

Welcome to the Patients Association's Weekly News

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 Forward

Spending review: big numbers, little hope



This week's Spending Review announced large sums of money for the NHS, but after a decade of underfunding, and with little detail behind the figures, our analysis suggests both health and social care will continue to struggle.

A great deal of the spending settlement for the NHS and social care had been publicised before Wednesday's announcements (see our analysis on [social care](#) and [the new levy](#)) but some of the Chancellor Rishi Sunak's announcement were new.

The mention of hundreds of millions of pounds for “a bigger and better trained NHS workforce”, including 50,000 new nurses, sounds good but it lacks details.

The headline figure of £11.2 billion over this parliament for capital health spending sounds huge, but after years of raiding capital funds to keep the NHS running day-to-day, it’s disappointing.

Elsewhere, the Chancellor failed to address historic underfunding for public health, although a strong public health system is essential to address many of the inequalities people experience.

But the Chancellor’s announcements on social care were awful news for anyone who might need adult social care over the next five years. The increase in funding to local government of 3% is paltry after years of cuts and not all of this will go to social care. We saw nothing in the Spending Review that will prevent the haemorrhage of staff from social care. This is a system that will slide further into crisis, with funding not keeping up with rising levels of need.

Sign up for our next event Shared decision making: a reality for everyone?



Join us next month for our event, Shared decision making: a reality for everyone?

We're partnering with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), NHS England & NHS Improvement, and the Winton Centre for Risk & Evidence Communication for an online event on November 24th.

Our panel will look at NICE's recently published [guideline](#) on shared decision making and also at the recommendations we made in our report, [Shared decision making: shared reality or insider jargon?](#) We'll also explore how to ensure shared decision making is a reality for patients.

Our panel is:

- Rachel Power (chair) - Chief Executive, Patients Association
- Ruby Bhatti - Carer, Patients Association member
- Hameed Khan - Patient/carer, Patients Association member
- [Alexandra Freeman - Executive Director, Winton Centre for Risk and Evidence Communication](#)
- [Jonathan Berry - Person Centred Care Team, NHS England & Improvement](#)
- [Victoria Thomas - Head of Public Involvement, NICE](#)

Attendees will hear from and be able to ask questions of our panel members about their experiences and thoughts on shared decision making.

The event will be held on Zoom and tickets are free. You can register to join the event below.

[Register for Shared decision making: a reality for everyone?](#)

Share your experience of digital healthcare



The Patient Coalition for AI, Data and Digital Tech in Health is working on its next report, focused on digital health inequalities, and is looking for examples that would bring the issue to life.

The Coalition's first report on Digital Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic used case studies to demonstrate how digital technology was used to ensure patients continued to receive good care during the pandemic. The new report aims to shed light on the scale of digital health inequalities across England and look at projects underway to address this challenge. The Coalition would like to include people's personal experience of digital health inequality.

As you're reading this via an email, we're assuming you're not one of the estimated 12.6 million people in the UK who don't have basic digital skills. But aside from a lack of digital skills, other types of digital health inequality exist. They include: no or limited access to fast reliable broadband services, not owning the technology to connect to the internet, and not having the income to pay for a data plan to be able to access the internet.

If you are affected by digital health inequality and you would like to contribute to the forthcoming report, then please write to Sophie Feary on sophie.feary@lexcomm.co.uk. Sophie is based at Lexington, the communications agency that provides support to the Coalition. The Patients Association is the chair and members include many of the UK's biggest patient charities as well as several of the royal medical colleges.

If you know someone who you think would also be interested in sharing their experiences

of digital health inequality then please share this information with them.

[Read the Coalition's first report](#)

From the helpline

Care home excludes patient from care decisions



Thelma* called our free helpline to find out what she could do to support her friend, Janet*, who's temporarily in a care home, and who feels control over her care is being taken over by the home.

Janet was recently discharged from hospital to a care home for six weeks. Thelma is Janet's next of kin.

On admission to the care home, Janet was told she could manage her own medicine, but a couple of days later care home staff took away her medication and told her care home staff would give it to her.

Janet has full mental capacity and is unhappy to be denied her medicines and how the care home went about taking them off her. Thelma also told our adviser that the care home has added a new medicine to Janet's medication, without giving any information on what it is and why it's been prescribed. Janet has refused to take this medicine.

Thelma added that the care home had told Janet it'll be reviewing her care, but would not be involving her or Thelma. She feels the care home is withholding information and taking control of Janet's care.

Our adviser recommended that Thelma contact the local clinical commissioning group (CCG), which would be responsible for paying for Janet's care under the current

Government COVID discharge funding scheme, to raise her concerns. She also suggested Thelma talks to Janet about getting a power of attorney for health and wellbeing for future care.

Our adviser followed up Thelma's call and Thelma said the complex care team at the local CCG had been very helpful: following the conversation with Thelma, a member of the team had arranged a meeting with the care home involving both Janet and Thelma, who was very happy with the outcome.

* Names changed for privacy.

To share your experiences with our helpline team, call 0800 3457115 between 9.30am and 5pm on weekdays or email helpline@patients-association.org.uk. See [our website](#) for more ways to get in touch.

What our team is reading this week

Autumn budget and spending review 2021

Scotland sticks to voluntary vaccines for NHS staff

Hywel Dda University health board bans visitors due to rising coronavirus cases

Northern Ireland Office may directly instruct trusts to offer abortion services

Why women may wait decades for an ADHD diagnosis

About Us

Our purpose is to ensure that everybody can access and benefit from the health and care they need to live well, by ensuring that services are designed and delivered through equal partnership with patients.

Our strategic focus for 2021-25 is patient partnership in the design and delivery of health and care services.

We are a registered charity raising all our own funds. If you'd like to support our work for all patients and make a difference, please [donate](#) or consider making a regular donation. Thank you.



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