

## Welcome to the Patients Association's Weekly News



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### Nurses escalate industrial action



The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) announced yesterday that its next strike will run continuously for 48 hours from 6am on Wednesday 1st March to 6am on Friday 3rd March, and will affect more than 120 NHS employers in England.

This time, for the first time, nurses working in emergency departments,

intensive care units, cancer care and other services that were previously exempted will go out on strike.

As an organisation, we implore the Government on behalf of patients to continue to negotiate with RCN to find a resolution to this dispute. We are concerned about the impact the strike will have on patients in hospital during the action, and its knock on effect where appointments and surgeries have had to be rescheduled.

We made it clear in our [letter](#) to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care last month that regardless of the industrial action being taken by nurses, paramedics and other NHS staff, the NHS is in crisis. The situation calls for plans that protect patient safety and reduce the number of excess deaths related to it.

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**Get together with family and friends and help  
recruit more members to the Patients  
Association**



Photo credit: Thibault Trillet

One of our aims during this, our 60th year, is to double our membership, and we need your help to achieve that.

Word of mouth, a personal recommendation, is often the best way to introduce people to something new. We're hoping some of our members will hold events during 2023 to introduce family, friends and workmates to the Patients Association.

We've put together a toolkit with some ideas to support every kind of event. It includes information about us and why we believe in patient partnership. We've calculated that if every current member got two people to join, we'd reach our membership target for 2023.

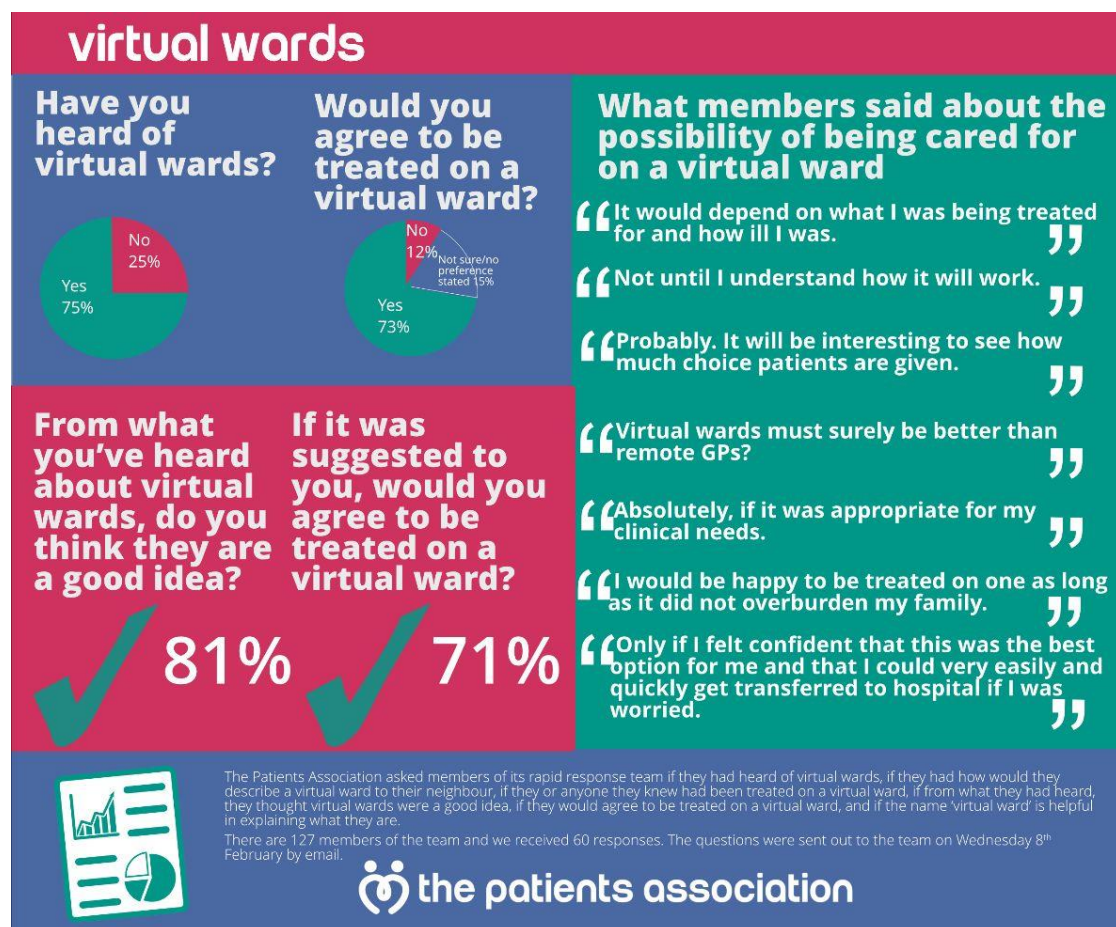
We hope some of you will take up the challenge. If you're a member of a patient participation group, are all your members also members of the Patients Association? Those of you who are part of community groups,

perhaps part of your next meeting could talk about the Patients Association?

