



## FEEDBACK FOR SOCIAL CARE

We created Care Opinion to give service users a seamless way of sharing feedback about their care and treatment, across both health and social care.

We want service users to be able to talk about their experiences of care, without needing to be aware of differing institutional priorities and the ideological or practical differences that often occur across health and social care services. Service users need services that don't argue between themselves or send conflicting messages. They should expect professionals to work together to meet their needs.

While there is not one ideal model of care co-ordination, evidence suggests that, where appropriate, joint commissioning between health and social care achieves

better results than a singular commissioning approach.

Whether a service user uses Patient Opinion or Care Opinion, their feedback is moderated and published in just the same way, and shared on both sites. Subscribing organisations can respond and report on this feedback using either site.

For the first time, CQC registered providers have the opportunity to generate and see online feedback about their services. Making this feedback clearly visible in this way will help providers, commissioners and other stakeholders see what works, and what needs to change, within and across services.

One area of work we're excited about is hearing the experience of care home

residents, about the home and health care services. This should improve the visibility of care pathways for older people and provide valuable learning for all those involved in the assessment and provision of their services.

Care opinion is alive and kicking in England now.

### Quote of the month

*I'm visually impaired and small print on labels stops me being independent as I have to ask other people to read my letters & labels.*

<https://www.patientopinion.org.uk/opinions/142203>

## WHY ALL DOCTORS SHOULD USE PATIENT OPINION

Dr Ben Mearns, Clinical Lead at Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust, recently blogged about using Patient Opinion as a doctor. He stressed the importance of "listening, really listening to our patients" and how Patient Opinion helps make this possible.

Initially, giving patients a platform to express their views honestly wasn't a particularly enjoyable experience.

He said: "Patient Opinion takes the control of the publication of information away from those of us that run the service. It made me uncomfortable at first, because when we didn't do our best it was plain to see. Every day when you opened your computer the feedback was staring right at you."

But despite this, the transparency of the feedback provided a useful tool to improve care. He changed his perspective of feedback as criticism to "seeing it as an indicator." These valuable indicators allowed Ben and his team to improve the standard of care patients received.

He said: "I see hospitals like I see patients. Patient Opinion is like one of the hospital's physiological observations – like a blood pressure chart. When we made our hospital's diagnoses and put in the right treatment the results stabilized and got better and better. That was the best feeling in the world."

Opening up the service to public feedback means that Ben is confident that if there is

a problem, he would be made aware of it. It wouldn't be ignored.

He said: "It feels liberating that everything bad that can be said, almost certainly has been. And it's amazing that the majority of patients have taken the time to write lovely comments as well. Both of these things give my team and I a huge boost."

"Patient Opinion has made me much more confident about the care that we deliver and that makes me happier."



# "WHAT DO WE REALLY CARE ABOUT?"

by James Munro,  
Chief Executive

It was a different world when we set up Patient Opinion back in 2005. People told us that enabling patients to post their experiences online, in public, was impossible, wrong, or both. Some still do. But we did it anyway.

In the nine years since, we've seen a sea-change in attitudes. We now live in a world where "online patient experience" is busting out all over. With patient comments on NHS Choices, "Friends and Family test" scores popping up on Twitter, hospital feedback apps, feedback portals, and even a "social media dashboard" showing public attitudes to the NHS. Phew.

And now, in England, the slightly uncertain Care Connect "multi-channel feedback pilot" too, which seems to combine NHS Choices comments with a (usually private) online channel to Pals departments.

This explosion of activity is a good thing. Innovation, experimentation, and open learning will help us all create a future where listening to patients and carers is normal, not subversive.

Inevitably, this makes us at Patient Opinion ask ourselves difficult questions: What do we have to offer a world full of apps, FFT scores and dashboards? What do we really care about?

And the answers come down to a few simple, yet profound, principles:

- We care about giving people a voice (not a survey), and ensuring their voice is heard (not measured).
- We start with what story authors want, not what the health service wants.
- We think we can help change care by connecting people, more than by collecting data.
- And we do all of this, as far as possible, in public so that everyone can benefit.

Apps, dashboards and scores may be important – but Patient Opinion is different. It's personal, citizen-centred and effective. We can't change the world alone, but if we work together we can. Many have already joined in and are making a difference. Maybe you are too?

## Meet

### Ricky Derisz

#### What do you do at Patient Opinion?

I'm a journalism student at the University of Sheffield, and I work here part-time. My role includes processing postal feedback, taking stories over the phone and most importantly creating the newsletter, which ties in nicely with my degree.

#### How else does your role fit with your degree?

As well as writing and editing features for the newsletter, there are many other transferrable skills. I feel that my communication skills have really developed handling sensitive phone-calls from patients.

#### What couldn't you live without?

Although I'm living away from home, I still religiously keep up to date with one of the true loves in my life; Bristol Rovers football club. Let's face it, someone has to support them!



Ricky

## MUMSNET BETTER MISCARRIAGE CARE CAMPAIGN



We are inspired by giving patients a voice, and using that voice to improve services. With 5-10% of responses showing a change, we think we've got pretty good at it. But, can we make a difference on a bigger scale?

We have followed the work of Mumsnet for a while. Their campaigns have had a big impact on social issues.

We hear many stories expressing frustration about miscarriage care, which inspired us to partner with Mumsnet's Better Miscarriage Care campaign.

Mumsnet are asking their members to share feedback about their experiences of miscarriage care. Our hope is that these real

stories can help transform the experience of care after a miscarriage.

Often, simple things are easy to change... As one woman who shared her story recently put it:

"I could not believe she showed no understanding or empathy... This midwife was thinking only of her workload, which I understand may have made her feel snowed under. However, it only takes a few extra seconds and some eye contact to make this experience that little bit easier to bear."

It's early days, but already over 30 women have shared their story, and we'll report back as this work develops...

## THIRD SECTOR SCOTLAND

Our work with third sector organisations in Scotland is going from strength to strength.

PO Scotland are excited to be working with national charities and plan to reach out to a range of different support groups. Next month, we will be holding an awareness session focused on what people from BME groups think of using Patient Opinion to share their experiences.

Working with Age Scotland, we hope to inspire their group leaders who are based in remote areas, to get others using Patient Opinion.

It is shaping up to be a fantastic year in our continued work with our third sector colleagues. We are delighted to have been a part of so many great things in the last eight months: The Gathering, Letters Life and Love Stories - A Celebration of Caring in Scotland, World Hepatitis Day and the Highland Third Sector Partnership conference.

Over the last year our widgets have also been making an even bigger impact than before and are popping up all over the place.

If you want to know more, or would like to be involved in any of this work, please get in touch with

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