

Welcome to the Patients Association Weekly News

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 Forward

Personalised health checks to be considered in new review



The Department of Health and Social care has announced a radical change to NHS health checks in a bid to provide more personalised and ‘targeted’ advice to patients.

Currently, people between the age of 40 and 74 are invited to their surgery every five years for checks on blood pressure, cholesterol and weight, and other tests depending on what is found. The checks aim to spot those at risk of stroke, heart disease, and conditions like type two diabetes and dementia. The ‘new look’ NHS health checks intend to make prevention and treatment much more effective by looking at whether tailored programmes that take age, genetics and socioeconomic factors into account can more

effectively prevent disease.

In comments featuring in [the Telegraph](#), John Kell, Head of Policy at the Patients Association, said:

“A more personalised approach to prevention that looks at individual patient needs is to be welcomed. Whether this review will achieve this will depend entirely on what it recommends. Public health and preventative measures remain disgracefully underfunded, being excluded from both Theresa May’s commitment of new funding last year and Boris Johnson’s much more modest funding pledge recently.

“The temptation for the Government to find a way to provide these population-wide health checks on the cheap, by finding a rationale for calling fewer patients in, must be tremendous – we hope they will resist it, and come up with a genuinely effective, evidence-led approach that really meets people’s needs. It’s vital that patients are fully involved at every stage of this review, and we look forward to hearing from the Secretary of State how he will ensure this.”

You can find out more about the review [here](#).

[Read more](#)

Patients Association joins health leaders in calling for end to social care crisis



The Health for Care coalition, of which the Patients Association is a member, has this week [written a letter](#) to the Prime Minister to take action to address the escalating crisis in care.

The letter includes a call for cross-party talks to help deliver a solution to the care crisis, immediate funding increases in the upcoming Government spending round to shore up

care services in the short term, and a genuine long-term funding settlement alongside key reforms to help deliver a sustainable solution for social care. Niall Dickson, Chief Executive of the NHS Confederation who coordinated the letter, has written in the Daily Mail, describing the 'national disgrace' that hundreds of thousands of the most vulnerable people in our society are failing to get the care and support they need.

The letter to the Prime Minister is accompanied by a [petition](#) signed by more than 150,000 people calling for urgent action to fix the system that provides care for older and disabled people. It urges the Prime Minister "to end swingeing cuts", saying more than 1.4 million over-65s in England have been left without the support they need.

You can read the letter to Boris Johnson [here](#), sign the public petition [online](#), and find out more about Health for Care on the [website](#).

[Read more](#)

'Listening to patients, speaking up for change'



It's not too late to get involved in our upcoming work – if you live in or near Leeds, London, Oxford or Manchester, you'll find there are various opportunities below for you to join us and share your experiences on a range of health matters. Our membership survey is also still open, and you can take part and share your views if you've not already done so [here](#).

Your insight, experiences and views on the health and care system strengthen our work to improve patient care, so we hope to see you at one of the events below. All our latest

events and focus groups can be found on the website [here](#).

Have your say

Leeds, 6 September: being switched to new medicines



Have you been switched from a 'biological' medication to a new 'biosimilar' drug? The Patients Association is hosting a workshop in Leeds on **Friday 6 September** to learn more about how people who are taking these new medicines can be better supported and to understand how their experiences could be improved. This is an exciting opportunity to shape new guidance directly with healthcare professionals, and this work will help patients to be better equipped to make decisions and will allow them greater control over their own health and wellbeing.

Biologic medications are usually liquids given via a drip or injection pen. They are often used to treat long-term conditions including Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, psoriasis and rheumatoid arthritis, but patients with diabetes and people with some forms of cancer may also be taking biologics. If you've recently been switched onto a new biosimilar medicine and live in or near Leeds, we'd love for you to join our workshop on 6 September. The session will run from 10am to 2pm, and your feedback will help to shape our work. Places are limited so please contact anna.shears@patients-association.com to reserve your place. Lunch and light refreshments will be provided, and we're also offering high street vouchers to participants for giving their time.