Or you can go to town and hire a fire eater - if you do, we'd like to see the photos.

[Download our toolkit](#)

## Virtual wards - thumbs up from members but with some reservations





Last month, the Department of Health and Social Care announced that up to 50,000 people a month will be cared for at home in high-tech 'virtual wards'.

NHS England describes virtual wards as allowing "allow patients to get the care they need at home safely and conveniently, rather than being in hospital". To learn more you can watch this [video](#).

Following the announcement, we wondered how much members knew about virtual wards and if people would be willing to be treated on one. To get some idea, we asked our newly formed rapid response team for its thoughts.

Here's what we asked and the findings.

- Have you heard of virtual wards before? Three quarters of respondents said yes
- Have you or anyone you know been treated on a virtual ward? More than two-fifths said no
- From what you have heard about virtual wards, do you think they are a good idea? Two-fifths said yes
- Would you agree to be treated on a virtual ward if it was suggested to you? A little less than three quarters said yes, with some people being very enthusiastic but there were concerns such as knowing they could be easily admitted to hospital if their condition worsened, or if they were assured it was appropriate for their condition
- Do you think the name 'virtual ward' is helpful in explaining what it is? Half said no, just over one third said yes, and the rest were unsure.

Based on these responses, we've decided to host an event on virtual wards later this year at which people will be able to learn more about

this way of caring for patients. We'll provide details as soon as they are confirmed.

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## Save the date: online access to your health records - what's in it for patients?



Make a note in your diary for our next webinar: **Online access to GP health records – what's in it for patients?** which we're holding with NHS England on 16th March, between 12-1pm, on Zoom.

Since last November, an increasing number of patients have been able to access their GP-held medical records via the NHS App. We support patients having access to information about themselves, as it helps them work in partnership with their GP to make decisions about their care.

The event on 16th March will bring together our Chief Executive Rachel Power, two of our members who access their records online, a GP whose

practice has 'switched on' access to their patients' records via the NHS App, and Tristan Stanton from NHS England, who is part of the team that introduced the NHS App.

We'll provide details of how to book your place on the webinar in the next Weekly News.

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## **NHS Innovation Accelerator wants patient input**

