

This week in the Patients Association Weekly News:

- **Health inequalities on the rise**
- **Coronavirus update**
- **'Opt-out' organ donation**
- **Opportunities with NICE**
- **From the helpline**

Health inequalities on the rise: Marmot, ten years on



The Patients Association has responded to the shocking findings of Sir Michael Marmot's review of health inequalities, ten years on from his landmark report. He concluded that the overall picture had deteriorated rather than improved, and that government policy was a key root cause.

The headlines include:

- Life expectancy for men and women has stalled since 2010
- The more deprived the area you live in, the shorter your life expectancy
- Life expectancy for women living in the poorest communities has fallen since 2010
- People who live in poorer areas spend more of their life in ill health than those in the more affluent areas
- The amount of time people spend in poor health has increased in England over the
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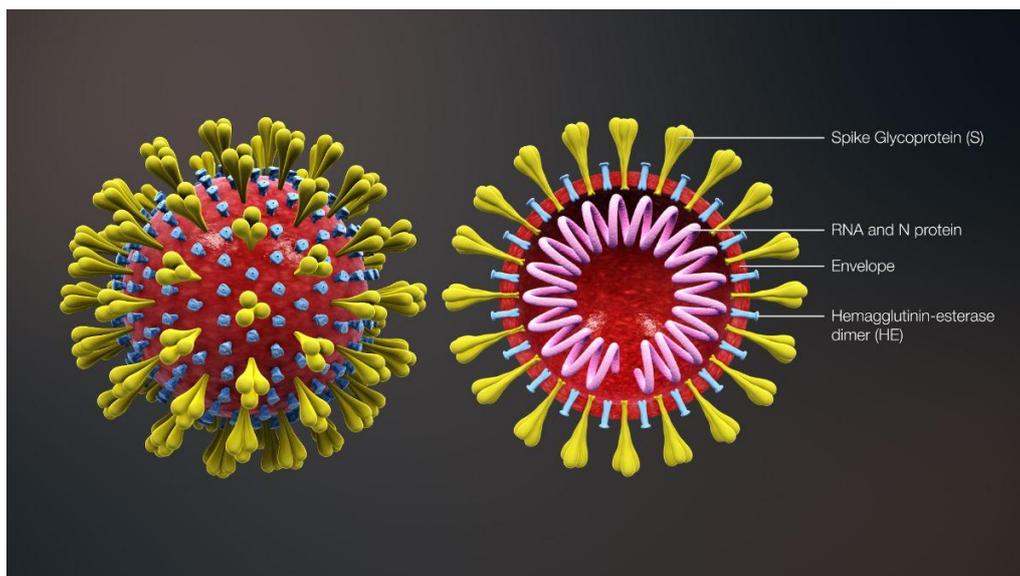
- last decade.

Our CEO Rachel Power was driven to respond to the report, calling for decisive action by the government. She said: “These declines have not occurred in other developed countries: the report shows that they are the direct result of policy choices by successive governments since 2010. There is no justification for our political leaders degrading the health of the population in this way.

“Not only should the Government commit adequate funding for the NHS and social care, but it should articulate a clear vision for health and wellbeing, and align all areas of policy to ensure its vision is realised. These must include housing, environmental, transport, food, work and economic policy.”

[Rachel's statement in full](#)

Coronavirus update



Steps continue to be taken to address the threat from coronavirus, as cases on continental Europe are reported to be increasing. So far over 7,000 people in the UK have been tested for the virus, with more than 99% being found negative.

Advice has been issued for people who have recently returned from travelling overseas.

If you have returned from these specific areas since February 19, you should call NHS 111 and stay indoors and avoid contact with other people even if you do not have symptoms:

- Iran
- Specific lockdown areas in Northern Italy as designated by the Government of Italy
- Special care zones in South Korea as designated by the Government of the Republic of South Korea
- Hubei province (returned in the past 14 days).

