

Welcome to the Patients Association Weekly News



Patients Association at the 2019 Charity Governance Awards



Earlier this week the Patients Association attended the 2019 [Charity Governance Awards](#) ceremony in London. The Awards celebrates outstanding governance in charities in the UK, and the Patients Association was one of the finalists in the 'Managing Turnaround' category. Dementia UK and Dorset Mind completed the shortlist for this category, with 21 charities in total in the running for awards across seven categories.

While we didn't win on the night, it was fantastic to be shortlisted, and our patient-centred work was praised by the judges on the evening. Congratulations to Dementia UK, who were worthy winners.

As our latest [annual review](#) outlines, 2018 was a transformational year for the Patients Association, and across the three core elements of our work – our [helpline](#), our [policy and campaigning work](#), and our [projects](#) to improve patient care – we made great strides. We're proud of our work for patients and the difference we make, and we're particularly pleased with our achievements over the last few years to improve care for people. This national recognition will give us fresh impetus to carry on our patient-centred work and to support the thousands of patients who benefit from our helpline and advice service.

You can read our shortlisted entry [here](#).

[Read more](#)

Survey: Tell us about your experiences of unsafe, premature discharge



Have you completed our latest [survey](#) on unsafe discharge from hospital?

We want to hear about times when someone has been discharged from hospital despite not being well enough to leave. If the person suffered harm as a result of this, or was at a real risk of harm, it was an unsafe discharge.

Too little research has been done on discharges that simply happened too early, even though we hear about this from callers to our helpline. If you think your experience, or the experience of someone close to you, matches this description of an unsafe, premature discharge, please [share your experiences with us](#) in this short survey.

We will be issuing a report, based on what people tell us. The survey should take around seven minutes to complete. Share your views [here](#).

[Complete the survey](#)

Patient's Choice Awards - voting now open



[Voting is now open](#) to choose the winner of one of nursing's most prestigious accolades: the Patient's Choice category of the RCNi Nurse Awards. The award, which is supported by the Patients Association, enables members of the public to thank a nurse, midwife, health visitor, healthcare assistant or assistant practitioner who has provided exceptional care. Voting is open to everyone.

Five inspirational nurses have been chosen as finalists this year from scores of nominations by patients. Those who nominated the finalists include a young woman diagnosed with cancer while at university and a teenager whose mental health worker has supported her towards recovery.

Rachel Power, Chief Executive of the Patients Association, said:

"It was incredibly heart-warming to read patients' accounts describing how nurses have gone above and beyond the call of duty, and it was

challenging to shortlist just five nurses for these prestigious awards. The commitment, care and dedication of these nurses to their patients is without question – it's now up to the public to make the difficult choice and decide who should be the winner.”

Voting closes at midnight on 14 June, and the winner will be announced at the RCNi Nurse Awards ceremony in London on 3 July.

[Vote now](#)

Information for people needing medical help over the bank holiday weekend



Visit your pharmacy
for minor health concerns

NHS



Contact your GP practice
for appointments in the evenings or
over the weekend



If you need urgent medical help and
you're not sure what to do.

Go straight to 111.nhs.uk

With the bank holiday weekend approaching, it's important to be informed about the health services available to you if you need medical help. If you or a family member needs non-urgent medical advice, you can visit your local pharmacist, call NHS 111 or visit NHS 111 [online](#). The NHS 111 telephone line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. It's completely free of charge to call to help you choose the right care.

Our office and helpline will be closed on bank holiday Monday, and will reopen on Tuesday 28 May.

[NHS 111 website](#)

From the helpline: access to a deceased person's medical records



This week we were contacted by Sonia*, who got in touch with us following her mother's death. Sonia's mother was over 90 years old and was recently admitted to hospital for hip replacement surgery. Following the operation, she became unwell, sweating profusely, experiencing a great deal of pain and difficulty breathing. Sadly, Sonia's mother died. Sonia has not received an explanation from the hospital as to the causes of her mother's death, and she is also concerned that staff did not act quickly or decisively to alleviate her mother's pain.

Sonia contacted our helpline to find out how we can help to establish the circumstances of her mother's death.

This was a particularly distressing case, and our helpline adviser shared condolences on behalf of the Patients Association team with Sonia on her mother's death. Our adviser first addressed Sonia's view that her mother experienced substandard care, and suggested raising concerns with the hospital through their complaints channels. We provided contact details for the hospital's Patient Advice and Liaison Service, and advised Sonia to keep the content of her letter short and to the point, using bullet points to summarise her views. We also signposted Sonia to the [complaints resources](#) on our website and suggested that she follow our hospital complaint letter [template](#).

In terms of finding out about the circumstances of her mother's death, we suggested that Sonia initially make a request to obtain a copy of her mother's hospital records. Access to a deceased person's medical records are subject to legal requirements, and the law is very specific about who they can be supplied to. We signposted Sonia to [online resources](#) to find out more about accessing these records. Finally, we provided contact details for the hospital's Bereavement Team, and suggested that Sonia contact them to request information about what happens next, including when she can expect to receive her mother's death certificate.

We asked Sonia to keep us updated on her progress, and to contact us if we could provide any additional information. If you need advice about any aspect of health and social care, you can contact our helpline on 020 8423 8999, or email helpline@patients-association.com. You can find out more about our helpline and advice service [here](#).

*Name has been changed

[Contact our helpline](#)



What our team is reading this week

[Whorlton Hall: Hospital 'abused' vulnerable adults](#)

[Swathes of countryside becoming 'healthcare deserts' with £100 trips for hospital care](#)

[Personal care should be free for over-65s, says thinktank](#)

[Aspirin 'safe' for brain-bleed strokes](#)

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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