



All the latest news, views and reviews from the Patient Opinion team

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Patient Opinion extends into social care

Over the last seven years we have been sharing patient stories, over 37,000 now, and helping health services to use these to improve. Health care staff have been able to read about people's experiences, learn from this invaluable insight and have had the opportunity to really understand their patients. But when someone shares a story that talks about experiences with services in both health and social care, we hit a hurdle.

When we receive a story like this we know that the hospital will see it. Sadly the social care team involved may never hear the feedback. So at a time when the health and social care sectors often struggle to communicate effectively and legislation aims to further integrate them, we really wanted to make sure our service helped make this easier. The great news is, this is going to happen.

Patient Opinion is delighted to announce that it has secured funding to extend its web-based feedback service to cover all of adult social care. The Department of Health has released funding for Patient Opinion to

develop this service for social care services and their users. When developed, this will enable clients, patients and carers to give feedback about their experiences of both health and social care in a simple and seamless way.

Our new team member, Jasmine Ali joins the project as Social Care Development Manager. Jasmine said, "Social media has fundamentally changed the way people communicate and give feedback but up to now it has been very hard for busy staff to interact with. We hope that this new service will be as useful to busy staff as it is to clients and families themselves."

The new site will cover all adult social services in England and will give all service users, their families and their carers the opportunity to publish their experiences, good and bad, of the care system and for care providers and other stakeholders to respond. We'll keep you posted as we move into the world of social care.

For more information, contact jasmine.ali@patientopinion.org.uk

Whenever we talk to a new group about Patient Opinion, we can never quite tell how it will be received. But when Gina, our lead in Scotland, met with Forth Valley Advocacy service she really inspired them. Their manager, Wendy Sharp saw the great potential that Patient Opinion presented for them and they have embarked on a project to gather opinions about their own organisation.

Wendy said: "Patient Opinion allows us to be completely open and transparent and shows we want suggestions for improvement. It shows we've nothing to hide and if someone

APOLOGY IS THE SUPERGLUE OF LIFE

We held the first of many (we hope) Patient Opinion events in Scotland in March. There was lots of energy and enthusiasm in the room stimulated by some insightful and inspiring speakers. People truly learned and shared.

The phrase of the day from Dr Dorothy Armstrong, Clinical Advisor with the SPSO: "Apology is the superglue of life" - there's something to ponder on!

See our [Scotland event page](#) for photos, slides and more details.



Quote of the month

"I am 6 years old, and I loved playing in the playroom and made a friend. The nurses were very nice to me and my mummy."

www.patientopinion.org.uk/opinions/62923

has something to say we want to hear it.

"Patient Opinion is not an advocacy organisation but they do provide a safe, trusted channel where people can make their voice heard, and have an impact on the way services are delivered."

This is an exciting new use for Patient Opinion, and fits well with our new move to cover social care services. Clearly, online feedback captures the imagination of many sectors that want to have meaningful, open and transparent dialogue with the people they serve.

Patient Opinion pioneers



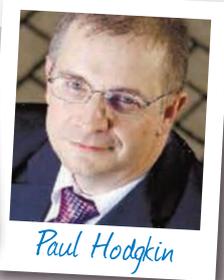
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0845 113 0012

A word from the Doc...



Paul Hodgkin

It's the response what counts!

People are pretty savvy about online feedback nowadays. Many businesses have learnt the hard way that their success rests heavily on their online reputation. Most now spend a lot of time and money on making sure that they're responsive when people share criticisms online. But is this true of the NHS?

We recently asked over 400 people whether posting their critical story on our site made

"The response by contrast comes straight from the horse's mouth"

them more or less likely to complain. We're still analysing this (and we'll tell you the results as soon as we can) but it is clear that the response shapes what people feel about the service.

The reason is obvious: A critical story may be down to poor performance but could also be a reflection of the author's personal circumstances and their perspective. The response by contrast comes straight from the horse's mouth – it really is an example of how the service responds to its users. For the general public looking for information about which health services to trust, responses may shape what they think as much as the original story itself.

This has big implications for how staff respond. 'Cut and paste' replies, especially to critical postings, are likely to make matters worse. 'You mean that's all they have to say when all that happened?' may be the incredulous reaction from the public.

Some trusts seem to think that it is impractical and a waste of resources to reply sensitively and individually to patient stories. We disagree. Your replies will shape

how you are seen. If workload is a problem then remove the bottle neck and give many more staff the ability to respond. Not a job for everyone agreed, but on every ward or department there will be someone who can respond with compassion and who'd be really sensible in what they wrote. And of course it's these people – not Directors of Comms or PALS officers – that the public wants to hear from. We know that this takes courage from trusts. Letting frontline staff shape public responses is risky. But given the social media world we now live in maybe not as risky as posting drearily boring responses to heart-rending stories.

Meet



Jasmine

Jasmine Ali

Social Care Development Manager

What do you do at Patient Opinion?

I lead on the extension of Patient Opinion's feedback service into social care. I hope to apply my 20 years experience of working in social service development to this exciting new area of user engagement.

How does Patient Opinion's model with health services translate for social care?

People will be able to share their story about social and integrated services much like they do about health services now, and we hope to see improvements as a result. This is so important given the growing concerns that the most vulnerable people are being disenfranchised from the social care services designed to support them and the moves to integrate health and social care.

Outside of work, what could you not live without?

In the top three would have to be Bikram yoga (extreme yoga), which I practice twice a week for 90 minutes in a room heated to 105°F with a humidity of 40%. It is incredibly beneficial and relieves stress, which is no bad thing in the current climate!

Happy Easter!



Theme Based Feedback from PO

Recovery may have become a buzz word, but for health and social care services everyone recognizes the importance of supporting people towards this goal and ultimately, independence. We are increasingly working with healthcare organisations to generate stories on different themes, particularly as agendas change and services adapt. In mental health and substance misuse services, recovery is one such area.

While we never restrict people when they're sharing their story because we want to hear exactly what mattered to them, we have been running workshops in services encouraging a reflection on the deeper impact of care and treatment on their lives. We've are specifically asking people how

services are supporting them to recover, what has or would make the difference and what more could be done to help them on this journey.

"I have been coming here 5 years...I have noticed a change in the last six months which is a good thing. I am now seen every 4 weeks... it helps me to be more focused cos I am not just coming down and stuck in a rut, I am more in touch with what's going on and what I am doing."
www.patientopinion.org.uk/opinions/60080

And even more dramatically, "I came to this service 6 months ago drinking over 130 units a week, my child was put in child protection due to domestic violence and my drinking. Now 6 months later with the help of the

workers (home visits, 1-1 conversations) I'm down to 6-8 units a week, my son's off child protection and my life's looking positive for the first time in a long while. Without the help I received I think I'd be in a very unhappy place now".
www.patientopinion.org.uk/opinions/56824

These are powerful testimonies to the impact of treatment and care and great evidence to present to commissioners. Patient Opinion are now helping staff, patients and service users to concentrate on themes and specific areas to increase the value and relevance of stories and feedback. If you want to do the same, talk to the Patient Opinion team or email subscribersupport@patientopinion.org.uk.

www.patientopinion.org.uk

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Contact us...

If you want to get in touch email us at:
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