

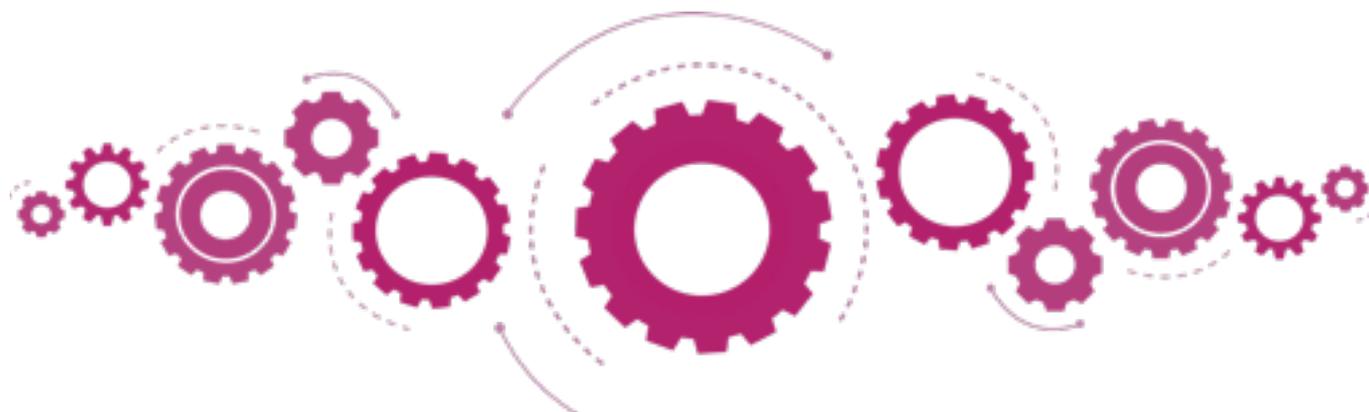


Annual Review

of stories told about NHS Scotland
Services in 2021-2022

**Engaging, learning,
developing and
changing – making
services better for
everyone**

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**Fraser Gilmore, Executive Director &
Head of Scotland**

Introduction

2021/22 was another busy year at Care Opinion in Scotland, with more members of the public sharing their feedback about NHS Scotland services and more staff listening to and responding to this feedback than ever before.

We saw a 40% increase in the feedback received from the previous year, with 4,696 patients, service users, relatives, carers and friends sharing their stories, and these authors received 5,683 responses from staff and services. With the vast majority of these stories (74%) either being completely positive or minimally critical.



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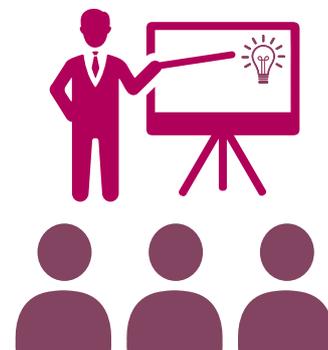
Currently in the NHS in Scotland there are over 2,800 staff listening to and responding to feedback from the public. Engaging with these authors to learn from them, developing and changing as a result of the feedback, making services better for everyone. This number is growing every day!

Stories shared by the public during this period have already been read a whopping 904,205 times, by NHS staff, civil servants, MP's, MSP's, Third/statutory sector organisations, researchers, educators, staff in training and of course, other members of the public.



Even though in 2021/22 we were still firmly in the grip of Covid-19, across Scotland we saw some brilliant engagement on Care Opinion between health services and story authors. We continued to innovate, to find more ways for services to encourage feedback and we saw many services engage with and use these tools, which is evident in the rise in story numbers.

Working with our subscribers from across the UK, we further developed our training for staff and services, introducing new topics and updating our current body of training, to reflect the fast changing world we are currently living in. Our collaboration with health services across the country has enabled us to better meet staff and services needs when it comes to; knowing how to encourage feedback from the public, how to respond well to this feedback and how to develop, learn and change as a result.

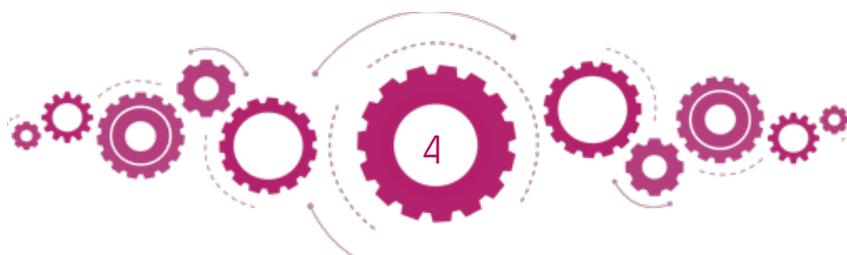


Alongside our training sessions we have been constantly updating the information available on our knowhow pages, where staff and services can learn more about the functionality of the Care Opinion platform, as well as further information on how to engage with the public and learn from their feedback.



