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| **Welcome to the Patients Association'sWeekly News** |

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| **COVID restrictions update** |

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| The Government has confirmed that there will be a further easing of restrictions from Monday in England, but there are no changes to social contact rules and many restrictions will still be in place. Outdoor gatherings must still be limited to six people or two households, and there shouldn’t be any socialising indoors with anyone you do not live with or have not formed a support bubble with.But from the 12th of April, hairdressers, barbers, beauty and nail salons, indoor leisure facilities such as gyms and spas, pubs with beer gardens, zoos, theme parks, drive-in cinemas and drive-in performances events, and public buildings such as libraries and community centres will reopen.Overnight stays away from home will be permitted and self-contained accommodation can also reopen, though must only be used by members of the same household or support bubble.The advice to work from home, if possible, continues, people should minimise domestic travel where they can and international holidays are still illegal.The number of care home visitors will also increase to two per resident, and all children will be able to attend any indoor children’s activity, including sport, regardless of circumstance.As ever, we continue to keep our COVID resources up to date and you can check on our website for the rules in the other home nations.  |

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| [**Read more**](https://patients-association.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9dd6577cf3f36af3c2f6682ed&id=8ba804f05e&e=b00dac9705) |

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| **Official statements on rare side effects caused by the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine** |

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| This week, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisation issued new advice suggesting people under the age of 30 with no underlying health conditions should receive an alternative to the AstraZeneca vaccine, where available. The JCVI says: “The benefits of prompt vaccination with the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine far outweigh the risk of adverse events for individuals 30 years of age and over and those who have underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease. JCVI currently advises that it is preferable for adults aged <30 years without underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease, to be offered an alternative COVID-19 vaccine, if available. People may make an informed choice to receive the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine to receive earlier protection.”The MHRA says anyone who has already had one dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine and did not experience any blood clots or changes in their platelet levels are being urged to have their second dose when invited. The JCVI noted that there had been no incidences of blood clots after the second dose.Public Health England is preparing updated information for those being offered COVID-19 vaccines, and for health professionals, which will be available through the GOV.UK website.Both the MHRA and JCVI have stressed that vaccination is highly effective and substantially reduces the risk of infection and severe COVID-19 disease. |

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| [**Read more**](https://patients-association.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9dd6577cf3f36af3c2f6682ed&id=10344a63cd&e=b00dac9705) |

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| **Opportunity to get involved in the CVDPREVENT audit** |

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| The Patients Association is working with the NHS Benchmarking Network to engage patients, carers and families in the CVDPREVENT Audit. We are seeking participants for a patient panel to guide and influence our involvement in this.   As part of this work the Patients Association will be hosting a series of patient panel meetings virtually (using Zoom). The purpose of these meetings is to get patients’ feedback on the development of the audit outputs to ensure they are suitable for a range of audiences. The patient panel will comprise of 35 patients from the different parts of England. The meetings will be held in July and October 2021 and next February 2022 (dates are on the registration form).  An £80 Amazon voucher will be offered in recognition of your time for each session and places are limited.If you have recent or ongoing experience of any of the following we are keen to hear from you: •    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](https://patients-association.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9dd6577cf3f36af3c2f6682ed&id=9c184cbba6&e=b00dac9705).  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.  |

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| [**Register your interest**](https://patients-association.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9dd6577cf3f36af3c2f6682ed&id=8724d4f387&e=b00dac9705) |

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| **Freedom from Heart Failure - The F Word** |

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| Heart failure is a misunderstood and misdiagnosed condition, as malignant as cancer that should be treated with the same urgency. With the widespread impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, this issue has become more pressing than ever, with at least 23,000 missed cases of heart failure that we know about.The British Society for Heart Failure, the professional association for heart failure specialists in the UK, wishes to address this lack of awareness. Heart failure means that the heart is unable to pump blood around the body properly. It usually occurs because the heart has become too weak or stiff. Heart failure does not mean your heart has stopped working. Twenty years ago, there were very few treatments apart from palliative symptom relief for those with heart failure. However, we have made incredible advances and now have a plethora of medications, devices and surgical interventions that can both extend and improve quality of life. The earlier people present with symptoms, the faster they can get access to treatment.The Society will be running a campaign, The F Word – Freedom from Heart Failure. It will inform and educate, while inspiring a sense of hope, encouraging us to learn more about this important condition. They are asking for your help testing the campaign messages to see how they resonate with you as a member of the public, by clicking on the link below. |

