

Welcome to the Patients Association's Weekly News

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 Forward

Help improve referrals to secondary care



We are recruiting participants to join a patient panel for a series of online workshops that will discuss NHS England's plans to redesign and improve referrals to outpatient services.

Members of the panel will be asked to share their views on the referral process, including the role of specialist advice and guidance. Specialist advice and guidance involves a GP sharing a patient's clinical information with a specialist before, or instead of a referral, so that the GP can get advice about the patient's case.

The panel will also comment on patient resources, such as leaflets and videos, about the use of specialist advice and guidance. Another area the panel will comment on is how NHS England can evaluate the impact of the referral process on patients.

A number of panel members will be invited to share more about their individual experiences for the purposes of developing anonymous patient case studies.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are funding this project.

Workshop dates are:

- 1.30pm - 4pm Thursday 30th June.
- 1.30pm - 4pm Thursday 21st July.
- 1.30pm - 4pm Thursday 28th July

Please note you must be available for all three workshops if you'd like to join the panel.

Participants will receive an £80 voucher for each workshop and case study interview.

To register your interest in taking part, please fill out the [expression of interest form](#). We encourage people from all sections of the community to participate. We are committed to having a diverse patient panel, and particularly welcome applications from Black, Asian and minority ethnic, disabled, and LGBTQ volunteers.

[Register your interest](#)

We've joined the Rural Health & Care Alliance



We are now members of the Rural Health & Care Alliance (RHCA), which exists to draw attention to issues relating to health and care in rural communities.

Its goals are:

1. Seeking equity of health and care for rural communities
2. Creating a strong, collective voice for those involved in rural health and care
3. Raising awareness of the challenges faced in rural health and care.

Issues such as vulnerability, isolation and loneliness affect rural communities across the UK. With these challenges come the additional cost and workforce requirements of delivering effective services to improve healthcare outcomes for those living and working in these communities.

[Learn more about the RHCA](#)

Good practice in combatting digital health inequalities



The latest report from Patient Coalition for AI, Data and Digital Tech in Health highlights the importance of the health system working in partnership with patients who are digitally excluded.

The report, *Putting patients first: championing good practice in combatting digital health inequalities*, is the Digital Coalition's second report. The Patients Association chairs the Coalition, whose members include several leading UK patient charities and royal colleges.

This report focuses on digital health inequalities and the impact that digital exclusion is having on health in the UK. It highlights different reasons for disparities in a person's ability to access and use digital health technology and provides insights into the severity of the UK's digital inequalities.

The report also looks at four case studies demonstrating unique ways to combat digital health inequalities and improve access, and use of digital health technology for patients.

You can read the full report on our website.

[Read the report](#)

Patients urge Secretary of State to think again on clinical negligence claims



We have, along with eight other patient charities, written to Sajid Javid, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care urging him to think again about plans to impose fixed costs on lower value clinical negligence claims.

This is because we see the plans as a threat to both access to justice and patient safety. We [responded to the consultation](#) earlier this year, saying: "We do not support them [the proposals], and are shocked that the Government has brought them forward in this form. They misunderstand the fundamental problem, and propose a bad solution as a result. In particular, they show no comprehension of the scale of the challenge that the NHS faces to overcome its ongoing struggles with patient safety."

[Read the letter](#)

Vote before the AGM



All members should have received their invitation to attend the AGM on 26th May and details of how to vote on the resolutions by now.

We are asking all members to vote or appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf before the AGM. Please be sure to use your vote before 20th May - no votes will be cast at the virtual AGM.

If you are a member and haven't received your invitation and voting form, please get in touch.

[Contact us about the AGM](#)

Your chance to be in *Patient Voice*



We're busy getting the next issue of Patient Voice ready, after more than two years of no editions, and we'd like to hear what our members are up to.

Maybe you're getting your PPG up and running again after a pandemic-enforced break, or you've been involved in the new integrated care systems. If so, we'd love to know more and share what you've been doing with other members.

We'd also like *Patient Voice* to feature individual stories about what's happened to people using the health and social care system - good, bad and middling. By sharing our stories we can all learn more, and the more we share and learn, the more the system can improve. Remember - stories are data with soul!

Email us at the link below to tell us more about projects you're involved in or ask questions about how to contribute to *Patient Voice*.

[Get in touch](#)

Shop with Amazon and raise funds for us



If you shop on Amazon, you can now raise funds for us, at no cost to you, by shopping on the AmazonSmile website.

When you first visit smile.amazon.co.uk, you will be prompted to select a charitable organisation. Once you have chosen the Patients Association, when you shop on smile.amazon.co.uk, AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price to us. Only purchases made through smile.amazon.co.uk will raise funds for us.

Raising funds this way costs us nothing and comes at no costs to individuals who use AmazonSmile. You can find out more about AmazonSmile on [our website](#).

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Scottish cancer plan open for consultation



The Scottish Government has started the process of developing a new cancer strategy for Scotland and wants patients' views on what should be prioritised.

The Government says: "We need to decide what aspects of cancer prevention, management and care are the most important. We want to be comprehensive but will also need to focus on the most important areas for action, particularly in the shorter-term."

The consultation closes on 7th June 2022. Follow the link for the consultation document and how you can share your views.

[Respond to the consultation](#)

From the helpline
Finding medical records



Dorothy* called the helpline to get some advice on how to get hold of her adult daughter, Mary's* missing GP medical records.

Mary has moved GP practices five times over the past 10 years and has become aware that parts of her medical records are missing.

Our adviser suggested Mary contact Primary Care Support England (PCSE), who should be able to locate the missing records. The PCSE supports all parts of primary care in England - GPs, dentists, opticians and pharmacists - providing NHS services in England. It moves medical records between GP practices when patients move.

Our adviser gave Dorothy the contact details for PCSE and encouraged her to get back in touch if she needed further information.

*Names changed to protect privacy.

To contact 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.

And remember, we have a [range of information](#) on our website from our very popular nutrition checklist right through to understanding your medicines.

What our team is reading this week

NHS waiting list in England hits record high as 6.4 million wait to start treatment

No10's independent Covid inquiry WILL probe impact of lockdowns on mental health and young people

Lack of NHS dental appointments widens health inequalities

Mental Health Awareness Week

World complacent on Covid, warns former UK prime minister Gordon Brown

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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