Care Opinion: a new approach to feedback for a new kind of NHS organisation

James Munro, 13 January 2019

# Context

During 2018-21 the NHS across England is moving towards an ICS model of care. The approach will vary from place to place, and may also evolve over time as local collaborations change.

The King’s Fund notes:

There is no single model for an ICS and so local context is important in shaping the approach taken in different areas. In some places, it is likely that working towards integrating hospital, community, mental health and adult social care services will make sense, whereas in others there will be an appetite for more broadly-based partnerships. Elsewhere, horizontal integration, such as hospital chains and groups, may be the focus.

This context of emerging organisational forms, new networks of care and multi-agency collaboration requires a new, modern and flexible approach to gathering and learning from the experiences of those who use services. Care Opinion is a perfect fit for the new landscape of ICSs.

# About Care Opinion

Care Opinion CIC is an award-winning, non-profit feedback platform for health and social care across the UK. Since 2005 we have pioneered a new approach to hearing and learning from people’s experiences of the health/care services they rely on.

Our mature and values-based service has gained a national and international reputation, and is now used in three countries. In the UK we work with 600 health and social care organisations, and are visited by 100,000 people each week.

Our mission is to provide an online platform so that:

* people can share honest feedback easily and without fear
* stories are directed to wherever they can help make a difference, and
* everyone can see how and where services are listening and changing in response

Our values are innovation, transparency, inclusivity, positivity and humanity.

(More details: <https://www.careopinion.org.uk/info/mission> )

# Listening to what an emerging ICS wants

New systems of care require new thinking on the possibilities and potential of feedback, going far beyond the limited value of the NHS Friends and Family test. Increasingly, people want to see an approach which:

* is clearly aligned with NHS values
* serves the needs of both patients and staff
* enables authentic voices to be heard
* is transparent and accountable
* is as real-time as possible, to support rapid resolution/improvement
* can work across multiple organisations
* engages and motivates staff
* is both effective and cost-effective
* avoids onerous data entry, paperwork, or copying and pasting
* makes a genuine difference to care, culture and morale

Our experience over more than a decade of research, development and learning is that Care Opinion meets all of these challenges.

# Why Care Opinion is a good fit for the new ICS landscape

Care Opinion has a number of attributes which set it apart from traditional, organisation-centric approaches to feedback. These include:

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| **Person-centred** | Care Opinion starts from what people want to say, not from what organisations want to ask. So you learn about things you didn’t realise were important. And a feedback donor need tell their story just once: we share it will all the relevant organisations. Feedback is person-centric, not organisation-centric. |
| **Accessible** | Care Opinion is online and accessible to people with a range of sensory impairments. BSL videos are linked from every page, and we recently added our innovative “picture stories” feature to help people with cognitive impairments tell their stories too. |
| **Integrated** | Care Opinion works across all the organisations in an ICS. It spans commissioners and providers, health and social care. You can include the healthwatch, PPGs and local patient voice groups too. |
| **Flexible** | As the ICS evolves, Care Opinion evolves too. We remain endlessly flexible as the world changes. |
| **Two-way** | Almost every current health/care feedback system is one-way: so there is no room for resolving concerns, clarifying issues or making connections. Care Opinion is safe, simple and two-way. |
| **Transparent** | Every Care Opinion post is moderated by an expert human, prior to publication. Responses are published too. The transparency that results spreads trust, understanding and learning among staff and patients alike. |
| **Built for learning and change** | Simply collecting data won’t improve services or change culture. Feedback has to be shared, understood and acted on to make a difference. At Care Opinion, encouragement for change and learning is built into the platform. |
| **Fully supported** | Care Opinion is more than a feedback platform: it’s also a journey which requires vision, courage and persistence. We provide unlimited phone and email support to keep you on track. |

# How Care Opinion works, in a nutshell

Care Opinion is an online feedback platform, and can also accept feedback by post and phone.

1. People post their stories on the site, saying what was good and what could have been better. Each story is linked to the services it relates to.
2. Every story is moderated by Care Opinion, before publication.
3. On publication, relevant staff across multiple organisations can be alerted. Staff can control their own alerts.
4. Authorised staff can respond online, as often as needed to resolve an issue. The story author may also respond. Everyone learns from the exchange.
5. Over time, trust is built and culture becomes more open to feedback and learning.

Here are examples of effective responding creating change and building trust:

<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/opinions/294974>

<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/opinions/126866>

In addition, Care Opinion includes built-in flexible tools for

* Searching
* Reporting
* Alerting
* Blogging
* Data visualisation
* Service page customisation

# Flexible, right across the health economy

Care Opinion works right across the health economy in a flexible way to suit local circumstances. This means that we can involve and work with

* ICSs of any shape
* Commissioners (including local authorities)
* Healthwatch
* Local patient voice organisations
* General practices, individually as well as in federations
* Practice participation groups

# Find out more

This is just the start: we have much more we can share with you! To find out more:

Visit [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk)

Call us on 0114 281 6256

Or email Miriam.rivas-aguilar@careopinion.org.uk