We are delighted that this year, the Scottish Government decided to continue supporting the work of Care Opinion, by providing subscriptions to all of the territorial and special health boards across Scotland for the next few years. This means that we can continue to support NHS Staff and Services across the country to engage in online feedback from the public.

In 2022/23 we have already seen an increase in members of the public sharing their feedback with Care Opinion than ever before and we have also seen an increase in staff reading and responding to stories. Our mission for the coming year is to continue to support more and more people to tell their stories about NHS Scotland services, more and more staff to engage with the platform, so these staff and services can learn, develop and change in response.



CEO overview of this year



James Munro, Chief Executive Officer

The past two years have been a time of extraordinary disruption and change across society, and healthcare is no exception. One key theme has been an accelerating adoption of digital approaches across many parts of the NHS, along with rapid learning about what we lose and what we gain in the process.



So it is no surprise that Care Opinion continues to grow in Scotland, both in terms of organisational adoption and public awareness. We present data on the upward trend in story numbers and staff engagement with online feedback elsewhere in this report.

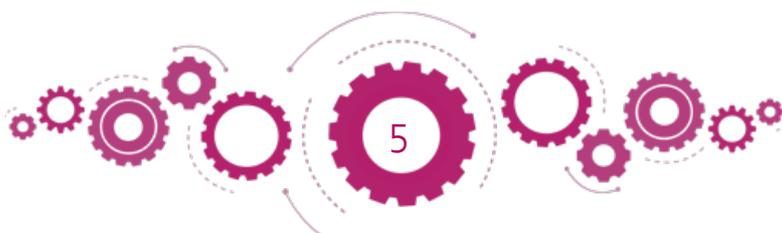
But of course “it’s not just about the numbers”, as we are often told. So it is encouraging to report that the stories shared on Care Opinion are increasingly being used to add insight and challenge in new areas beyond the clinical setting.

For example, online feedback is helping to enrich the work of the cancer policy team in the Scottish Government. It is informing academic research on patient experience, with papers published recently from Aberdeen and Glasgow universities. And we are seeing renewed interest in bringing patient feedback into the professional training of nursing and medical students too.

The growing Care Opinion Scotland team is enormously energetic and innovative, offering support and encouragement to an increasing range of organisations, including a growing number of Health & Social Care Partnerships. The team has been key to producing our popular online conferences, and also offers “pocket project” support to staff wishing to do more with Care Opinion.



There’s now a real sense that in many parts of Scotland’s health service, online feedback has become “the new normal”. Emerging research evidence suggests that positive patient feedback (and about 70% of Care Opinion feedback is positive) can have significant benefits for staff wellbeing and retention, while negative feedback can be important in identifying quality and safety issues. No wonder then that, internationally, people are looking to Scotland for lessons in how to create a patient feedback system which delivers real value to patients and staff alike.



Three of our most read stories

Care and compassion during my stay

<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/845914>

"I was admitted to ARI for an emergency appendix removal recently and would like to thank staff in HDU for their care and compassion to me during my stay also would like to thank Mr Ali and his team for their care compassion and kindness during my stay also thanks to ward 207 especially Kelly and Erin day shift and Anna night shift I Truly appreciate all my help during my unforeseen stay I clapped for each one of you before I think you all deserve so much more I cannot thank you all enough xx"

My Mothers care in ward 4

<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/844403>

"My mother was nursed in ward 4 for some time. The staff, including Staff nurses Nicky and Kirsten were so compassionate.

The care Mum received was exceptional. Our Borders general hospital calls their patients by their name and they are not a number."

They gave him the love he needed when he was most vulnerable

<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/850607>

(You can read the full heartfelt story using the link above)

"Tony knew all of the staff by name and to the end was very grateful for the care and support that they gave him. During the 3 yrs of his cancer journey he has spent many nights in hospital. We are grateful to all of the hospitals, wards, and the staff who cared for him during the 3 yrs, but on this occasion when he was scared about surviving this new treatment everyone held him in their care and allowed him to be safe. One of the last things that he said was that he wanted to stay on the ward as he felt safe. Only the staff can make a patient feel that way and the only way that it can be done is through love.

I will be forever grateful to all of the staff on 4b, all 60 of them. You all played a part in Tony's last journey and I will be forever grateful to every one of you for being there when I couldn't.

Thank you to everyone who gave us Hope."

Stories shared on Care Opinion at a glance

40%
increase

4,696
stories
told

74% of stories
told are positive
or minimally
critical

NHS
Scotland

47%
increase

19%
increase

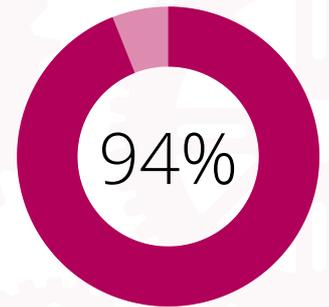
2,757
subscription
members

904,205
stories
read

What the public told us – Authors survey

Care Opinion wouldn't exist without engagement from the public, who want to share their experiences. As stories about health and care services from the public is at the core of what we do, we wanted to find out from authors who posted on Care Opinion what their experience was like. So back in late 2021, we asked a random sample of 554 people in Scotland who had told their story on the platform what their experience was like.

