

Welcome to the Patients Association Weekly News

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Four-hour waiting limit for A&E 'to be scrapped'?



A [report](#) in The Times has suggested that the four-hour A&E target could be scrapped.

It is known that standards across four areas of care – A&E, elective surgery, cancer and mental health – are being reviewed by Professor Stephen Powis, NHS England’s Medical Director. This review was part of the deal under which the Prime Minister announced additional funding for the NHS last summer.

It is not clear whether the review will produce any major changes, though many rumours have swirled in the media in recent weeks. Its initial findings are expected to be published this spring. The review prompted the Patients Association to run this survey on waiting times and other targets, and you can share your views with us [here](#).

Many in the NHS credit existing waiting times targets with eliminating the longest waits and serving as a good barometer of wider health service performance. However, the target has not been hit since July 2015 as hospitals deal with rising numbers of older, sicker patients.

The target to discharge, admit or transfer 98 per cent of patients arriving in A&E within four hours was introduced in 2004 and set at 95 per cent in 2010.

Lucy Watson, Chair of the Patients Association, said:

“It’s essential that patients’ views should be listened to and acted on through genuine consultation before any major change to what the NHS provides. Whilst a change to performance standards in A&E might not be seen as a major change the impact for patient experience and safe care for patients could well be major. When patients wait over four hours to be admitted in an A&E department they are often waiting in corridors and on trolleys, and the department is so busy that the staff are struggling to care for all the acutely unwell patients waiting . Lack of timely access to treatment leads to poorer outcomes for patients.”

Read more about the story [here](#).

[Read more](#)

Waiting times survey: last chance to have your say



Have you completed our short survey on NHS waiting times yet? It’s not too late to have your say. We would like to hear your views so we can better understand how patients feel about these treatment targets. Share your views before the close of the survey at **9am next Tuesday 5 March**

How important are waiting times targets to you? Would you support a relaxation of the current targets? The [survey](#), which includes a brief overview of the current system and targets, will take around five minutes to complete, and your views will be kept anonymous.

You can complete the survey [here](#).

[Complete the survey](#)

Policy and campaigns update



Low valuemedicines: our response to NHS England

Thank you to everyone who responded to our recent survey on NHS England's proposals to restrict access to certain treatments. This week we published our response to the consultation, which you can find on our website [here](#).

In our response, we noted that responses to our survey indicate that NHS England's initiatives may have given rise to some negative impacts on patients. We recommend that shared decision-making should be made more integral to NHS England's guidance, and we also suggest that patient involvement in the development of these proposals should be substantially enhanced. We also strongly recommend that NHS England and NHS Clinical Commissioners commission full-scale polling and market research to validate the findings of our survey. Read our full response [here](#).

Share your views: help deliver the NHS Long Term Plan

The NHS has this week launched a call for patients, the public, NHS staff and partner organisations to [provide their views](#) on potential proposals for changing current primary legislation relating to the NHS.

The call for people to share their views follows a meeting between leaders of NHS England and NHS Improvement, where both organisations agreed a series of new measures to 'improve collaboration' across the health service, including a request from the two bodies for permission to merge. The two bodies believe that targeted amendments to the law could help local and national health organisations work together more effectively to improve services for patients.

You can give your views directly to NHS England about its proposals by completing this [online questionnaire](#). The survey closes on 25 April.

The Patients Association will also be submitting a full formal response. Information about how you can inform our recommendations to NHS England will follow in next week's newsletter and also be available on our website.

Share your views: National Data Guardian

Patients and members of the public are invited to share their views on the key priorities for the National Data Guardian for Health and Social Care (NDG), as the role moves to a new phase. In December 2018 Parliament passed a law to place the role of the NDG on a statutory footing. This law gives the NDG the ability to issue guidance about the processing of health and adult social care data.

Your views will help the Government decide what the key priorities should be for the NDG. You find out more

about the consultation and submit your response [here](#). The deadline for responses is 22 March.

[Read more](#)

Share your experiences of using GP services



Have you found recent consultations with your doctor helpful? Whether your experience has been positive or one that could have been better, we'd like to hear more and see what we can do to help. The Care Quality Commission (CQC), who we work closely with, are looking for case studies of patients' experiences of using GP services.

Our partnership with the CQC means when you call our helpline or email us, it makes a real difference. To get in touch with our helpline team and share your thoughts of using GP services, call 020 8423 8999, email helpline@patients-association.com or visit our website.

[Our helpline](#)

Working in partnership to empower patients



While our policy and helpline work are central to us as an independent charity, we also pride ourselves on working in collaboration with other charities, companies, NHS trusts and patient groups. All of our projects involve listening to patients to make improvements that they have identified as important.

We are currently working on projects across the country on a range of topics, from improving complaints handling and developing patient participation groups to using digital technology. We have had some great feedback on our work over the past few months and made a real tangible difference to improving patient experience.

If you would like to know more about our project work you can visit our [website](#) or email mailbox@patients-association.com.

[Read more](#)

What our team is reading this week

[80% of GP antibiotic prescriptions for respiratory conditions 'are too long'](#)

[Shock rise in global measles outbreaks 'disastrous' for children, UN warns](#)

[Nuffield Trust: Q&A with Charlotte Augst, new National Voices CEO](#)

[Almost half of GPs plan to quit NHS within five years amid criticism of Skype consultations](#)

[Diabulimia: NHS cash to treat type 1 diabetes eating disorder](#)



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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