

Welcome to the Patients Association's Weekly News

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The way ahead for COVID-19: lockdown, shielding and vaccines



Many of you will still be shielding, protecting yourself against infection, and the wider lockdown continues – for now.

But as some companies talk about going back to work, you may be wondering whether you're safe to leave the house. Is the worst over?

The answer is: not just yet. Prof Yvonne Doyle, Director for Health Protection and Medical Director at Public Health England said this week that the UK is passing through the peak of the COVID-19 infection and we must still stay at home where possible, and at all times for people who have to shield themselves.

The Prime Minister has announced that details of the next phase of the anti-coronavirus measures will be announced next week. This is expected to include an indication of how lockdown restrictions might be adjusted in the coming months, but it is not expected that the lockdown will be lifted entirely in one go, or that social distancing guidance will be ended at all soon.

But the good news this week is that research into a possible vaccine to COVID-19 has taken a further big step. Two UK-based projects are underway, at Imperial College London and the University of Oxford. The Oxford study has begun trials of a possible vaccine in humans this week, and say they will know by July if it works.

Your opinions on social care and health records needed



The Professional Record Standards Body is looking for people and carers to join its webinars in May, which will help to better connect social care and health care services.

In [this short video](#), Sam Bergin Goncalves speaks about her own experiences with the health and care system from her family's perspective. She explains why it's so important for people like her son, Shane, to have information shared in the right place to ensure they get a better quality of life.

The PRSB develops and helps to implement standards for the structure and content of health and social care records such as hospital referral letters, discharge summaries, and inpatient and outpatient letters.

Care record standards exist to improve the safety and quality of health and social care, in particular to ensure that the right information is recorded correctly, in the right place, and can be accessed easily, by any authorised person who needs it, wherever they are.

If you have had any experience of the social care system (whether that is a relative in a care home, or support with every day tasks during an illness), the PRSB would love you to join its online discussions this month and share your views.

You can find all the details and dates [online here](#). Or if you'd like more information, please get in touch directly with the PRSB on info@theprsb.org.

[Get in touch](#)

Get involved – your experience of the pandemic



We want to find out how the treatment and care patients, people with long term conditions, and their families normally receive has been affected their during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Next week we'll launch our Understanding Patient Experience During COVID-19 survey and we hope you'll all take the time to complete the questionnaire, which will be in next week's newsletter.

This survey has three sections:

- The first asks about accessing care for existing health conditions
- The second is for people who have had COVID-19 to find out what their experience of treatment and care was like
- The third section asks people to tell us how you have felt about the services you've received and if you've been satisfied.

We'll use your views and experiences to influence decision makers, such as government and the NHS, during and after this crisis to improve services. So keep an eye out for the survey next week.

From the helpline



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

Bobby* called us for advice on tracking down his missing medical records. He had recently moved house and had registered with a new GP a fortnight ago. The GP prescribed Bobby's regular medicine, although his medical records hadn't yet been sent to the new practice.

But when Bobby asked for a repeat prescription, he was told that because his records still hadn't been received, his new GP wouldn't be able to give him a prescription. This, understandably, made Bobby very anxious.

We advised him to contact Primary Care Support England to find out where his medical records were, and to call NHS 111 to get advice on to get hold of his medication. We asked Bobby to call back if he need additional information or advice.

*Name changed for privacy.

To share your experiences with our helpline team, call 020 8423 8999 between 9.30am and 5pm on weekdays or email helpline@patients-association.com. See our website for more ways to get in touch.

What our team is reading this week

[Coronavirus: What is the hidden health cost?](#)

[The NHS' recovery from covid will be complex, uncertain and controversial](#)

[Randomised test of 100,000 to help decide end of UK lockdown](#)

[Official data demonstrates rapid rise of remote GP consultations](#)

[UK likely to be 'very close' to meeting COVID-19 testing target](#)

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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