

Welcome to the Patients Association Weekly News



Rachel Power appointed to new NHS Assembly



We're delighted to announce that our Chief Executive, Rachel Power, has been appointed to the new [NHS Assembly](#).

The Assembly is a national forum of stakeholders from across the health and care system to support NHS England and NHS Improvement in the delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan. It is formed of individuals drawn from national and frontline clinical leaders, patient

leaders, patients and carers, and staff representatives, who will bring their experience and knowledge to inform discussions around the NHS's work and priorities.

The group will meet for the first time in April, and then quarterly afterwards. The Assembly will have an agreed programme of work to allow for engagement activity in advance of meetings to help bring wider insight. More than 500 people applied to sit on the Assembly, with the successful applicants chosen based on their individual knowledge, skills and experience.

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

“I am delighted to be appointed to the NHS Assembly and look forward to working with colleagues to shape the future delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan. This is a crucial time for the health service and the decisions made now will impact on patient care in the coming years, so it's vital to get things right. I'll do all I can to ensure that the voices of patients across the country are reflected in policy discussions.”

You can find out more about the Assembly, and who else is on it, [here](#).

[Read more](#)

NEW: 'Photo at Discharge' survey



The Patients Association, in collaboration with Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust, is [conducting a survey](#) to explore people's thoughts on 'Photo at Discharge' (PaD).

A PaD is a photograph taken by a nurse or other healthcare professional of a patient's wound at the point of their discharge from hospital. The photograph is then given to the patient or carer with the aim of providing a clear assessment of the wound for the patient's records and the healthcare provider(s). The photo can help to monitor the healing process, identify any changes in the wound, and can help avoid the unnecessary prescribing of antibiotics.

PaD has received positive local feedback at hospitals that offer it to patients, and the scheme is inviting patients and members of the public nationally to share their views. Do you think having a colour photo of your wound on the day you leave hospital would be beneficial to you? Do you feel it should be standard practice for all patients who have had surgery?

You can find out more about the scheme and complete the short survey [here](#).

[Read more](#)

Help deliver the NHS Long Term Plan



Have you completed our [short survey](#) giving us your views on the laws that underpin the NHS? If not, there's just over a week for you to get involved – our five minute survey closes on Monday 8 April.

As our Head of Policy, John Kell, explains in his [latest blog post](#), NHS England's proposals to change the law mainly involve keeping the current institutions but giving them new duties and powers. We speak up for patients and would like to represent your views, so if you have an opinion on how the NHS should be organised, complete our [survey here](#). Your responses will help inform our response to NHS England.

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

[Read more](#)

Speaking up for patients



The Patients Association has a national media profile and provides comment on behalf of patients on a range of issues across the health and social care. You may recently have seen the Patients Association mentioned in these stories:

[Daily Mail: The A&E map of shame: Graphic reveals the 10 NHS trusts where the most patients are waiting more than four hours to be treated](#)

Only [six out of the 135 hospital trusts in England](#) achieved the A&E waiting time target of treating or discharging 95 per cent of patients within four hours in February. On average, English hospitals only managed to see 84.2 per cent of A&E patients within the four-hour time limit – the lowest figure ever.

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

“These figures are a huge concern, particularly when you consider the relatively mild winter we have experienced this year. It’s a sad indictment of the state that our health service has been allowed to fall into that thousands of patients needing urgent medical help face the awful prospect of being left stranded in cramped corridors or on hospital trolleys, waiting for a hospital bed to become available.

“These figures are also important considering the NHS’s plans to revise targets for A&E patients to be treated within four hours. Lack of timely access to treatment leads to poorer outcomes for patients, and it is clear that the Government has much more to do if we are ever to see an end to the pressures on the NHS that create crisis conditions in hospitals not just every winter, but all year round.” Read more about the story [here](#).

[The Guardian: Little advice in place for patients if drug supplies dry up](#)

The Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England have given little practical advice to patients about what they can do regarding their medications in the event of a no-deal Brexit. There are [concerns](#) that some people may go online to get medication if supplies are affected.

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

“Patients are in a very difficult position. They do not know what the outcome of Brexit will

be, and the end result could mean no change to their medicine supply at all, or potentially serious disruption. In the latter event, it is impossible to say whether the Government's contingency planning will prove adequate.

“Patients urgently need more information about what is happening, what the risks are and what is being done to mitigate those risks. The uncertainty over Brexit is leaving patients who rely on medicine for their day-to-day wellbeing on the horns of a dreadful dilemma.” Read more about this story [here](#).

From the helpline: how to make a complaint



This week we heard from Jacob*, who got in touch seeking information about how to make a complaint. Jacob, whose wife had recently been admitted to hospital, was informed that his wife was ready to be discharged and that he should come to the hospital to collect her. Jacob, who is in his 80s, arrived at the hospital but after two hours, his wife was no closer to being discharged.

Jacob asked a doctor how much longer he and his wife could expect to wait, and was unhappy that the doctor responded by shouting that Jacob was trying to tell him how to do his job and that he should leave the ward. Jacob was later informed that a vital signature was required before his wife could be discharged and that she would be unable to leave until her papers were appropriately signed. Jacob subsequently returned home and is waiting to hear when his wife will be discharged.

Our helpline adviser provided Jacob with information on the complaints process and directed the caller to the various [complaints resources](#) on our website. Our adviser suggested that Jacob should feed back to the [Care Quality Commission](#), so they can record his concern and use his experience to improve care. We asked Jacob to keep us updated with developments and to get in touch if he required any more information.

We've had an increase in callers to our helpline over recent months, and we're hearing in particular from people who need help with making a complaint or information about how to do so.

*Name has been changed

[Contact our helpline](#)

What our team is reading this week

[Brexit: NHS no-deal fears prompt call for drugs export ban](#)

[Newborn hip checks 'have failed to prevent late diagnosis'](#)

[Nuffield Trust: Friday FAQs - Sharon Allen](#)

[Doubling in number of antidepressants doled out in a decade, NHS figures show](#)

[Dossier reveals 'petty tortures' of NHS trainee doctors denied leave](#)



Helpline Live Chat:
Weekdays from 2pm to 5pm



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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