Of those sampled, 132 responded to the survey. A large majority of whom reported a positive experience of using the Care Opinion feedback platform, with over 90% of responders noting that they were glad they had used Care Opinion and 94% saying that they would use it again.



But just like on Care Opinion, we want to share with you what authors told us, so as well as the numbers we are using to tell a story, throughout this article, we are sharing our authors own words

" I felt that the staff went way and above the call of duty in their care of my mother and I wanted people to know about this. Too often we hear only negative stories from relatives and I just thought that it would be a nice thing to show the staff our appreciation."

We asked our authors why they posted on Care Opinion, and the top three answers we received were; To praise the service received, to inform other patients and to improve the standard of care, these answers making up 71% of all responses. Only 23% of respondents noted that they were posting to give critical feedback about a treatment, a service or a professional. This certainly reflects what we have seen on Care Opinion over 2021/22 where over 74% of all feedback in Scotland was either completely positive or minimally critical.

"I had such a positive experience that I wanted others to know about it especially if they were in any way apprehensive about being admitted there or the well-being of relatives. I wanted this story to be read by patients, relatives, friends, the NHS authorities and most of all the staff working at the coal face."

It was also important for us to understand if authors felt heard and understood in the responses they received from services. 71% of respondents told us that they agreed or strongly agreed that they felt heard and understood, and only 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

"Due to the Nature of my operation I did have a good few questions which were all answered to my satisfaction and the feedback for my wee story told me someone was listening and watching"

"The response I recieved showed a caring, sensitive person, who obviously was keen to train staff not only in terms of providing treatment, but also that 'bedside' manner was just as important."

"I received a lovely reply from the Audiologist and four people advised that they were helped by my story."

"I was able to speak to the service manager who contacted me through care opinion. This gave me the opportunity to discuss the situation in more detail than I could on care opinion and also to discuss what actions I felt would have improved the situation and also what actions I thought should be taken as a result of my comments."

64% of responders felt that their story on Care Opinion led to positive outcomes for themselves, health/care staff or service and/or other people. With 93% noting that they were not aware of any negative outcomes to posting their story.

"Some of the staff who helped me were amazing and I felt that should of been highlighted."

"I spoke to someone senior within the health board who was going to draft a document to circulate to staff about some of the issued I'd raised."

"Hopefully others have read my review and find it helpful."

"The staff deserved to be complemented. I wanted patients in a similar situation to know that they shouldn't worry about going to hospital."

"I felt good writing a positive review. I hope the staff will have felt appreciated"

"My friend felt listened to. She was told that her experience would be used in training"

"I had a response from one of the staff members and they planned to pass on the good feedback to the other members. That would have made them feel really good! Hopefully other patients read it and then don't feel as nervous about getting a colonoscopy as my experience was a good one"

Lastly, when patients were asked if posting on Care Opinion achieved what they wanted, the majority of respondents (64%) answered in the affirmative.

"I'm glad I put my thoughts down as soon as I got home and posted them onto the Care Opinion website - and that the high up management as well as the wonderful team appreciated my doing so. It's nice to be able to say something positive too!"

"I would like to know if all the staff concerned were made aware of my comments, it certainly makes people feel better about themselves which improves the service. And like many other large organisations. NHS receive a lot of negative press. Unfortunately us humans prefer to read about bad stories not positive ones."

What NHS Scotland staff told us

We asked NHS staff what Care Opinion meant to them over the past year and this is what they told us.

“ The last 12 months have been challenging across our healthcare systems. Despite easing of the pandemic, all services have seen increased activity which has put many areas under pressure at a time when staff absence has remained high as a result of COVID-19. Staff are tired but continue to do their best to provide compassionate, person centred care, in often less than ideal circumstances.

The importance of patient and family feedback, especially in these difficult times, cannot be underestimated. Within NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Care Opinion is our biggest source of positive feedback which is especially important to staff at this time. The impact of reading feedback from a grateful patient or family member on staff's wellbeing is extremely important and can be a boost to staff morale. We have spent a great deal of time in the last year ensuring staff have access to stories told about their ward, department or area and that they are supported to respond to the story author.

Whilst no one wants our patients to have a negative experience, it is important to us that when they do, we know about it so that learning and improvement can take place in a timely manner to prevent other patients having the same poor experience. Care Opinion provides an excellent platform for quick and effective change based on real patient experience.

NHS Ayrshire and Arran continues to promote Care Opinion and encourages staff of all grades and roles to get involved in responding and progressing learning from the healthcare experiences shared on Care Opinion. We value and appreciate the time our patients take to post their feedback so we ensure that it is treated with the utmost respect – we love it when the author responds to our invite to get in touch to allow us to provide more personal and detailed feedback.

