

This week in the Patients Association Weekly News:

- **Patients Over Politics: the results of our survey**
- **Patient experience: tell us what makes a difference to you**
- **Donate as you buy your Christmas shopping**
- **Media round-up**
- **News from the helpline**

**Patients Over Politics – patients deliver massive vote of no confidence in politicians**



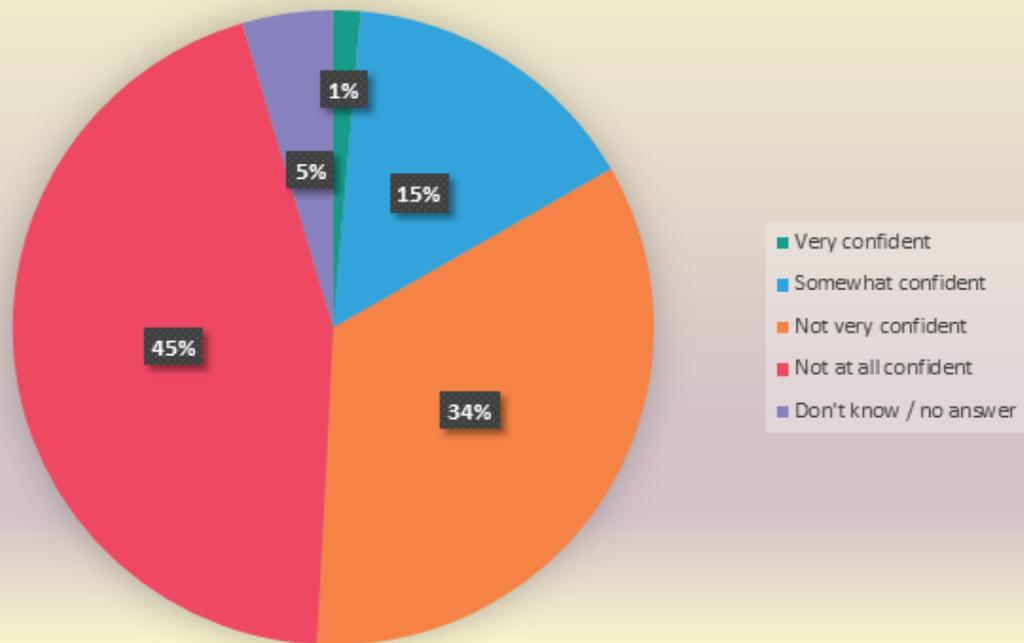
**PATIENTS  
OVER POLITICS**

**Remember what really matters**

Thank you to everyone who took part in our Patients Over Politics survey. The results make grim reading for politicians, with 79% of people saying they are not confident in the UK's politicians and political parties to address issues relating to health and care in a serious and responsible way.

In addition, 76% of people are not confident in our politicians and parties to do what's best for health and care.

**How confident do you feel in the UK's politicians and political parties as a whole to address issues relating to health and care in a serious and responsible way during this election campaign? (%)**



Our call to put Patients Over Politics therefore seems more important than ever – with less than a week until polling day, parties and candidates have a little time left to show that they are capable of remembering what really matters, and taking the serious and responsible approach that health and care demand.

The full report of the survey result also explores what you told us should be the priorities in health and care. The clear top five were:

1. Expand the clinical workforce, including by improving retention
2. Increase funding
3. Invest in and/or improve social care
4. Prevent or reverse privatisation / private sector involvement
5. Integrate / join up services.

Analysis of the results is available in the full report.

[Read the report](#)

[Get involved](#)



There's still time to get involved! You could display a poster, send a message to your candidate or spread the word online and in person. There are details of these ideas, and more, on our dedicated website.

[Take action](#)

## Party pledges

If you're looking for information on what the parties have pledged to do in relation to health and care, we have produced comprehensive digests of all manifesto promises from the UK's main parties.

[Brexit](#)

[Conservative](#)

[Green](#)

[Labour](#)

[Liberal Democrats](#)

We've also published [a short article](#) explaining how each summary was compiled.

[Read all the manifestos](#)

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## Patient Experience

Our major policy programme in 2020 will focus on patient experience, and it will be guided by what patients tell us. Our in-depth survey will generate crucial evidence, so if you have not taken part already please consider setting aside ten minutes to complete it.

It asks about what has made a difference to your experience in the past, in terms of both the care you have received and the other aspects of your life that have been important to you. It also explores what the term 'patient' means to people – to explore patient experience, it's essential to be clear about whose experiences are being considered!

