



Welcome to the Patients Association Weekly News



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Forward

'Declare Your Care' to help improve services says Care Quality Commission



About seven million people who used NHS, private health or social care services in the past five years had concerns about their treatment but had never raised them, according to the Care Quality Commission (CQC). More than half of these people (58%) expressed regret at not doing so.

CQC's new research shows that patients and their carers often worried about being seen as troublemakers or feared that complaining

would make matters worse.

The main reasons for raising a concern were poor patient care, a lack of information and delays to a service or appointment.

The research was published to mark the launch of CQC's 'Declare Your Care' campaign, which encourages people to share their experiences of care to help improve standards of care in England.

John Kell, Head of Policy at the Patients Association, said:

"It's sobering to read that millions of people who have had concerns about their care have chosen not to share their experiences, either because they did not know how to do so, or because they were worried that they would not be taken seriously.

"Patient input is an invaluable resource for the NHS. This is particularly true when things have gone wrong – complaints will help the NHS understand what happened, and learn so that it is not repeated. But the NHS needs to learn to value this patient input, and act on it rather than becoming defensive and closing ranks as often happens. An NHS that is not truly open will always be an NHS that fails to learn and improve.

"Many people contact us seeking information on the complaints process, and patients are generally nervous that by speaking out their future care will suffer. That should not be the case in an NHS that is open to feedback and keen to improve based on patients' experiences."

Read more about CQC's research [here](#).

[Read more](#)

Department of Health launches NHSX to lead on NHS IT



The Government has announced plans to create a new joint organisation for digital, data and technology, to be called NHSX.

The new organisation will set national policy and set best practice for technology across the NHS, including standards setting, data sharing and transparency. A key requirement will be to ensure interoperability across both the health and broader care systems, as well as

supporting the use of new technologies by the NHS. In addition to other parts of the NHS, the new tech unit will work closely with the Government Digital Service and other central government functions.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said: “Everyone knows how hard it’s been to get the NHS to adopt the best in digital. We’ve set out a clear tech vision for the NHS, which underpins our NHS Long Term Plan. Now we’re bringing together the tech leadership into NHSX, which will be responsible for harnessing the true potential of technology to transform care, save lives, free up clinicians’ time and empower patients to take greater control of their own health.”

Find out more about NHSX [here](#).

[Read more](#)

Waiting times targets - how important are they to you? Our five minute survey



Have you completed our short survey on NHS waiting times yet? It's not too late to have your say. We would like to hear your views so we can better understand how patients feel about these treatment targets.

How important are waiting times targets to you? Would you support a relaxation of the current targets? The [survey](#), which includes a brief overview of the current system and targets, will take around five minutes to complete, and your views will be kept anonymous.

You can complete the survey [here](#).

[Complete the survey](#)

From the helpline: misdiagnosis and delayed diagnosis



This week we heard from Susan* who got in touch with various concerns following a misdiagnosis at hospital. After an accident in 2017, Susan was admitted to hospital where she was told that her elbow was dislocated. Upon further examination she was informed that she had suffered ligament damage and that surgery would be necessary.

Susan was referred to a specialist and after a 10-month wait it was discovered that her injuries included a problem with the nerve in her arm as well as a torn muscle – injuries that had been missed by the hospital conducting Susan’s initial examination. Due to the passage of time since Susan sustained these injuries, her treatment options were very limited. To compound matters further, Susan was concerned that the two hospitals appeared to have lost parts of her medical record. Having lost faith in medical advice and concerned that the recommended treatment may result in further complications, Susan contacted our helpline to seek advice.

Our helpline adviser explained the complaints process and directed Susan to the various [resources](#) on our website. We explained that even though her complaint would be raised outside the 12 month period in which it should ordinarily be made, the hospital may accept Susan’s complaint if she outlines the reasons for the delay.

We informed Susan that she can select one of the two hospitals to be the ‘lead’ hospital for her complaint. This means that, if both hospitals accept Susan’s complaint and investigate what went wrong, Susan would liaise with just the lead hospital rather than having to correspond with both separately. With regard to her treatment and diagnosis, we recommended that Susan inform her GP that she would like a second opinion, and outlined the process involved in doing so. We also advised Susan to contact the Information Commissioner’s Office regarding the missing hospital records.

Finally, we recommended that Susan share her experiences with the [Care Quality Commission](#), who may visit the healthcare provider in order to better understand why things are going wrong. We asked her to keep us updated with developments and to get in touch if she required any more information.

*Name has been changed

Our helpline

Keep well this winter

**At the first
sign of a
winter illness
seek advice
from a
pharmacist**



Despite the milder weather than usual for this time of year, [more than 2,000](#) people have been admitted to an intensive care unit or high dependency unit because of flu since the start of October. In total, 2,182 people in the UK have required hospital treatment. That is more than the 2,045 who needed such care in the same period last year, when the virus was much more prevalent.

Those who have not had the flu vaccine appear to be most at risk.

The flu vaccine is routinely given on the NHS to young children, adults 65 and over, people with certain medical conditions and pregnant women. Find out more about the vaccine [here](#).

NHS England is encouraging patients to visit their local pharmacy for advice if they start to feel under the weather. You can find your local pharmacy [here](#).

You can also contact NHS 111.

[Read more](#)

What our team is reading this week

Post traumatic stress disorder affects 'one in 13 by age of 18'

UK government letting down young people by failing to tackle health inequalities, report warns

Nuffield Trust: Friday FAQs: Trish Greenhalgh

NHS patients with chronic illnesses will get a £3,000 a year 'personal health budget' to spend on their own care by 2024, ministers reveal

NHS staff to get safe spaces and 24 hour helpline to avoid burnout



Helpline Live Chat:
Weekdays from 2pm to 5pm



About Us

Our vision is that health and social care will be delivered in a way that meets every person's health and social care needs. Our mission is to give effect to the patient voice, to improve patient experience and support people to engage fully in their own care. Find out more about our values on our [website](#).



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