We look forward to hearing the views of our service users in the coming year and will continue to work towards our aim of supporting all levels of staff to respond directly to all our posts. ”

Laura Harvey
Quality Improvement Lead
Patient Experience
NHS Ayrshire & Arran

“

The past year was challenging for NHS Lanarkshire as we continued to deal with the impact of covid while at the same time trying to continue to provide the high quality non covid related care that we strive to give to the people of Lanarkshire.

Care Opinion was vital in helping us to hear the experience of people who used our services while some of our face to face ways of capturing feedback were still paused due to the restrictions from the pandemic. We encouraged people to use the website as a way of telling us what was good about their experience and what we could do better. This feedback was shared at all levels in our organisation from our Board to the frontline teams providing the service. We have used this feedback to listen to and act on what matters to people so that we can do even better in future.

”

Marjorie McGinty
Head of Improvement
Quality Directorate
NHS Lanarkshire

“

Over the last year, Care Opinion has been a great way of boosting morale across NHS Lothian.

It lets staff know that their hard work has been appreciated by patients and their families. All services across the Health Board have been under incredible pressure over the last couple of years, so it is really important for staff to receive positive feedback and know that all their efforts have made a difference in the care of patients.

At the same time, Care Opinion has also been helpful in identifying areas for improvement. Some of the key themes we noticed over the year that could be better were communication, information, waiting times and staff attitude. Each story shared is reviewed by the relevant Clinical Management Team and the feedback is used to identify where changes can be made to improve how they provide their service.

The reports and visualisations that Care Opinion offers are extremely useful for presenting the stories and key themes in different ways. They are regularly used by the Patient Experience Team when producing reports on feedback. Overall, Care Opinion has been incredibly useful throughout NHS Lothian for encouraging feedback, sharing positive stories with staff, and identifying areas for improvement.

”

Louise Davies
Patient Experience Officer
NHS Lothian

Researching online patient feedback for quality improvement within NHS Scotland

My PhD is looking at how online patient feedback is used for quality improvement within NHS Scotland, focussing on Care Opinion as the feedback platform. The first part of the PhD involved carrying out ethnographic research with the Care Opinion Scotland team. This involved observing, and interviewing, staff about their moderation work. The findings of this research were published this year and are available at



Emma Berry, PhD student, Health Services Research Unit, University of Aberdeen



<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/20552076211074489>

In the paper, we discuss the different types of work that moderators and Care Opinion undertake – the process work of moderating stories, the emotional labour involved, and the brokering or mediation work involved in managing relationships between different stakeholders. Ultimately, moderators want story authors to share their feedback, and to be listened and responded to by healthcare staff in the hope it will improve care. Part of achieving this involves some process work to ensure the stories are suitable for publication, including editing and tagging stories, and identifying any safeguarding issues. Many moderators also work closely with healthcare staff to support them in using Care Opinion and responding to the feedback.

And there is of course a responsibility to the Scottish Government, who awarded Care Opinion the online patient feedback contract for NHS Scotland. These are the key relationships which Care Opinion must juggle and consider when carrying out their work. From carrying out this research, I was struck by the emotional labour involved for moderators with working on the stories. The experiences described can sometimes be moving or distressing, and Care Opinion staff work to support each other with dealing with the emotional side of the work. There is also emotional labour involved in managing relationships with staff in the Health Boards, encouraging them to respond in a personalised and constructive way, and supporting them to make best use of the stories for improvement.

This knowledge, along with support from the PhD advisory group, has shaped the next stages of the PhD research. I am currently undertaking case study research with several boards in Scotland, to get a deeper understanding of how they respond to feedback - with the focus on Care Opinion stories. I am interviewing staff as well as considering other information to better understand the approaches used. I will then bring my initial findings back to discuss with staff in focus groups. Alongside this, I am looking to understand the emotional impact of reading and writing Care Opinion stories by interviewing Care Opinion authors as well as asking NHS staff about this in their interviews.

While the case study research is ongoing, I will be starting to interview policy maker and senior leaders in Scotland. These interviews will be to better understand the decisions around supporting Care Opinion at a national level, and their expectations of Care Opinion.

From completing this research, I hope to identify ways to help NHS staff in Scotland with using online patient feedback. I will be sharing my findings with interested NHS boards and other groups. If you would be interested in hearing more about this research, or being informed of the PhD findings then please contact



e.berry.19@abdn.ac.uk

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Doctors of the future – University of St. Andrews placements

For the second year in a row, Care Opinion was delighted to offer placements to two students from the University of St. Andrews. Our students this year, Iona Gibson and Holly Eggleston, hail from the ScotGEM course, which is a four year graduate entry medical programme, designed to develop doctors interested in a career as a general practitioner within NHS Scotland.

For our placements, our students were tasked with doing some research using Care Opinion stories on a topic that interested them based on their studies. Both students chose very different areas, Iona looked at “Autism Awareness within the NHS” and Holly chose to look at “Palliative Care”.