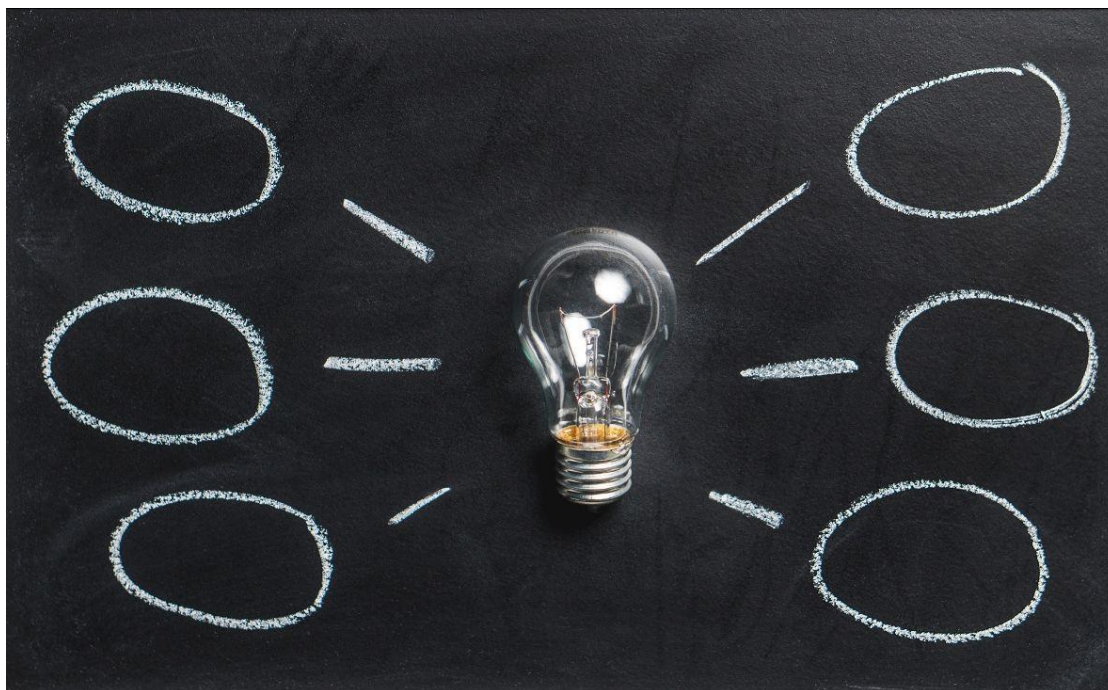


Photo credit: Pixabay

The NHS Innovation Accelerator (NIA) supports the adoption and spread of innovations that benefit patients and staff across the NHS.

It was launched in January 2015, and is run by UCLPartners in partnership with the 15 Academic Health Science Networks.

The NIA is looking for someone, either a patient or a member of the

public, to join the NIA Programme Board, which oversees the strategic delivery of the NIA programme. Their role will be to help ensure, with the rest of the Board, that the voices and perspectives of patients and carers remain central to the work. There are two lay members on the Board.

If you're interested, you can get further information, including role description that details commitment around time and duration, expenses, accountability, support and application details, by emailing UCLPartners. Just follow the link in the button below. The closing date for application to this role is Sunday 26th February.

[Email UCLPartners](#)

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## Support research into patient safety



Photo credit: Rodnae Productions



Researchers from the Universities of Manchester and York are looking for patients, carers and members of the public to get involved in the Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) forum for their research into patient safety.

The main aim of the project, **Quality, safety and clinical governance in NHS and independent hospitals: lessons from the interface**, is to understand how quality and safety is monitored across the NHS and independent hospitals.

Members of the PPI will play a role in the project's design, development, delivery and dissemination. The PPI forum will meet formally six times during the study. There will be opportunities to help in designing and developing survey questions and interview schedules as well as commenting on emerging findings or themes. We will also provide support to enable our PPI forum members to help lead our patient focus groups online if they are able and interested in doing so.

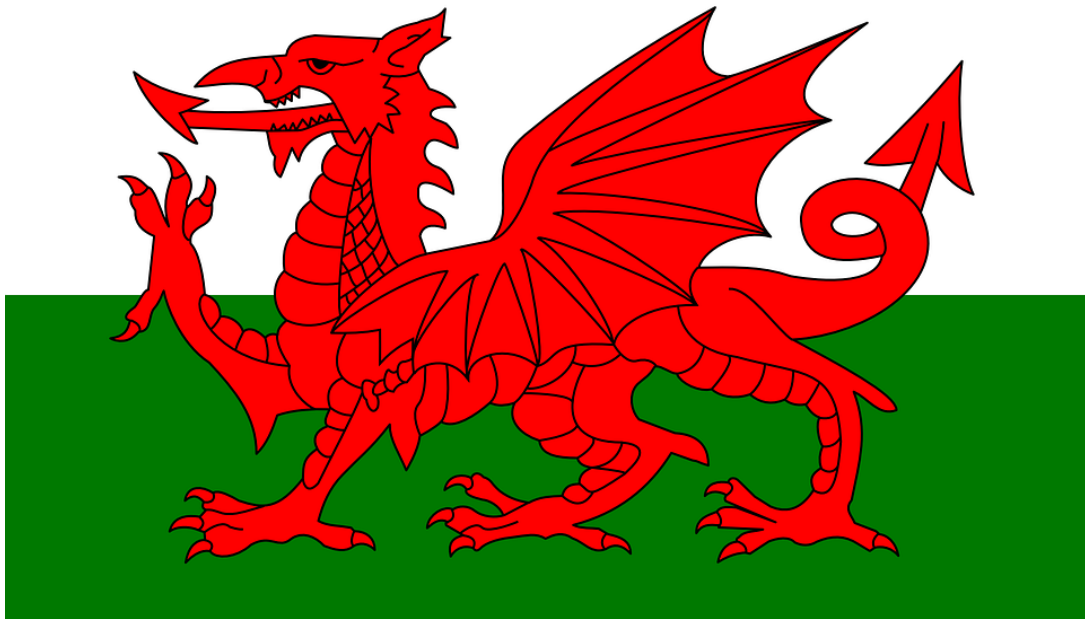
The researchers say the role will last for two and a half years and the first meeting will be in late March. This is a voluntary role but expenses incurred in connection with your volunteering will be reimbursed.