Join us in Leeds

Oxford, Friday 6 September: patients with knee problems sought to help create new guidance



We've partnered with Oxford University to produce new patient information about the recommended treatment options for meniscal problems of the knee, and we'd like to hear from you if you currently have knee problems and are considering surgery, are waiting for a procedure or have recently had an operation. We want to recruit a diverse group of patients to pilot a new approach to creating guidance that will inform and empower patients. Structured clinical guidance is central to the delivery of care in the NHS, and it is crucial that this guidance is developed with meaningful involvement from patients and the latest, best quality evidence.

As well as working with Oxford University, the project is also supported by the NHS Getting It Right First Time programme and the British Association for Surgery of the Knee. Participants will need to be able to attend a meeting in Oxford on Friday 6 September from 10.30am to 3pm. Travel expenses will be reimbursed. If you are interested in taking part please contact Heather Eardley on heather.eardley@patients-association.com.

[Join us in Oxford](#)

London, Thursday 5 September: private healthcare patients



We've partnered with Oxford University to produce new patient information about the recommended treatment options for meniscal problems of the knee, and we'd like to hear from you if you currently have knee problems and are considering surgery, are waiting for a procedure or have recently had an operation. We're looking for people to pilot a new approach to creating guidance that will inform and empower patients.

As well as working with Oxford University, the project is also supported by the NHS Getting It Right First Time programme and the British Association for Surgery of the Knee. Participants will need to be able to attend a meeting in Oxford on Friday 6 September from 10.30am to 3pm. Travel expenses will be reimbursed. If you are interested in taking part please contact Heather Eardley on heather.eardley@patients-association.com.

[Join us in London](#)

From the helpline: unsafe discharge



This week we heard from Helen*, who got in touch after her husband Stuart was discharged from hospital too early. Stuart has motor neurone disease and has occasional bowel issues, which requires surgical compression.

Stuart had been admitted to hospital on three separate occasions in recent weeks, and was discharged from hospital on 1 August. Within an hour of returning home, Stuart felt discomfort and was readmitted to hospital after contacting the NHS 111 service to request medical advice. Stuart remains in hospital and is extremely weak following his previous admissions into hospital. He has been eating less frequently as a result, but Helen has received assurances from nursing staff that Stuart is comfortable, and that fluids and painkillers are being provided to him.

Helen told our helpline that it sounded to her like Stuart was receiving end of life care, but that nursing staff had not communicated this to her. She asked our helpline for advice and information on what she should do next.

Our helpline team suggested that Helen raise her concerns with the consultant overseeing Stuart's care in the first instance. We advised Helen that if she still remains dissatisfied after a conversation with the consultant, then she should get in touch with the hospital's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), and we provided contact details for the service should Helen need to contact them.

After a few days, we checked in with Helen, who told us that she had spoken to the consultant overseeing Stuart's care, and received assurances that Stuart would not be discharged unsafely from hospital again, and that he would only be leaving hospital when he was ready to do so, and when a suitable care plan was in place. Helen was also told that Stuart was now receiving nutrition, and that she would receive more regular updates on his health and condition from medical staff.

Following this conversation, Helen sent a polite email to the hospital's PALS team informing them of her experience, in a bid to prevent anyone else from going through the same thing. Helen was also grateful to our helpline team for the advice we provided. We asked Helen to get in touch if there was anything we could do for her or Stuart in future,

and shared the contact details for the health regulator, the Care Quality Commission.
*Name changed

[Contact our helpline](#)



What our team is reading this week

[Patients who cannot eat food 'fear for lives'](#)

['Hundreds' seek private clinics for medical cannabis](#)

[Patients waiting for hip operations suffering 'pain worse than death'](#)

[NHS bill for private out-of-area mental health care rises to £100m](#)

[Emergency medical supplies could be airlifted into UK after Brexit](#)

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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