

This week in the Patients Association Weekly News:

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Coronavirus update



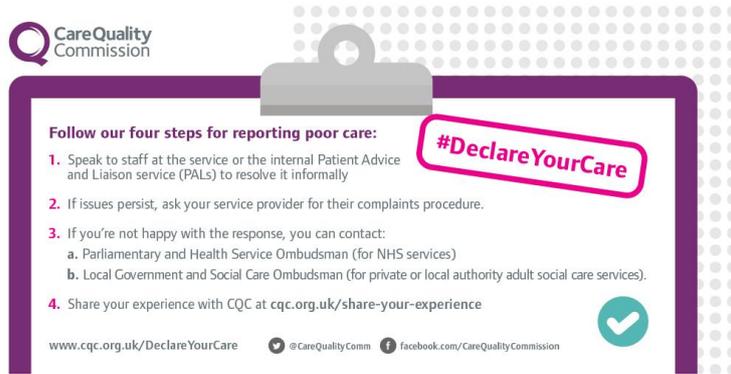
Department
of Health &
Social Care

The Department of Health & Social Care is publishing regular updates on the coronavirus situation, and providing details about the virus and its symptoms, the current situation in the UK, advice for travellers and a summary of actions taken to date.

So, to keep abreast of all the latest news and developments, please visit their website.

[Visit the website](#)

**Declare your Care:
people with learning difficulties**



Follow our four steps for reporting poor care:

1. Speak to staff at the service or the internal Patient Advice and Liaison service (PALs) to resolve it informally
2. If issues persist, ask your service provider for their complaints procedure.
3. If you're not happy with the response, you can contact:
 - a. Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (for NHS services)
 - b. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (for private or local authority adult social care services).
4. Share your experience with CQC at cqc.org.uk/share-your-experience

www.cqc.org.uk/DeclareYourCare  @CareQualityComm  facebook.com/CareQualityCommission

We're delighted to support the current campaign from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) which focuses on encouraging people with a learning disability, their parents and carers to provide information about the care they receive.

This is so important. We were horrified to hear the research findings that people with a learning disability are more likely to regret not complaining about poor care than those without, that they are most likely to want to raise a complaint because of a lack of information about a health condition or because of their treatment options being poorly explained, and that they are twice as likely to have concerns about maternity services and mental health services than people without.

This needs to change. Please visit the CQC website to learn more.

[Visit the website](http://www.cqc.org.uk/DeclareYourCare)

What happens when your medical treatment goes wrong?

For most of us, when we go into hospital or go and see our doctor, either on the NHS or privately funded, our experience is positive and the treatment we receive works.

However, things can go wrong and if your medical practitioner makes a mistake or fails in their duty of care to you it can sometimes lead to an injury or make your condition worse.

When these consequences are serious, it is not unusual to consider contacting a lawyer to find out if you are due any compensation.

But where to go?

If you ever need to find out your legal position, you can search for medical negligence lawyers online. If you do this, make sure you choose a firm that has qualified specialists and can give examples of their other clients. Action Against Medical Accidents has a list of accredited solicitors who specialise in medical negligence on its website [here](#).

The process of identifying who is responsible for an injury or sub-standard treatment, and how the value of a claim is calculated, is explored in two short films available via the links below. They have been produced by Leigh Day, a specialist law firm with some of the UK's leading personal injury and clinical negligence teams, and also one of our corporate partners Do take a look if you, your family or one of your friends is in this situation – we think you'll find the information useful.

[Film: Identifying responsibility](#)

[Film: Proving who is at fault](#)

Get involved: Improving Access to Physical Therapies



The NHS are looking for three people to be patient and public voice partners for their Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme (IAPT).

The roles are initially for 12 months and to apply you must have experience of using IAPT services and be:

- comfortable working with a group
- willing to challenge
- able to work collaboratively
- able to evaluate and comment on documents and reports
- committed to helping improve access to high quality psychological therapies
- willing to attend between four and six meetings during the year.

For more information about the role and application process, please email England.MentalHealth@nhs.net

The closing date for applications is Friday 28th February at 5pm.

Website assessment for the CHC - can you help?



NHS England's Continuing Healthcare (CHC) team are looking for people with accessibility needs to help support the development of its 'Delivery Model' website.

The website has been developed to be a 'one stop shop' for CHC resources and includes loads of information and guidance.

Before it can go live for use by the public, the website needs to meet standards for usability, particularly by people who have accessibility needs. The team are therefore looking for volunteers to test the website for them.

If you have accessibility needs and would like to get involved in helping this project, please contact Nicola Wager at Nicola.wager@nhs.net, who will discuss the project with you, and get you set up if you decide to take part.

The testing sessions are taking place on 5th, 17th and 18th March 2020.

National Data Opt Out

The National Data Opt Out was introduced in May 2018 to give patients the option to stop their personal and confidential information being used for research and planning, and to give them more control over their own data.

All health and care organisations in England are required to comply to the scheme by the end of March 2020. However, achieving compliance requires them to take some significant actions, and it has been reported in the media that some of them will not meet the deadline. If this were to be the case it could mean that some patients' data would be shared against their wishes.

If you would like to know more about the scheme and how to opt out, please visit the NHS website.

[NHS website](#)

From our helpline

The image shows a close-up of a hand holding a mobile phone. The Patients Association logo, a stylized heart with two figures inside, is visible in the top left corner. The text 'the patients association' is written in white on a dark background. A large green box with white text reads 'Calls to our helpline are now free of charge!'. Below this, a blue box with white text says 'We've launched our new 0800 number, making it free for people to speak to our expert advisers: 0800 345 7115'. A red diagonal line crosses the image from the top left to the bottom right.

the patients association

Calls to our helpline are now free of charge!

We've launched our new 0800 number, making it free for people to speak to our expert advisers:

0800 345 7115

The helpline team received a call from Jean* asking how she could make a complaint about the difficulty her 79-year-old mother has in getting appointments at her GP practice.

As Jean's mother is deaf, Jean phones the practice to make any appointments that are needed on her behalf. Unfortunately, when Jean phoned recently she was told by the receptionist, who she described as rude and dismissive, that the practice could not offer her mother an appointment for three weeks. The last time there was a delay of this length, Jean's mother needed to be admitted to hospital with sepsis before the appointment date arrived, and so naturally Jean was worried that the same situation could happen again.

We suggested to Jean that she asked the practice if and how she could make appointments for her mother online, as this can sometimes reduce the waiting time for appointments. We also directed Jean to the NHS website where she could look for local walk-in centres and where no appointments are needed.

Regarding Jean's request for advice on how to make a complaint, we directed her to the 'how to make a complaint' leaflet available on our website and suggested that she gave details of her experience to the Care Quality Commission.

*Name changed for privacy

[Contact our helpline](#)

What our team is reading this week

[Mental health affects so many of us and I was one of them who needed help](#)

[NHS at risk of sharing patient data unlawfully](#)

[Thousands of patients potentially harmed by undelivered NHS mail](#)

[Nuffield Trust response to new UK points-based immigration system](#)

[Weak NHS plans spark fears over Boris Johnson's 50,000 nurses pledge](#)

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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