

Welcome to the Patients Association's Weekly News

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Join a focus group on private healthcare



Recent [research](#) found that one in five people had used private healthcare because of difficulty accessing treatment in the NHS.

In light of this trend, we're looking for people to join a focus group to help us produce information for patients looking into using private providers to help them better understand how private healthcare works. This information will cover a number of areas including how to get a referral to a private provider, what the options are for paying for treatment, and how patients can “mix and match” private and NHS healthcare.

If you have experience of using private healthcare, are thinking about using private healthcare or a mixture of

private and NHS services and are interested in this topic [please register](#) to take part.

Places are limited to 10 and participants will be selected to ensure diversity including ethnicity, age, gender and where you live. An £80 voucher 'will be paid to each participant in recognition of their time and contributions.

The focus group will take place via Zoom on Tuesday 2nd November 10.00-12.00.

This project is funded by the [Independent Healthcare Providers Network](#).

Patient Coalition for AI, Data and Digital Tech in Health officially launches



This week saw the launch of the Patient Coalition for AI, Data and Digital Tech in Health, which the Patients Association chairs.



It is the first coalition to unite a diverse group of organisations in order to champion patients' interests in digital health technology.

Issues Coalition members have committed to tackling include:

- Examining health inequalities and calling for the prioritisation of access to digital health
- Sharing best patient-centric practice in digital health
- Ensuring the patient perspective is embedded in policy and government strategies.

The Coalition's objectives for the next year are to:

- Promote understanding of the patient experience of digital health
- Ensure patients receive the support needed to access digital health tech
- Inform policymakers on what good practice looks like.

The Coalition will campaign for policies such as:

- Ensuring all patients have access to digital health technology, regardless of where they are in the country
- Providing patients with the choice of how they receive care, and empowering them to make that decision for themselves
- Prioritising digital assurance so that patients feel confident when engaging with digital health technologies that they are using products that have been approved by the NHS
- Ensuring there are clear regulations for the collection, sharing and use of patient data.

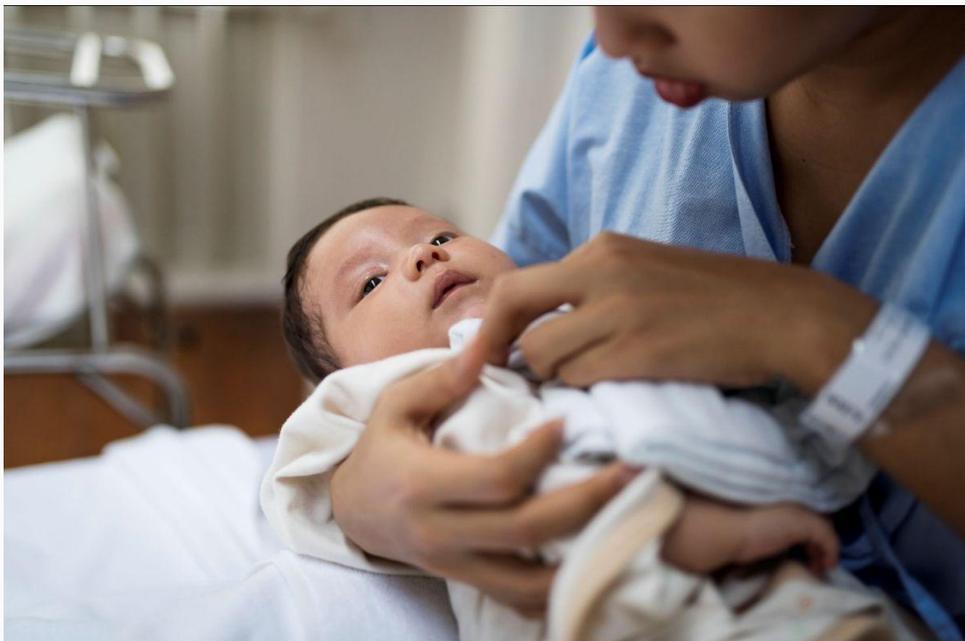
Digital healthcare - reality and benefits

Our Chief Executive, Rachel Power, contributed to a series of articles on the possibilities of digital technology in healthcare, which were published online this week and also in a supplement that was distributed in Tuesday's *Guardian*.

If you missed it, you can read Rachel's [article online](#) and find all the other articles [here](#).

[Read the Coalition's first report: Digital Health during the pandemic](#)

World Patient Safety Day



Today is World Patient Safety Day and this year's theme is "[dedicated to the need to prioritise and address safety in maternal and newborn care](#)".

The UK is a safe place to give birth, but there are variations in quality and safety across the country for mums to be.

In her latest blog on our website, our Chief Executive Rachel Power reflects on those variations and the Health and Social Care Committee's expert panel's assessment that English maternity care 'requires improvement'.

[Read the blog](#)

Reviewing the regulators - our submission



We've submitted our response to the consultation about potential changes to the regulatory framework in the UK, noting that a single framework for all regulators will be easier for patients to understand and go some way towards ensuring consistent outcomes.

We also say that regulation should exist to achieve the best results for patients, and this means focusing on safety and efficacy. Professional regulators should not prioritise efficiency over those objectives.

You can read our full response to the consultation on our website.

[Read more on our website](#)

Are you lonely tonight?



When we ran our first Pandemic Patient Experience survey last year, isolation and loneliness were key themes, and our helpline advisers often talk to people experiencing loneliness.

We thought it might be helpful to provide links to resources and organisations that can help with issues around loneliness.

- [Campaign to End Loneliness](#): this national organisation is working to reach and support the lonely and campaigns for services and activities that address loneliness.
- [The NHS website](#): has a whole section on loneliness.
- [MIND](#): has advice on how to manage feelings of loneliness.
- [Age UK](#): has done a great deal of work looking into the extent of loneliness among older people, including what puts a person at risk of loneliness, and how to combat loneliness.

**From the helpline
GP in a hurry**



Martin* from Norfolk called our helpline after being rushed through a face-to-face appointment with his GP.

He had booked the appointment to get advice about an ongoing pain in his leg. But at the surgery, the GP was in a rush and this made Martin very uncomfortable throughout the appointment. Additionally, the GP didn't offer any treatment and said the pain would go away on its own.

Martin called our free helpline to ask what he could do. Our adviser suggested he call back and ask for an appointment with a different GP at the surgery to get a second opinion. She also advised that he ask the receptionist to book a double appointment if Martin had more than just his leg pain to ask about.

Our adviser also explained how GP out-of-hour services work, and said if Martin experienced further issues, he should raise them with the Practice Manager in the first instance.

* Name 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

[First Covid booster jabs given to NHS staff](#)

[British Medical Association drops opposition to assisted dying](#)

[Life expectancy in England falls to lowest level in a decade](#)

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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