Results will be published in the new year.



[Take the survey](#)

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## A reminder - your shopping can help us



Have finished your Christmas shopping yet? If not then don't forget that every time you shop online you could be raising money for us – without costing you anything at all. Please consider signing up to Give as you Live – it only takes a minute - and then they'll convert your spending into cash donations for us!

There are over 4,300 shops to choose from, including some of the big names like Amazon, M&S, Argos, Boots, Debenhams and John Lewis. Thank you and happy shopping.

## Media round-up



The Patients Association has commented on some of the high profile health-related stories in the news this week.

The Daily Mail was interested to know what effect the fall in the number of GPs currently working full time is having on patients. Our Chief Executive Rachel Power commented:

*“This is a serious worry if it results in patients having less access to their local GPs. It could mean increased difficulty in securing appointments, longer waits for people when they have concerns about their health and, most importantly, greater risks to patient safety.*”

*“The onus is on NHS England and Improvement to curate the NHS’s workforce effectively, including taking into account patterns of working that are changing for doctors, just as they are for other occupations. It’s essential that the NHS People Plan meets this challenge when it is published after the election, so that patients can access reliable, high quality services.”*

[Read the full article.](#)

Additionally, The Guardian ran an article on NHS’s plans to restrict access to another group of treatments, following its earlier restrictions on ‘evidence-based interventions’. You can read [our consultation response to the previous proposals](#) on our website, in which we reported your views to NHS England.

Rachel Power said:

*“Patients have seen the range of treatments offered by the NHS cut back over recent years, and the NHS has been up-front about this being to save cash. Often there are good reasons for not using these ‘low value’ treatments as a first choice, but they are appropriate for some patients, and we are unhappy at any new*

*barriers being erected between patients and the treatments they need.*

*“This is of a piece with the restrictions on prescribing over the counter medicines, and patients have told us of the harm and distress this broad programme of restrictions has caused them.*

*“As a result of this rationing, we know that patients who can afford to pay privately are doing so, while those who can’t are going without and suffering. This is exactly what having an NHS is supposed to prevent.*

*“There is no excuse for the ongoing underfunding of our health and care system. For as long as it continues, the NHS will continue to scabble around to save cash, and patients will suffer as a result. The Government’s planned spending increases will not be enough to meet patient need while transforming services at the same time, which is itself essential, so the situation looks certain to get worse as things stand.”*

The comment was featured in [the piece in The Guardian](#), and also subsequently [in the Daily Mirror](#). We will be responding to the consultation on the new proposals when it is issued, and giving you the opportunity to feed in your views and experiences.

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## From the helpline



Our helpline received a call from Edward\* who was eager to understand how he could make a complaint about the difficulty he experiences when making an appointment with his local GP.

He was very unhappy that his practice request all patients to contact them to make appointments at 8am in the morning when they first open, either on the phone or in person. Unfortunately Edward has often found that even when he does get through to the reception early, all the appointments for that day have been taken and the same thing happens when he visits in person. Edward was getting more than a little frustrated and so called us asking for help.

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We advised him to find out whether his practice would allow him to book an appointment on line as this sometimes can help secure earlier appointments. We also suggested that Edward contact the practice

manager to raise his concerns, but if he had no luck with either of these options he should perhaps consider making a complaint.

We directed Edward to our '[how to make a complaint](#)' leaflet, which is available on our website, and we also advised him to share his experience with the practice's Patient Participation Group, and how he could get in touch with them. We then suggested he also gives all his feedback to the CQC, which he can do over the phone.

Lastly, we suggested to Edward that he may be able to find a different practice altogether, where it would be easier to book appointments. We told him the easiest way to find an alternative is on the NHS website which provides all the necessary information.

We asked Edward to call us again if he required any further advice or information.

\*Name changed for privacy

To get in touch with our helpline team and share your thoughts of health and care services, call 0800 345 7115, email [helpline@patients-association.org.uk](mailto:helpline@patients-association.org.uk) or visit our website. We also operate a Live Chat function on weekdays between 2 - 5pm for people who wish to receive advice online.

[Contact our helpline](#)

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## What our team is reading this week

[Our health and wellbeing is more than the NHS](#)

[Millions of children exposed as flu spreads following vaccine delays](#)

[NHS workforce: which manifesto gets our vote?](#)

[NHS winter crisis: extra beds in 52% of hospitals](#)

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## 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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