For more information and to apply, contact the PPI lead for the project Dr Jane Ferguson, by following the link in the button below.

[Email Dr Ferguson](#)

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## **Community Health Councils are changing in Wales - have your say on how the new system works**



Welsh Community Health Councils will be replaced with a new national body, the Citizen Voice Body, and the Welsh Government wants your views on how the new organisation should work.

The aims of the new body are to:

- Strengthen the citizen voice in Wales in matters related to both health and social services, ensuring that citizens have an effective mechanism for ensuring that their views are heard
- Ensure that individuals are supported with advice and assistance when making a complaint in relation to their care
- Use the experience of people who have used services to make improvements.

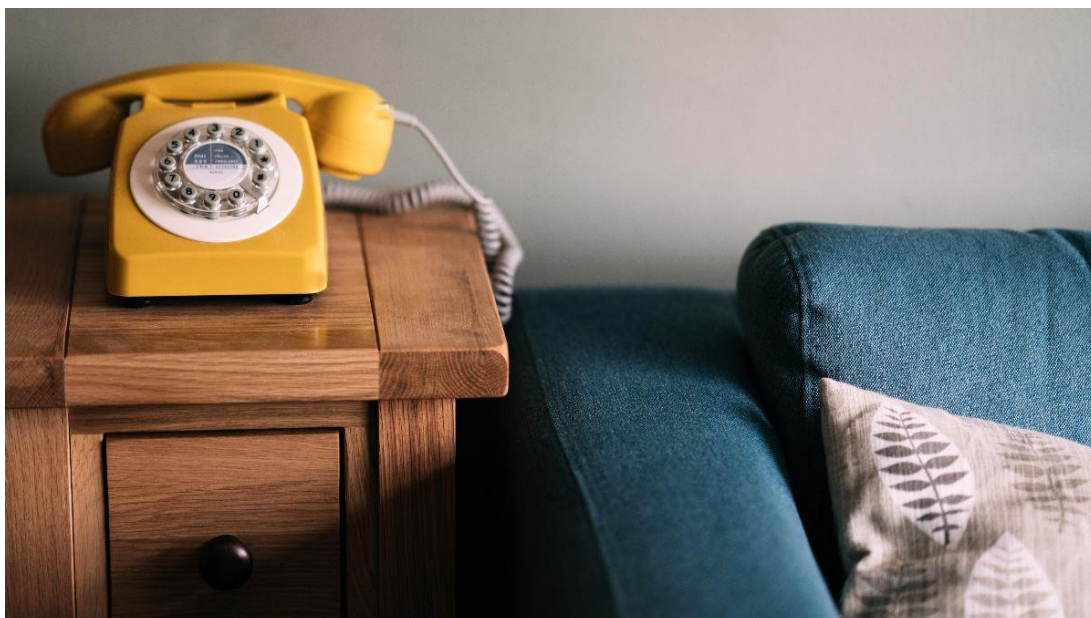
Visit the consultation page by following the link in the button below.  
There is information in Easy Read format. The consultation is open until 6th March.

[Respond to the consultation](#)

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## From the helpline

### Help with getting to hospital



Bethan\* called from south Wales to find out how to get patient transport for an out-patient appointment, as she doesn't drive.

Our adviser suggested Bethan take a look at the hospital's website for information about how to request patient transport. She could also get in touch with the practice manager for the GP who had referred her to the hospital.

Our adviser told Bethan to call back if she needed additional suggestions.

\* Name changed to protect privacy.

If you need information or guidance, our helpline is open between 9.30am and 5pm on weekdays, call freephone 0800 3457115. Or you can email [helpline@patients-association.org.uk](mailto:helpline@patients-association.org.uk).

We also have a [range of information](#) on our website from our very popular nutrition checklist right through to understanding your medicines

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## What our team is reading this week

**Cost of living: GP concerns over rise in signs of malnutrition**

**Fixing the foundations: Why it's time to rethink how we support older people with health problems to stay well at home**

**'We need urgent action on Black mental health'**

**Thirty-five ICSs publish first 'integrated care strategies' (paywall)**

**Health ombudsman issues unprecedented warning over safety and culture at scandal-hit NHS trust**



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## 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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