

## Welcome to the Patients Association's Weekly News

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### The COVID-19 ripple effect: waiting times lengthen



We have been speaking in the national media this week about the knock-on effects of the COVID-19 pandemic for regular NHS care.

The NHS released its latest hospital performance data on Thursday, which showed lengthening waiting times for elective surgery, with one person in 12 now waiting more than a year. Our Chair, Lucy Watson, appeared on BBC News to discuss how patients are affected by lengthening waiting times.

Growing waiting lists are a product of treatment cancelled as the NHS freed up capacity to care for COVID-19 patients. More than four and a half million people missed treatment last year, and there has been a growing trend to use crowdfunding to raise money to secure treatment that the NHS has been unable to provide.

Our Chief Executive, Rachel Power, spoke to the Guardian about this, saying: “This analysis confirms what has seemed likely for some time: that the backlog in NHS treatment will take years to clear, and people who were already disadvantaged are paying the highest price. Patients will be facing longer waits, with pain, discomfort and uncertainty, than they would have done in the years before the pandemic – although waiting lists were growing and waiting times increasing even before COVID-19. The NHS was struggling for resource before the pandemic, and it’s far from clear that the Government is providing it with ‘whatever it takes’ to cope with the consequences of COVID.”

We will be publishing a new report later this month that gives further insight into patients’ experiences of disrupted care, and other aspects of the pandemic. Keep an eye on future editions of Weekly News for full details.

[Read more](#)



**Still open**



Our survey to gather your opinions for our submission to the Government for its planned Women's Health Strategy is still open. Thank you to those who have already completed it. If that's not you, please take some time to share your thoughts with us.

[Take the survey](#)

## CVDPREVENT Audit – opportunity to take part



There's still time to register your interest to join a patient panel that will work with NHS Benchmarking Network to engage patients, carers and families in the CVDPREVENT Audit.

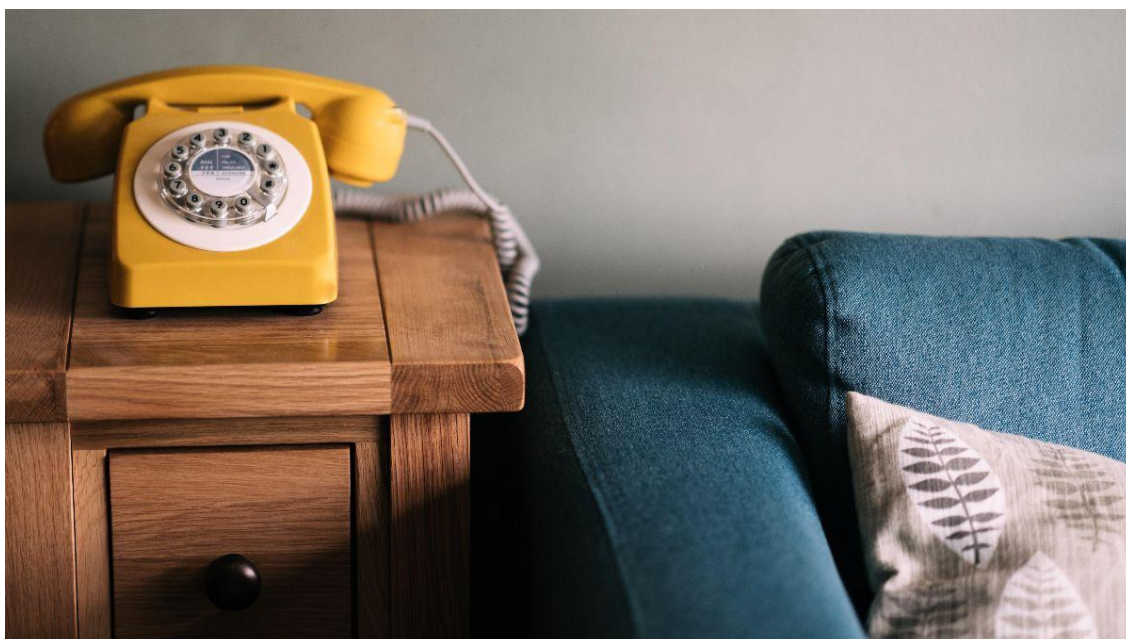
We're looking for people who have recent or ongoing experience of any of the following:

- Atrial fibrillation (irregular heart beat)
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Non diabetic hyperglycemia
- Chronic kidney disease
- Cardiovascular disease.

If you would like to take part, please complete this registration form. In order to ensure a wide geographical spread and all of the above conditions, recruitment and selection will include a short telephone conversation. Places are limited so if we receive large numbers of applicants we may not be able to include or get back to everyone but will do our best to do so and thank you for your interest.

[Register](#)

## From the helpline



David\* contacted our helpline via email initially to ask for advice about how he could get his local health service in the north of England to provide continence pads for his wife, who has Alzheimer's.

One of our advisers called David who said he'd already raised a complaint with the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) after the assessment, following which it was decided his wife didn't qualify for pads on the NHS. The CCG said it couldn't intervene in the decision. The GP said the same thing, adding that GPs only make the referral.

But David told us he thought that the assessment had been flawed, with the assessor weighing only the driest pads and ignoring the heavily soiled ones when deciding whether or not his wife needed an NHS supply. David was upset and frustrated by the assessor's behaviour and decision, and the failure of the CCG and GP to step in and help.

We advised him to call the local authority's Adult Safeguarding Team and Equality Advisory Support Service. We kept in touch over the next couple of weeks with David and were pleased when David told us that the adult safeguarding team had got involved and had asked for a reassessment. Following the reassessment, we were very pleased to hear that the continence service had decided to provide the pads.

\* 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.com](mailto:helpline@patients-association.com). See [our website](#) for more ways to get in touch.

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**What our team is reading this week**

[The top 10 dangers of digital health – a patient's perspective](#)

['Mix and match' UK COVID vaccine trial expanded](#)

[Man found dead at mental health hospital where action plan was delayed](#)

[Report highlights huge health inequalities across Northern Ireland](#)

[The Sewell report risks turning the clock back on the fight against racism in the UK](#)

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## 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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