If you have returned from these areas since February 19th and develop symptoms, however mild, you should stay indoors at home and avoid contact with other people immediately and call NHS 111:

- Northern Italy (defined by a line above, and not including, Pisa, Florence and Rimini),
- Vietnam
- Cambodia
- Laos
- Myanmar

If you have a cough, or fever or shortness of breath and have visited any of the following areas in the last 14 days, stay indoors and call NHS 111 informing them of your recent travel to the city.

- China
- Thailand
- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Hong Kong
- Taiwan
- Singapore
- Malaysia
- Macau.

[Read more](#)

New 'opt-out' system for organ donation begins in May



The new system of 'presumed consent', sometimes called 'opt-out' organ donation, has been scheduled to start in England on May 20th.

From that date, people aged over 18 will be considered to have agreed to donate their organs and tissue after death, except where they made a decision to opt out.

A similar system already operates in Wales, and is due to be introduced in Scotland this autumn. Northern Ireland is retaining the current 'opt-in' system.

Organs will only be taken for routine transplants, to help those waiting for a life-saving or life-enhancing transplant, and not for 'novel and rare' transplants. Only a small proportion of people who die in England are medically suitable to donate organs, due to the need to ensure they are free of any illness that caused the person to die. In practice this commonly means people who have been in good health and die in accidents.

While the new system starts on 20 May, people will continue to be able to record their decision to opt out at any point and the simplest way to do so is on the NHS Organ Donation website.

We [responded to the consultation](#) on the change when it was proposed in 2018.

[Read more](#)

Opportunities to get involved with NICE

NICE National Institute for
Health and Care Excellence

The National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (NICE) is the public body that evaluates best practice and cost-effectiveness of medicines and treatments. They regularly seek input from patients and carers as part of their assessment of the available evidence. Below are the opportunities they are currently advertising.

Join a committee

NICE committees are working groups made up of health and social care practitioners and experts, patients, service users and members of the public. They currently have four vacancies for patients with time commitments from ten to 18 months, to help develop guidance on the following topics.

- Quantitative faecal immunochemical tests to guide colorectal cancer pathway
 - Management of common infections - stye and conjunctivitis
 - Looked-after children and young people
-
- Self-harm: assessment, management and preventing recurrence.

Take part in a consultation

NICE are also consulting on new and revised guidance for specific conditions and treatments. If you have experience relevant to any of the following, please consider responding.

- Acute coronary syndromes
- Axonics sacral neuromodulation system for bladder control in people with symptoms of overactive bladder
- Suspected neurological conditions
- Behaviour change: digital and mobile health interventions
- Electrical stimulation to improve muscle strength in non-neurological chronic conditions
- Pembrolizumab with axitinib for untreated advanced renal cell carcinoma.

[Find out more](#)

From the helpline



We received a call from Beth* who wanted to know what she could do about her medical records that had gone missing from her GP's surgery.

Beth had been with the same surgery since childhood, and had also always lived at the

same address. However, she recently learned that the surgery, for no apparent reason, no longer held her records. She was obviously upset and concerned.

We advised Beth to contact Primary Care Support England (PCSE) who are responsible for moving medical records between GP surgeries, as this may have happened in error.

We then suggested she alerted the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) as they could advise her on any issues surrounding breach of data privacy.

Beth then asked us about making a complaint, so we directed her to our '[how to make a complaint](#)' leaflet which is available on our website, and advised her to feedback her experience to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) who are the inspectors of healthcare providers.

*name changed for privacy

If you would like more information about any of the organisations mentioned above, here are the links to their websites:

PCSE: <https://pcse.england.nhs.uk/>

ICO: <https://ico.org.uk/>

CQC: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/>

[Contact our helpline](#)

What our team is reading this week

England predicted to miss target of becoming smoke-free by 2030

Health visitors fear for children's wellbeing following 'relentless service cuts'

Sickest NHS patients 'face hours on trolleys'

Hospital 'bed blocking' numbers hit highest level since 2017

Drug hope for people with chronic cough

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