Our students presented their research findings at an online presentation in April 2022 and their subsequent reports were published on the Care Opinion platform. You can find these reports and a recording of the presentations here:



<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/blogposts/958/scotgem-student-placements-at-care-opinion-2022>

Care Opinion know how important it is to help develop our health and care professionals of the future, and a big part of this learning is listening to patients feedback. With this in mind, we asked one of our students “as an aspiring doctor, why she thought feedback was so important?” This is what she had to say:

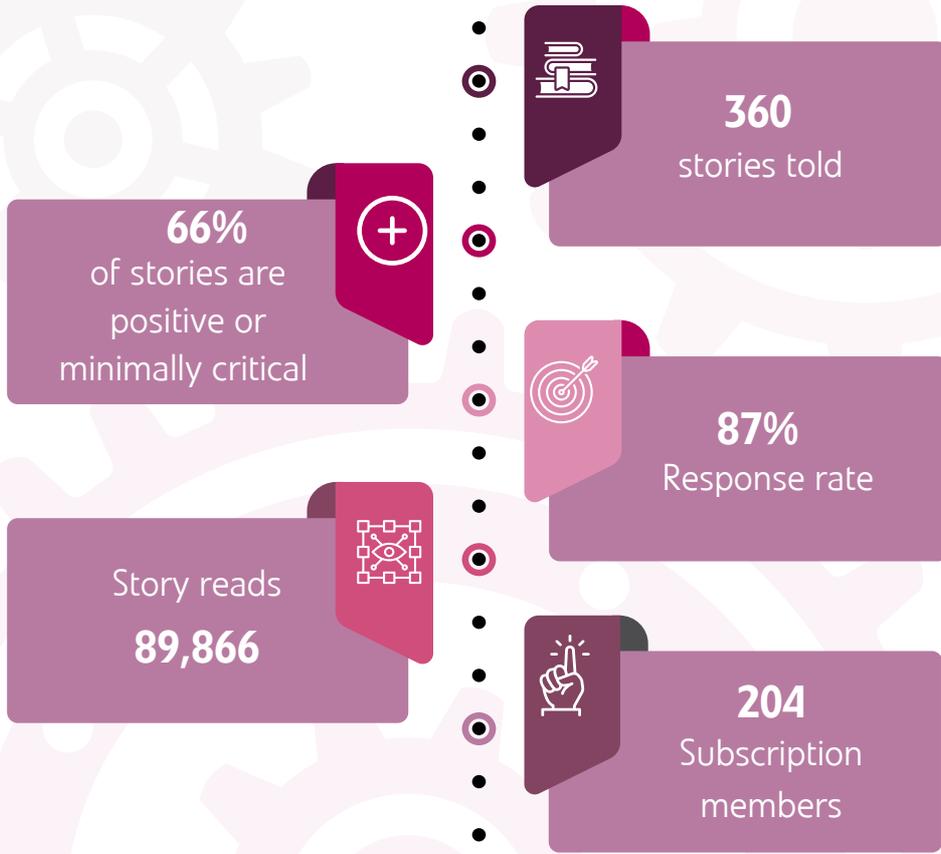


Iona Gibson, ScotGEM Student,
St. Andrews University

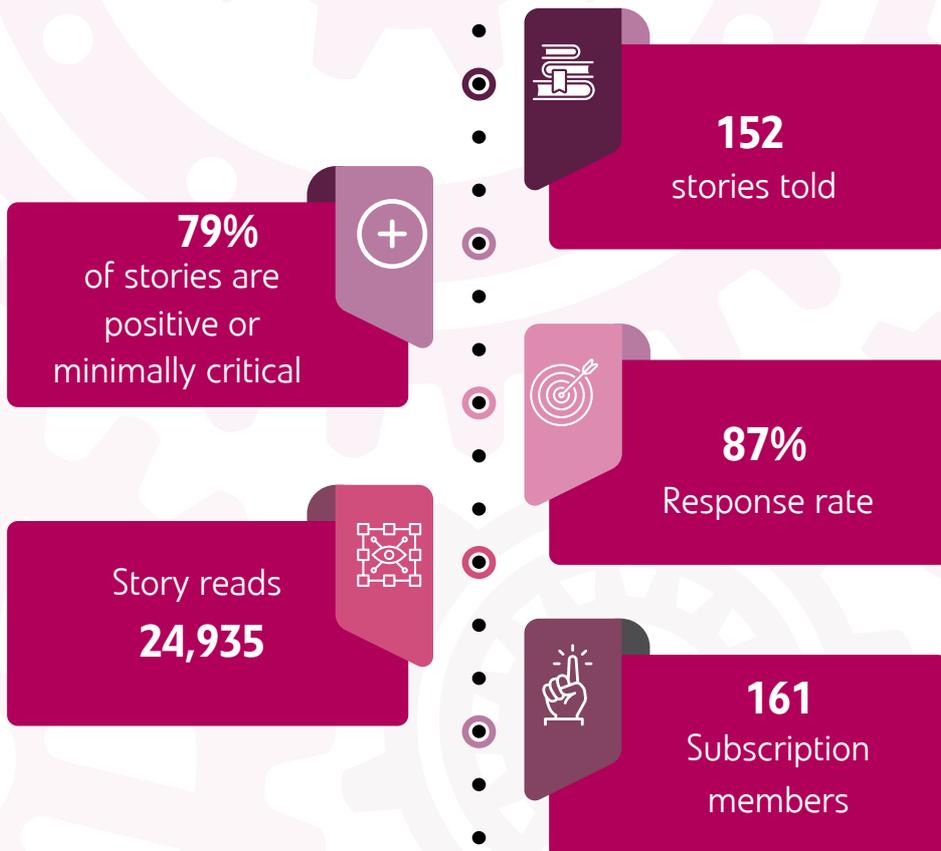


I’m very passionate about a patient centred approach, and to do that you need to know what is important to them. Doctors should be learning and adapting all through their career so they can best look after the community. I feel that Care Opinion is a great platform for this as it gives healthcare professionals access to feedback on so many topics, and will find out things they didn’t even know were a problem. Feedback overall will allow us to adapt, to do what is best for our patients.

