

CARE OPINION NEWS



Care
Opinion

What's your story?

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Missing: the importance of relationship

In July the government published its 10 Year Health Plan for England, aiming to "reinvent the NHS through 3 radical shifts: hospital to community, analogue to digital, and sickness to prevention".

The plan did not have a lot to say about collaborative or community-based strategies for sustaining and improving our health services. Many have argued that the plan sweeps away existing channels for independent patient and carer voice.

Despite this, the plan asserts that "The NHS does not take patient feedback seriously enough," and we would agree. Patient feedback is mentioned at various points in the plan, but without any coherent aim or consistency of approach. Is feedback for regulation, improvement or culture change? Does change occur because of data, feedback-related pay, or relational impact? Is the feedback public or private, metric or narrative,

moderated or unmoderated? Nothing is clear.

At Care Opinion, we're now celebrating 20 years of providing an open, safe and online feedback platform for health care across the UK, so we have plenty of experience of creating real change, in services, relationships and culture, through our approach. And we also have a large body of independent academic research showing how our independent, moderated and public platform can build trust and understanding, lift staff morale, create improvement, and connect people to purpose.

We think independence is key. Repeated studies confirm that patients fear the consequences of raising concerns about their care, so patient anonymity is essential. But the plan proposes that feedback be given via the NHS App. However this is implemented, nobody will see it as independent.

Staff do want to hear the raw and authentic voices of their patients, even when things have not gone well, and they want to respond and make things right. That is relationship, and that is what is missing from the government's plan.



Embedding Care Opinion as 'the norm'

"The client feedback is vital to promote good practise and challenge practise which needs changed."

Kate Gribben is Lead Nurse for Contraception and Sexual Health (CASH) who are part of the Integrated Maternity & Women's Health (IMWH) in Surgical & Cancer Services in Acute Directorate with Southern Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland. Kate was delighted to be awarded a Star Responder badge for her thoughtful responses to feedback- she proudly wears her Care Opinion badge in her daily work.

Kate recently wrote and published a fantastic [blog](#) highlighting how the service encourages and empowers service users to use their voices. Kate writes proudly and with honesty sharing how 'the sensitive nature of sexual health can often mean that the patient experience is difficult to obtain.'

Despite the difficulties with obtaining feedback, the service has embraced Care Opinion and shares details of how they encourage their service users to share their feedback with confidence including:

- Including Care Opinion in patient information leaflets both in the trust, in house and on the trust web page under sexual health services
- Keeping Care Opinion on the agenda for any team meetings within the cash teams

The service receives some great feedback. 'kindness ,care ,consideration, support, felt listened to by nurses' are some of the key themes present in the positive stories. Kate also talks openly about how they manage challenging postings and how some of the more negative stories have allowed them to develop their practices.

To enjoy reading more about the positive impacts of using Care Opinion on the service, [click here](#) for the full blog.



Our training and webinar pages have a fresh new look!

As part of our commitment to supporting subscribers, we offer an ongoing programme of engaging webinars throughout the year designed to help you make the most of your Care Opinion subscription. Whether you're just starting out or looking to enhance your responding skills, there's something for everyone.

Following the enthusiastic response to our May and June workshops, we're thrilled to bring back some favourites- **Advanced Searching, Intro to CO Bear, and Impactful Responding**- now part of our updated programme launching on **1st September**.

We're excited to introduce a **brand-new** webinar, **Moderation: Understanding Safeguarding and Criticality 6th October 2025** open to all subscribers and free to attend. In this online session, you'll gain insight into the moderation process at Care Opinion. We'll guide you through how we assign criticality, navigate safeguarding concerns, and ensure stories can drive meaningful change in health and care services. You will hear directly from our senior moderators and get a behind-the-scenes look at how moderation really works.

You can browse all sessions by training topic on our dedicated Training, workshops and tailored support pages. If you have questions about the new programme your Care Opinion support lead will be happy to help, or email us at: info@careopinion.org.uk

careopinion.org.uk

the UK's leading independent feedback platform.

Or call us during working hours (local rate):

0114 281 6256



Don't lose patient insight: Care Opinion keeps you listening

At the end of June, NHS England closed its ratings and reviews service. Patients can no longer leave feedback there, and providers can no longer see or respond. For many organisations, this was the main way of hearing from patients.

That's where Care Opinion comes in. Our independent, not-for-profit platform ensures patient voices continue to be heard, responded to, and used to drive learning and improvement. For 20 years, we've helped health and care organisations turn feedback into insight, action, and improvement.

Why Care Opinion?

- **Fully supported subscriptions:** Helping your teams promote Care Opinion, engage patients and service users, and make the most of every story.
- **Governance-ready insight:** Reports, visualisations, and alerts designed to support boards, quality teams, and oversight.
- **Flexible and inclusive:** Subscriptions scale from a single team to system-wide
- **Evidence-backed impact:** Independent research shows Care Opinion improves patient-centred care, lifts staff morale, and strengthens culture.
- **Independent and value-driven:** As a not-for-profit social enterprise, we provide a safe and accessible way for patients to share experiences and for staff to listen and respond.

For many NHS leaders, Care Opinion has become part of the culture of listening and improvement. With NHS.uk reviews now closed, it's an opportunity to ensure patient voices continue to be heard, feedback drives meaningful improvement, and governance is strengthened across your organisation.

To discuss how Care Opinion can support your organisation and explore subscription options, get in touch with Miriam Rivas-Aguilar, Chief Operating Officer at: miriam.rivas-aguilar@careopinion.org.uk or call 0114 281 6256.

Star Responder Award

Our Star Responder is Ashleigh Moss, Head of Service for Mental Health Inpatients (Holywell and Ross Thomson Unit), Northern Health and Social Care Trust, Northern Ireland.

Our author writes about activities available for service users. They feel there is over-reliance on medication, and that activities should support service users to develop practical skills for everyday life.

Ashleigh begins her response by apologising for the activities lacking. Her response is open and engaged and not at all defensive. It's clear Ashleigh is genuinely interested in learning from our author's feedback. She reassures our author that therapeutic activities are under review and asks for their recommendations for improving them.

Our author replies with some great ideas for more practical activities, like working in existing facilities including the gardens and greenhouses, which have fallen into dis-use.

We were really impressed that Ashleigh returned to the story to post another response, thanking our author for their suggestions, and offering to meet with them to look around the facilities together to see what ideas for activities they could come up with. We were pleased to see that Ashleigh added a "Preparing to make a Change" logo to her response and gave the author two different ways to contact her.

Congratulations Ashleigh! Your responses opened a conversation with your service user, led to meaningful change, and a collaboration with your service user to improve your service.

Read the story and response [here](#). Know a potential Star Responder? Nominate them today [here](#).



Care Opinion Autumn Conference

Did you know that our registration is open for our Care Opinion Autumn conference? If you didn't know about this 'not-to-be-missed' event and you haven't yet registered, now is your chance to register [here](#) and join the many others who have already reserved their virtual seats. There's room for everyone, so please tell all your pals too!

Some essential details:

When: Thursday 23d October 9.00am-12.30pm

Where: Online-so you are guaranteed the best seat in the house!

Further details, including the programme and speakers, will be shared with you very soon, but we can share with you that our key theme will be based around celebrating our **20-year anniversary**-20 incredible years of you and us to celebrate! We are always excited to host our online conferences, but this autumn it is going to feel extra special. We really hope to see you there.

Contact us...

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