

Welcome to the Patients Association's Weekly News

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You told us that NHS emergency measures to cope with COVID-19 pandemic came at a huge cost to patients



Nearly 1,000 patients in the UK completed our pandemic experiences survey and told us:

- Patients now want access to services to return to normal
- Many patients had difficulties accessing care
- Many patients experienced increased levels of worry, and loneliness.

The survey provided insights into patients' and carers' lives during the pandemic: some people had terrible experiences, others struggled on, and some even had great experiences. But the major themes were difficulty in accessing services, perennial problems with end-of-life care made worse by the lockdown, and confusion around being recognised as clinically extremely vulnerable and accessing help.

Announcing the results, Chief Executive of the Patients Association, Rachel Power, said: “We are worried about what the coming winter might hold for patients, and the NHS needs to be responsive to what patients have told us about their needs in this survey.

“It’s clear from what patients have told us that we need to do better in the future, both in responding to future emergencies, and in the long-term rebuilding of our health and care services. The survey has enabled us to develop seven suggestions to ensure all patients, disabled people, carers and others are able to access health and care services, should services have to adapt again to high caseload of COVID-19 patients.”

Thank you to all of you who completed the survey. You can read Rachel’s thoughts on what should come next for the NHS, the full report, and our seven key recommendations, in the blog post below.

The Patients Association has been supported to fund this survey and report through sponsorship provided by Novo Nordisk and ENGINE | MHP. Novo Nordisk and ENGINE | MHP have had no influence over the development of the survey or the content of the report.

[Read more](#)

Our advice for the Chancellor ahead of the Comprehensive Spending Review



We have made our formal submission to the Treasury, ahead of the planned Comprehensive Spending Review, giving our view on the impact of COVID-19 and what needs to be done in health and care policy over the spending review period.

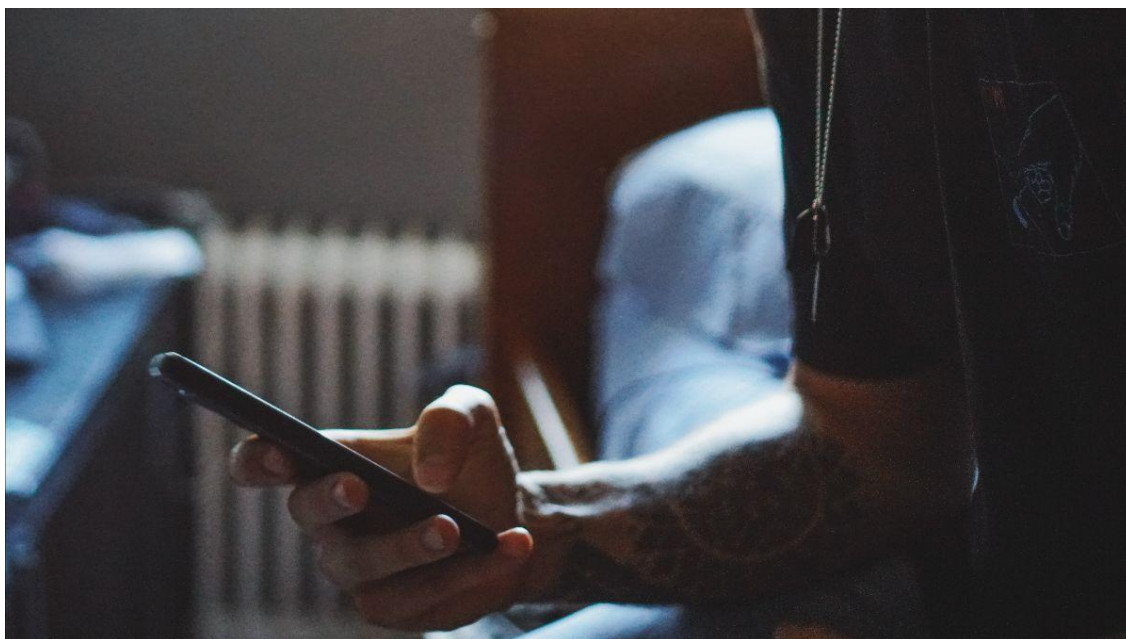
We recommend that the Review should provide the necessary funds to mount a full recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, and address health and wellbeing across all areas of government policy. In particular, we recommend that a strong focus on health inequalities, which have been starkly exposed by COVID-19, should be at the heart of this work.