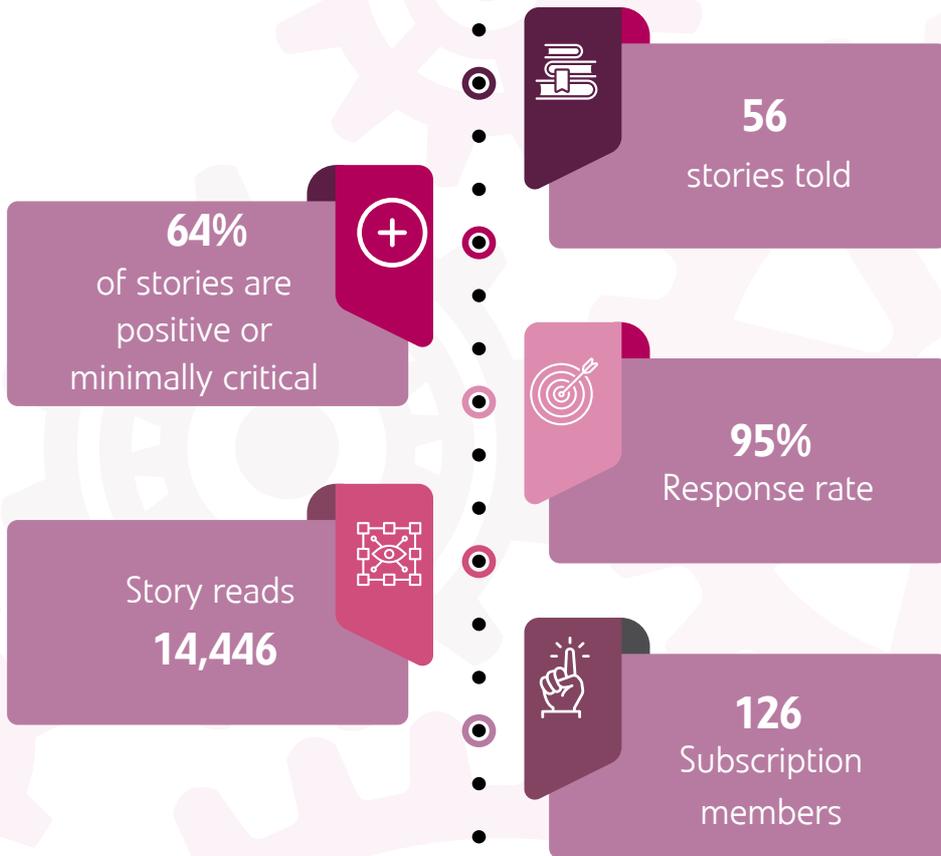
NHS Ayrshire & Arran



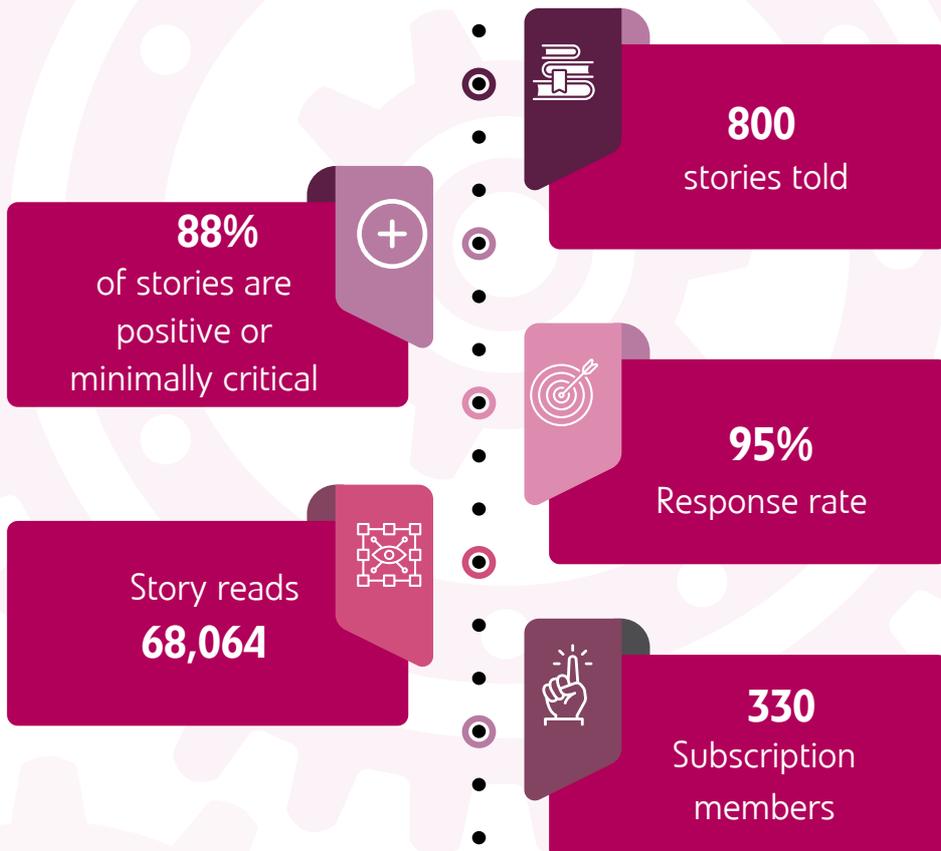
NHS Borders



