

Welcome to the Patients Association's Weekly News

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Join our focus group to improve complaint handling at the GMC



We're recruiting participants for a focus group we're running on behalf of the General Medical Council (GMC) to help it improve how it handles patients' complaints.

In particular, the GMC is doing further work to improve how it responds to complaints in light of the findings of the Paterson Inquiry, which criticised its approach.

Ian Paterson, a surgeon in the West Midlands, was convicted of wounding with intent, and imprisoned in 2017. The scale of his malpractice shocked the country, but there was outrage too that the healthcare system had not prevented this and kept patients safe.

We'll hold online Zoom patient group discussions on 12th May and 2nd June 2021. We're looking for ten participants, each of whom will receive an £80 Amazon voucher in recognition of their time.

If you have an interest in complaints handling but **not** direct experience or ongoing experience of a making a complaint to the GMC or other health regulators, we would like to hear from you.

Places are limited to ten and participants will be selected to provide a broad representation of viewpoints across different ages, genders, and ethnic groups. We will also be looking for people who are willing to be on a standby list to fill a place at short notice if required, but recognise that may not suit everyone.

If you would like to take part, please [complete this registration form](#) and we will contact you for an informal chat. For further information please contact Heather Eardley; heather.eardley@patients-association.org.uk.

Shared decision-making



As part of our ongoing work to empower and enable patients to have a greater say in decisions about their care and treatment, we would like to ask you a few questions about the role you play in your own health, and how you feel about this.

We will be producing a report with recommendations in July 2021 and the results of this survey will be included in the report.

This is an important project for us, and will be central in our work to achieve true patient partnership over the coming months and years.

[Take the survey](#)

Join Engage Britain's conversation

Health

The biggest challenge facing our country

and care

[Engage Britain](#) is supporting people across the nation to share their [health and care](#) experiences. Its aim is to bring about lasting change that benefits everyone.

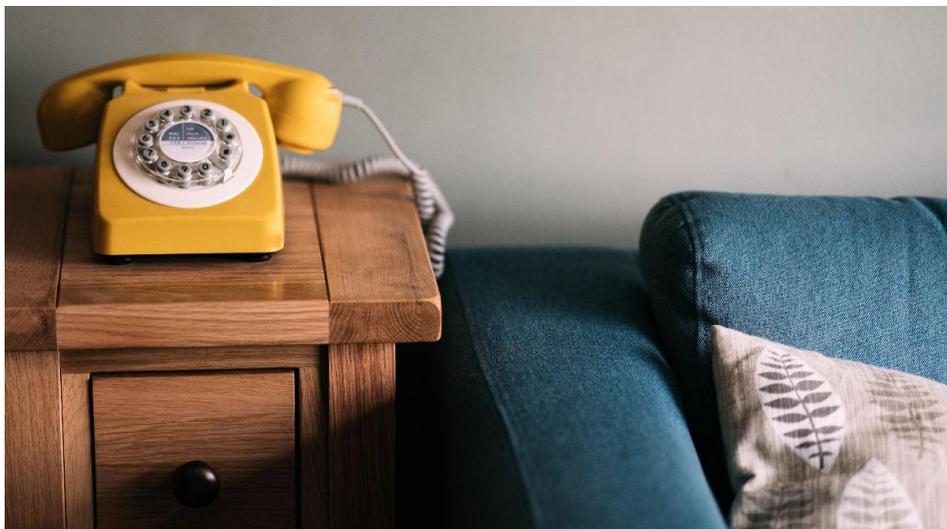
Engage Britain is a new charity that brings people together to tackle what it describes as some of the country's biggest challenges.

It's hosting an online community conversation on 13 May 2021 (10-11.30am). It's an opportunity to join people from across England, Scotland and Wales to share your experiences of health and care, what you think is working well now, and what could be better.

If you'd like to take part, email Engage Britain at healthandcare@engagebritain.org.

You can also share your views on health and care via [this short survey](#). Or if you'd rather talk through your thoughts, you can [upload a video clip](#).

From the helpline



Janice*, who called our helpline, has sadly been diagnosed with early onset dementia. Among her many concerns was the fact that her brother is listed as her next of kin, and wasn't sure he'd convey her wishes in the event she could no longer speak for herself.

Our adviser explained the role of the person one chooses as next of kin and suggested Janice reads our online leaflet on [next of kin](#), which explains the role and answers several commonly asked questions.

Given Janice's diagnosis our adviser also suggested that she consider making an advance decision, so that clinicians would be aware of her wishes in the future. Advance decisions were previously known as living wills, and are statements of which treatments you do and do not wish to receive, in the event you are not capable of making that known. We have a leaflet on that too: [Planning for the Future](#).

Our adviser also suggested that Janice she may wish to consider putting in place a power of attorney. The charity, Compassion in Dying has excellent information about this and our adviser gave Janice the contact and website details so she could look into this further.

As with all our callers, our adviser reminded Janice that she's welcome to get back in touch any time for further information.

* 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](#) for more ways to get in touch.

What our team is reading this week

[Most new mothers say NHS six-week checks fail to focus on their health](#)

[Mental health and social interactions of older people with physical disabilities in England during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

[Malaria: world's most effective vaccine developed in UK](#)

[COVID: government scientist warns of summer surge in cases](#)

[Infant mortality in Birmingham 'not openly discussed'](#)

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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