

Welcome to the Patients Association's Weekly News

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Patients Association raises concerns about NHS discharge plans



The NHS's updated process for discharging patients from hospital has provoked concerns about patient care, which the Patients Association shares. It risks patients being sent home before they are fully ready and without taking their views about their condition into account. It also enables the NHS to place considerable expectations on family members to deliver care and support.

Our Chief Executive, Rachel Power, said: "This guidance makes it clear that the NHS is still having to take drastic emergency action in the face of COVID-19, that will continue to take a heavy toll on patients. It is clear that many patients will be rushed home who would normally have had a longer period of hospital care.

“The guidance is clinically-driven and places no weight on patients’ views. It says that hospitals should discuss options with patients using new leaflets – but these leaflets state, as their starting point, that the clinical team has already made the decision to discharge. To the limited extent that shared decision-making was ever a reality in the NHS, it appears that it has now been completely binned.

“Shifting the burden of care to family members and friends seems to acknowledge that the health and care system can no longer meet all its responsibilities to patients – which may well be true, but it feels like something of a landmark to see it set out so starkly.

“These emergency measures are alarming enough in the short term, and many patients will pay dearly in terms of their health or wellbeing. But what’s most concerning is that influential voices are pushing for this crisis era, marked by short-cuts in care and the total silencing of the patient voice, to become the basis of the relationship between patients and the NHS over the long term. No ‘new deal’ founded on that basis can ever be acceptable – indeed, it should be unthinkable.”

Rachel’s comments have been quoted in the Health Service Journal, which also cites concerns from Carers UK about the burden the process risks placing on carers, and concerns from geriatricians that the guidance could lead to ‘urgent readmissions’, ‘permanent disability’ and ‘excess mortality’.

The full article is unfortunately paywalled and available to HSJ subscribers only, but if you have a subscription you can read it via the link below.

[Read more](#)

COVID-19 survey launch – tell your story



Thanks to all of you who took part in our survey about patients’ experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. It uncovered some powerful stories, and we’re now looking for patients who would like to share their experiences with the media when we launch the findings in a couple of weeks’ time.

If this is something you think you'd like to do, or just learn more about what it would involve, then please contact our media volunteer maya.anaokar@patients-association.org.uk and she can give you more details about how you could talk part in the launch.

[Get involved](#)

COVID-19: rules changing on social gatherings



Coronavirus infection rates have increased since the start of the month, which has prompted governments across the UK to introduce new restrictions on social contact. In England, Scotland and Wales, gatherings of more than six people from more than one household or support bubble will be prohibited, with limited exceptions including for work purposes and in schools. In Wales the restriction will apply only to indoor gatherings, but in England and Scotland it will apply outdoors as well.

The new rules come into force on Monday. Our website article outlining the guidance and rules relating to COVID-19 always reflects the current situation, and will be updated on Monday to reflect the changes. It also contains links to the full official rules, guidance and advice across the UK.

[Advice and guidance](#)

111 First



We have responded to media reports about plans for the NHS to advise patients to access care via the 111 service if they can, and not go to Accident and Emergency unannounced unless it's necessary. The stated intention is to direct patients to care they need without having to wait for hours in A&E if it can be avoided.

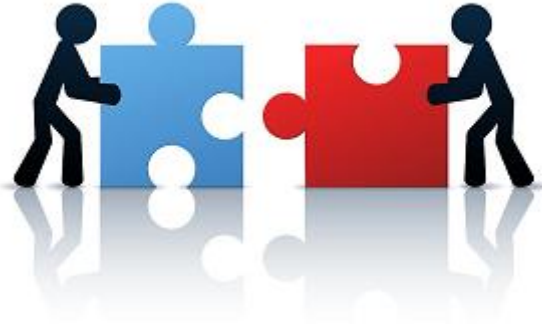
We told the Daily Telegraph: "We're supportive of initiatives to help direct patients to the right care as quickly as possible. If that means they can call 111 and get an appointment with the relevant expert clinician and seen on the same day, without hours waiting in A&E, that will be an improvement for patients. We would not support creating new barriers to patients getting care, such as by confusing and alarming patients who should be going to A&E but end up not doing so.

"We recognise that having large numbers of people waiting in crowded A&Es over the winter carries an obvious coronavirus infection risk, so the NHS is right to be exploring ways to mitigate that."

We will update readers on these plans as and when official announcements are given. In the meantime, the full article is unfortunately paywalled for Telegraph subscribers only, but if you have a subscription you can read it below

[Read more](#)

Complaint standards framework – public discussion



Our chair Lucy Watson joined others to take part in a webinar organised by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman this week to discuss and answer questions about its draft Complaints Standards Framework (CSF).

Joining Lucy were Helen Vernon, Chief Executive of NHS Resolution, Ian Trenholm, Chief Executive of the Care Quality Commission, and the Ombudsman Rob Behrens.

Questions from people joining the webinar included:

- How long will the Framework take to implement?
- How will the Framework be implemented throughout the NHS?
- Who will enforce the Complaints Standards Framework?

PHSO will be making a recording and transcript of the webinar available shortly – check [their website](#) for the latest.

We will be submitting a formal response to PHSO's consultation on the CSF shortly.

Helpline anniversary



It's a year next week (on the 17th) since our helpline became a freephone service. Since then we've taken calls and emails, with how to complain about a service the most frequent reason for calling. The 17th of September is Patient Safety Day, which is why we chose it to as the helpline's relaunch.

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. Our trained advisers offer free and confidential advice, information and guidance and are happy to answer your questions.

See our [website](#) for more ways to get in touch.

What our team is reading this week

[Birmingham lockdown restrictions now 'likely' following rise in coronavirus cases](#)

[Talking robots could be used in UK care homes to ease loneliness and improve mental health](#)

[Contraceptive services 'even worse' after coronavirus](#)

[Scottish government to appoint patient safety commissioner in wake of Cumberlege report](#)

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](#).