



Welcome to the Patients Association's Weekly News

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 Forward

We're still working A message from the Chief Executive

Many of us are rightly anxious about the COVID-19 pandemic and how it's affecting our regular care.

How we contact our GPs, our access to hospital treatment and so many other elements of care have changed.

But we haven't – the Patients Association is still working and we're here to support you and help you stay safe all the way through this pandemic.

We're very concerned about reports that many patients are not seeking help for serious health problems. While the media make it sound like the NHS is overwhelmed, it has capacity to treat people.

You should still call 999 in a medical emergency like a heart attack or stroke. If you're worried about symptoms, you should call your GP. It's helpful to prepare for any telephone consultation. We have information on [getting the most out of your GP appointment](#) and Cancer Research UK has developed [tips specifically on telephone consultations](#), which are helpful whatever your health condition is.

If you have a long-term health condition for which you regularly see a healthcare professional, your consultant or clinic should have told you how care will be provided. If they haven't, you should call them and ask for advice.

We have lots of help and advice on our website, not just about [coronavirus](#) but about [everyday health concerns](#). If you can't find what you're looking for online, then try

the helpline – it's open Monday to Friday between 9.30am to 5pm, and is free to call.

And tell your friends and neighbours about the Patients Association; we're here for every patient.



Rachel Power
Chief Executive

Patient lay representative wanted for doctors' group

independent doctors federation

The Independent Doctors Federation (IDF) is planning to establish a Responsible Officer Advisory Group and would like a patient representative to join the group.

The IDF represents doctors who work in private hospitals so it would like whoever joins the advisory group to have an interest in healthcare in the independent sector.

The patient representative will join three (virtual) meetings a year to review deferral and non-engagement revalidation recommendations made by the responsible officer to the General Medical Council (GMC) and fitness to practise issues.

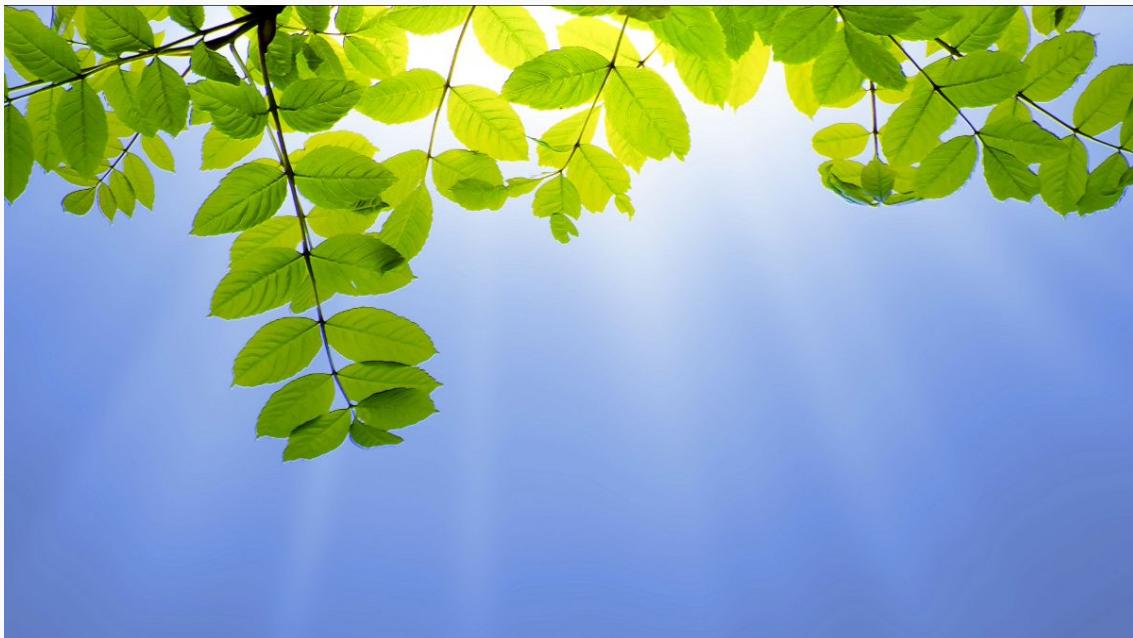
The role will also include a review of 10% of positive revalidation recommendations and you would be part of the IDF appraisal committee, which meets on three times a year in central London. There may also be occasional meetings or discussions by phone or email.

This is a voluntary role and the IDF is happy to have an informal discussion if you're interested in it. To do that, please contact Dr Alexandra Harkins, Responsible Officer at the IDF either by email at revalidation@idf.uk.net or by phone, 020 3696 4080 option 3.

To apply submit a short CV and include an explanation about why you are interested in the role to Dr Harkins at the above email.

For more information about the IDF, visit the website www.idf.uk.net.

Government advises everyone considers taking vitamin D supplements during lockdown



Public Health England is recommending that everyone should consider taking 10 micrograms of vitamin D a day during the coronavirus lockdown to keep bones and muscles healthy.

This is because many of us may not be getting enough vitamin D from sunlight because we're indoors for most of the day.

Vitamin D, known as the sunshine vitamin because you need sunlight to create it in the body, helps regulate your levels of calcium and phosphate, which are needed to keep bones, teeth and muscles healthy.

A lack of vitamin D can lead to bone deformities and bone pain. There is also some evidence suggesting vitamin D is needed for a healthy immune system.

Vitamin D supplements are available at most pharmacies and supermarkets, but don't buy more than you need.

[Full guidance](#)

From the helpline



the patients association

Calls to our helpline are now free of charge!

We've launched our new 0800 number, making it free for people to speak to our expert advisers:

0800 345 7115

We were contacted by Ramesh, a retired health professional who is currently shielding at home with his wife Sunita, who has a health condition for which she takes regular medication.*

The GP changed Sunita's medication, which caused side effects, including constipation. Sunita wanted to use suppositories but had run out of them. Ramesh called his local pharmacy and was told two boxes would cost £100. Ramesh was astonished. He went online and found two boxes of suppositories for just over £3.00, which he bought.

Ramesh was extremely unhappy about being quoted such an inflated price for suppositories and wanted to let us about what the Government describes as rip-off pricing. He also wanted us to make sure all patients knew that they could complain about this kind of behaviour.

We were just as shocked as Ramesh at this example of profiteering and gave him the contact details of the regulatory body for pharmacists, the General Pharmaceutical Council, who are concerned about any incidence of profiting during the pandemic.

Ramesh said he will contact the GPC with details of his local pharmacy and the price quoted.

We asked Ramesh to contact us again if he needed any additional information or advice.

*Names changed for privacy.

To share your experiences with our helpline team, call 020 8423 8999 between 9.30am and 5pm on weekdays or email helpline@patients-association.com. See our website for more ways to get in touch.

What our team is reading this week

Experts concerned UK's isolation advice does not go far enough

Clinically vulnerable and socially isolated being offered priority online delivery slots

New data suggests official UK care home toll will rise

SHAs would have helped with coronavirus

Government alerts trusts over 'critical' shortage of dialysis kit for covid patients

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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Forward

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