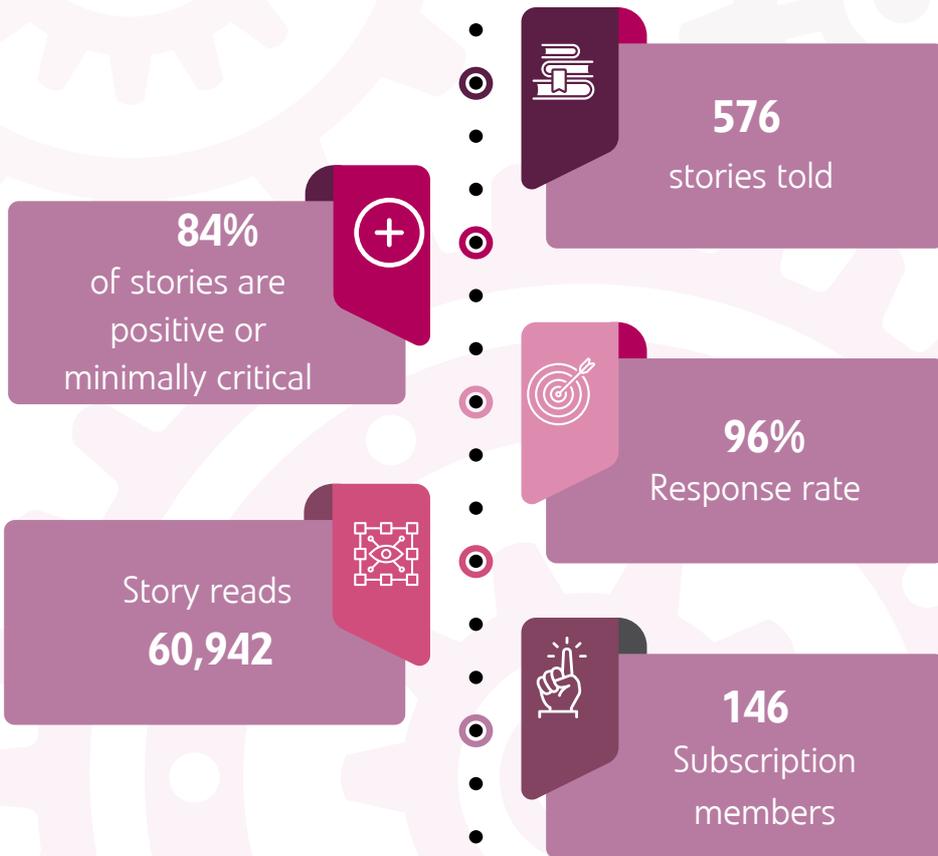
NHS Dumfries & Galloway



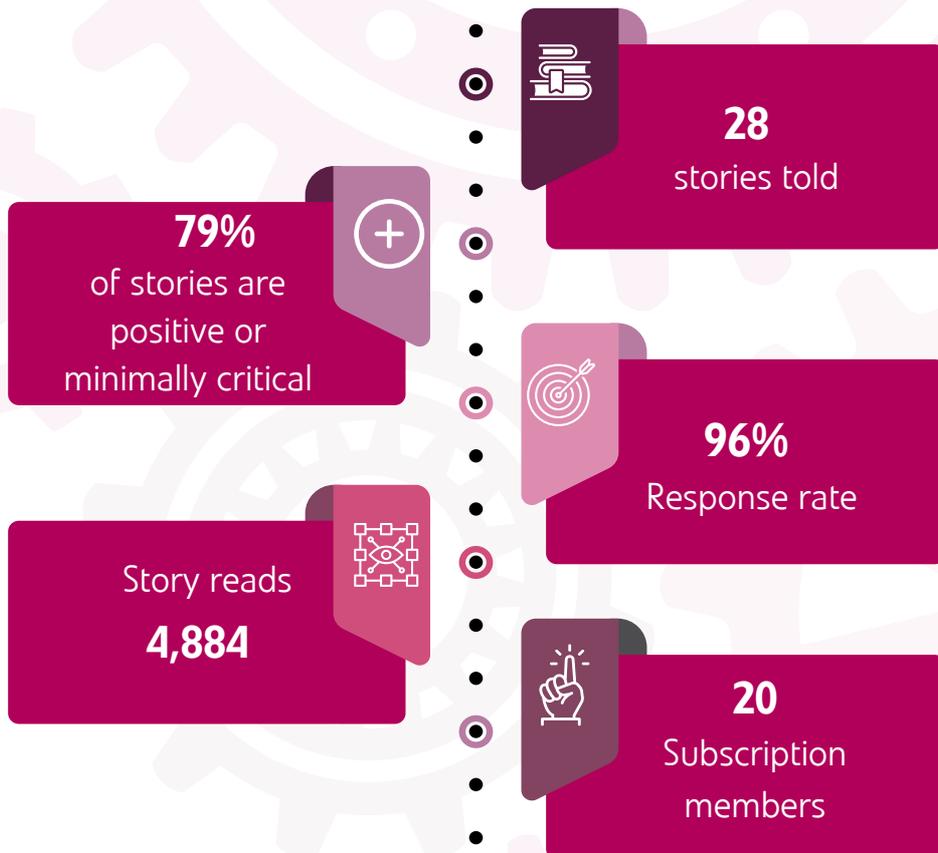
