

Welcome to the Patients Association Weekly News



NHS workforce crisis: health think tanks predict worsening of nursing and GP shortages without radical action



The NHS in England will no longer be able to care properly for patients without a major shake-up of services, according to a new [report](#) published by the country's three main health think tanks.

years unless action is taken, according to the report.

With falling numbers of GPs, the health service must consider recruiting 9,000 more physiotherapists and pharmacists to help in general practice. A combination of

international recruitment, student grants and innovation is needed for things to improve.

Rachel Power, Chief Executive of the Patients Association, said:

“The NHS’s deepening workforce crisis is putting patients’ wellbeing and safety at risk. This report identifies the massive scale of the challenge, and the decisive action required both in the NHS workforce implementation plan, and the Chancellor’s spending review. Failure to act now, and a failure to provide the necessary funding in the spending review, would be disastrous for patients, and thwart the implementation of the NHS Long Term Plan, including its shift to new models of care to meet the needs of today’s patients.”

You can find out more [here](#).

The King’s Fund, Nuffield Trust and Health Foundation said patients are facing longer delays for treatment as the NHS struggles to recruit and retain sufficient staff. Shortages of GPs in England will almost triple to 7,000, and double in nursing to 70,000, within five

[Read more](#)

Help deliver the NHS Long Term Plan



NHS England is consulting on proposals to change the laws that underpin the health service, and we [would like to hear your views](#) to help inform our response. As our Head of Policy, John Kell, explains in his [latest blog post](#), the proposals are technical, but do not propose a large-scale reorganisation like the one undertaken by Andrew Lansley.

Instead, NHS England is mainly proposing to keep the current institutions but to give them new duties and powers. We speak up for patients and would like to represent your views, so if you have an opinion on how the NHS should be organised, complete our [short survey here](#). It should take no longer than five minutes to do so. Our survey closes on Monday 8 April.

You can also give your views directly to NHS England about its proposals by completing this [online questionnaire](#). Their survey closes on 25 April.

[Read more](#)

Speaking up for patients



The Patients Association has a national media profile and provides comment on behalf of patients on a range of issues across the health and social care. You may recently have seen the Patients Association mentioned in these stories:

[The Guardian: NHS England restricts patients' access to cataract removal](#)

Nearly one in five clinical commissioning groups are restricting access to at least three basic elective surgeries and treatments, according to new [research](#). The Medical Technology Group found that 88 per cent of CCGs are limiting access to one or more treatments including: hernia repair surgery; cataracts removal; continuous glucose

monitoring; and hip and knee replacement.

Rachel Power, Chief Executive of the Patients Association, said:

“For some years now, the NHS has been forced into crude and often locally-driven rationing decisions through a sheer need to save cash, and clearly without any clinical justification. But these restrictions are not putting patients’ needs and their well-being as the priority. They unfairly and unnecessarily prolong the time patients will spend in pain, possibly immobile and unable to carry out daily tasks or to work, and to ask them to wait for wait for longer in discomfort and at risk of further complications is totally unacceptable.

“The NHS should never put patients in this position, and funding choices by central government should never have put the NHS in this position. A properly funded and well-functioning health service will not leave patients in pain and denied procedures that would improve their quality of life.” Read more about the story [here](#).

Sunday Times: New prescription rules for GPs to curb UK's opioid epidemic

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), the official health watchdog, is to [develop guidelines](#) for GPs on prescribing opioids and how to ease patients off the powerful painkillers. The move follows increasing concern in the rise of prescriptions of these painkillers, variations in GP prescribing patterns and increasing addiction rates, overdoses and deaths.

Lucy Watson, Chair of the Patients Association, said:

“When patients suffer acute pain from illness or trauma they want safe and appropriate pain relief. It will be crucial to take an evidence-based approach to the issues concerning safe opioid use so that there will still be appropriate prescribing of opioids for those patients who require this form of pain relief, particularly patients with cancer and people receiving end of life care. Patient experience and the outcomes to be achieved for appropriate pain relief must be considered in the development of these guidelines.”

Read more [here](#) (£).

Opportunities to have your say



Share your views on the education and training of pharmacists

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the regulator for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacies in Great Britain. They set standards for the education and training of pharmacy professionals, to make sure they are prepared with the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours to provide safe and effective care for the people using their services.

GPhC wants to hear from patients, carers and the public on its proposed changes to the education and training standards for pharmacists to make sure that the pharmacists of the future are prepared for future practice. These changes include students spending more time with patients from an earlier stage in their education and training. This consultation is open until 3 April 2019. You can complete the survey [here](#).

NICE committee to develop antimicrobial prescribing guidelines

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is recruiting expert lay members to help develop antimicrobial prescribing guidelines.

NICE is looking for individuals with experience of:

- [impetigo](#) or
- [infected human and animal bites](#)

People who have an understanding or experience of either of these two topics are invited to apply. This understanding could have been gained through personal experience, as a relative or carer of someone who has used health services, or as a volunteer or employee of a relevant voluntary organisation or support group.

The time commitment for each role is around seven months.

More information can be found [here](#).

[Read more](#)

From the helpline: communication at GP practice



This week we heard from Anya*, who got in touch following concerns about the way she had been treated by reception staff at her GP practice. Anya was at her GP practice when she saw another patient, who spoke little English, experience difficulty in communicating with the receptionist. As Anya spoke the same language as the patient, she approached the reception desk to interpret for him, but was told to re-take her seat, which she did. A few minutes later, a different patient approached the reception desk to interpret.

Later that week, Anya received a letter from her GP practice informing her that she had breached confidentiality guidelines, and that she should not repeat the behaviour. Anya was distressed by this letter and found that her blood pressure readings had spiked following the incident and since receiving the letter. Anya attributed this to the conduct of the staff at the practice. She asked our helpline adviser how she could stop the GP practice from writing to her, as the correspondence was distressing to her, and she felt it

was not doing her health any good.

Our helpline adviser suggested that Anya should acknowledge the letter from her GP practice and explain that her intention was to assist the patient in communicating with the receptionist. We also advised Anya to confirm that, following the request from the practice that Anya does repeat such behaviour, that she would not do so in future. We advised Anya against asking the practice not to contact her in future, and suggested that instead she should informally raise her concerns about her blood pressure. Finally, in the event the relationship with her GP practice did not improve, our adviser provided information about how to register with another GP practice, and directed Anya to the various [resources](#) on our website.

We asked her to keep us updated with developments and to get in touch if she required any more information.

*Name has been changed

[Contact our helpline](#)

What our team is reading this week

[Expect a rise in patients suing NHS over long waits, watchdog warns](#)

[What will the proposed A&E waiting time targets mean for patients?](#)

[Unprecedented drug shortage linked to Brexit, NHS bosses say](#)

[The DIY smear test: Women who miss their cancer screening at the clinic will now be offered home kits in the post](#)

Childhood trauma scars the brain and boosts depression risk



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](#).



Copyright © 2019 The Patients Association, All rights reserved.

You are receiving this email because you subscribed to the Patients Association Weekly News. If you no longer wish to receive it and wish to unsubscribe, please follow the links contained in this email.

Our mailing address is:

The Patients Association
PO BOX 935

London, England HA1 3YJ

United Kingdom

[Add us to your address book](#)

Our full privacy policy [is available on our website.](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

The Patients Association is a registered charity in England and Wales (1006733). A company limited by guarantee. Registered company in England and Wales (02620761)

Registered address: P Block, Northwick Park Hospital, The North West Hospitals NHS Trust, Watford Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 3YJ