We also call for a decision on how to end the crisis in social care.

The Comprehensive Spending Review will be announced later in the autumn.

[Read the submission](#)

Smartphone apps for COVID-19



Smartphone apps to help tackle COVID-19 are now available for all parts of the UK, with the launch of the app for England and Wales, joining those for Northern Ireland and Scotland.

The apps enable users to find out if they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and need to self-isolate, check into venues for contact tracing purposes, and book a test if they develop symptoms.

All of the apps are based on the system developed jointly by Google and Apple, which keeps users' personal data stored on their phones and does not share it.

You can find links to information on all of the apps on our website.

[Read more](#)

New COVID-19 restrictions



Tighter restrictions have been introduced across the UK, to limit personal contact and try to reduce the rising levels of COVID-19 infections.

As usual, there are variations across the different nations of the UK about what is permitted. In England, changes include advice for people to return to working from home if they can do so, and tighter restrictions on pubs and restaurants.

These measures are in addition to local lockdowns, which impose additional restrictions in some areas.

You can find links to all the different national and local rules on our website.

[Read more](#)

Consultation response – PHSO Complaints Standards Framework



We have submitted our response to PHSO's consultation on its draft Complaints Standards Framework.

In it, we observe that patients and families need to be more central to the framework, which is very focused on systems and processes, but doesn't consider what it's like for people going through those processes. That said, its outline of how complaints processes should work is essentially sound, but this unfortunately only illustrates how far away the NHS is from implementing good practice as standard.

[Read our response](#)

Early years review



In July, the Department of Health and Social Care launched an Early Years Development Review, aimed at reducing inequalities in young people from birth to age two and a half.

An online questionnaire is available for new parents, so they can have their say on the availability and quality of early years support.

From the helpline



Struggles getting GP to write prescription for consultant-prescribed medicine

Charlotte*, who lives in the south of England, rang seeking advice about getting her GP to write a prescription for medication, which had been prescribed by a consultant.

Charlotte's consultant told her he would write to her GP to ask the GP to continue to prescription he recommended, once the initial prescription for three weeks was up. But Charlotte's GP told her the medicine wasn't something he could prescribe and she should ask the consultant to continue to write her prescriptions. The consultant wrote another prescription and said he'd ask the GP again to take over prescribing, and gave Charlotte a copy of the letter.

But once again, the GP said he wasn't permitted to write prescriptions for that particular medicine and the consultant would have to be responsible for repeat prescriptions. Charlotte told our helpline adviser she felt 'pushed from pillar to post' and was quite worried because the medication was vital to her health.

We advised her to do several things including contacting NHS 111 immediately to ensure she could get access to her medication without further undue delay. We also suggested she contact the local clinical commissioning group (CCG) to establish if her medication was restricted and we gave her the CCG's contact details and explained that CCGs can decide which medication and treatments it will pay for and those that it restricts. We advised her that if her medicine is restricted by the CCG, Charlotte should ask about alternatives.

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.

* Name changed for privacy

What our team is reading this week

[COVID-19 test and trace programme is still a leaky system](#)

[Test turnaround times getting longer in England](#)

[When will we be able to stop wearing face masks?](#)

[UK reports highest ever number of new daily coronavirus cases](#)

[NHS trust fined for lack of candour with family after patient's death in landmark case](#)

About Us

Our vision is that health and social care will be delivered in a way that meets every person's health and social care needs.

Our mission is to give effect to the patient voice, to improve patient experience and support people to engage fully in their own care. Find out more about our values on our [website](#).



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