular nutrition checklist right through to understanding your medicines.

What our team is reading this week

[Public health measures are key to curbing Covid in UK, say scientists](#)

[Core20PLUS5 – You said, we're doing...](#)

[Healthcare is 'postcode lottery' for elderly people in Scotland](#)

[NHS Wales waiting times causing 'public health crisis' as around 25% of population await treatment](#)

[Covid trapped me at home for more than seven months](#)

About Us

Our purpose is to ensure that everybody can access and benefit from the health and care they need to live well, by ensuring that services are designed and delivered through equal partnership with patients.

Our strategic focus for 2021-25 is patient partnership in the design and delivery of health and care services.

We are a registered charity raising all our own funds. If you'd like to support our work for all patients and make a difference, please [donate or consider making a regular donation](#). Thank you.

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