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| [**Take the survey**](https://patients-association.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9dd6577cf3f36af3c2f6682ed&id=387e2e69d3&e=b00dac9705) |

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| **National Nursing and Midwifery Council education standards survey** |

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| Now the EU exit transition period has ended, the UK is no longer required to follow EU law on requirements for nursing and midwifery education programmes.The National Nursing and Midwifery Council, the professional regulator for nurses and midwives in the UK, has commissioned research to help it understand if it should review the inclusion of the EU requirements in its programme standards.The programme standards set out how courses should be delivered; they still reflect EU law and will continue to apply unless it proposes, consults and agrees on any changes.As part of this research, the NMC would like to hear from patients about its current pre-registration programme standards and whether they should be changed, and there is a survey available to get your views. Survey respondents will also be able to register their interest in taking part in an in-depth focus group or interview at a later date (this is optional). |

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| [**Take the survey**](https://patients-association.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9dd6577cf3f36af3c2f6682ed&id=149ab9257a&e=b00dac9705) |

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| **Other surveys still open** |

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| Our Women’s Health Strategy survey is still open; your answers will inform our response to the Government's new Women’s Health Strategy.  |

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| [**Take the survey**](https://patients-association.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9dd6577cf3f36af3c2f6682ed&id=abeb08cb35&e=b00dac9705) |

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| The survey for patients with disease-related malnutrition, caused by being unwell or living with a disease that affects nutrition, is still open.  Your answers will help in the development of patient resources.  |

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| [**Take the survey**](https://patients-association.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9dd6577cf3f36af3c2f6682ed&id=5940de90e0&e=b00dac9705) |

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| **From the helpline** |

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| Gerry\* called from Northern Ireland on behalf of his mother who is temporarily in Canada. He wanted to know how to get his mum’s medical records because the Canadian authorities will not allow her to fly until they have seen her vaccination history. Our adviser suggested he contact the Overseas Health Service to obtain advice, also his mother's GP, and we shared with him our advice leaflet, [Seeing Your Medical Records](https://patients-association.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9dd6577cf3f36af3c2f6682ed&id=dee260cdb6&e=b00dac9705).The adviser said that it would be better if his mother makes the request for the medical records and he also provided Gerry with details about the Information Commissioners Office in Northern Ireland, which may be able help if his mother encountered any difficulties in obtaining her records.\*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. See [our website](https://patients-association.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9dd6577cf3f36af3c2f6682ed&id=53d45c967a&e=b00dac9705)for more ways to get in touch.  |

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| **What our team is reading this week** |

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| [**The parallel health crises of the COVID pandemic**](https://patients-association.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9dd6577cf3f36af3c2f6682ed&id=3bef947512&e=b00dac9705) |

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| [**UK public health expert criticises No 10 race report ‘shortcomings’**](https://patients-association.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9dd6577cf3f36af3c2f6682ed&id=cfb3bb7f5f&e=b00dac9705) |

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| [**Would COVID passports be damaging to public health?**](https://patients-association.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9dd6577cf3f36af3c2f6682ed&id=2d05e3c4ca&e=b00dac9705) |

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| [**COVID-19 has made us more averse to both income and health inequalities**](https://patients-association.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9dd6577cf3f36af3c2f6682ed&id=18f1a0f246&e=b00dac9705) |

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| [**Vaccines have prevented 10,400 deaths in older adults, Public Health England says**](https://patients-association.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9dd6577cf3f36af3c2f6682ed&id=3d7591c045&e=b00dac9705) |

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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](https://patients-association.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9dd6577cf3f36af3c2f6682ed&id=69ea649a14&e=b00dac9705). Thank you.     |

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| *The Patients Association is a registered charity in England and Wales (1006733).  A company limited by guarantee.  Registered company in England and Wales (02620761)Registered address:  P Block, Northwick Park Hospital, The North West Hospitals NHS Trust, Watford Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 3YJ* |

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