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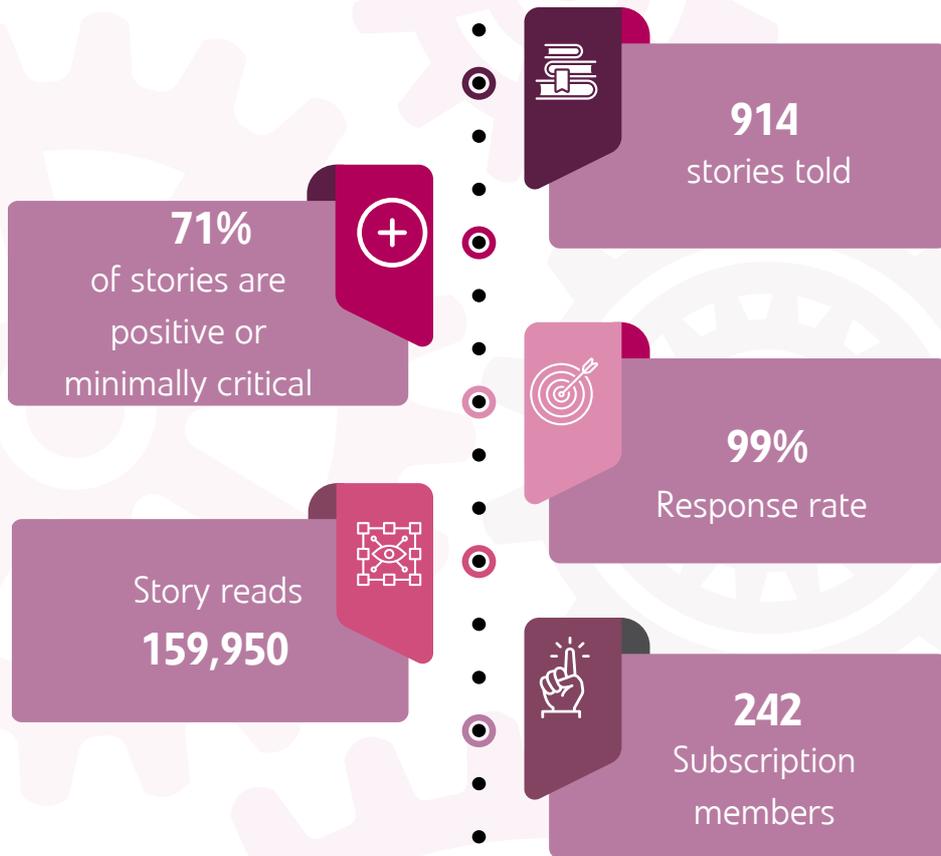
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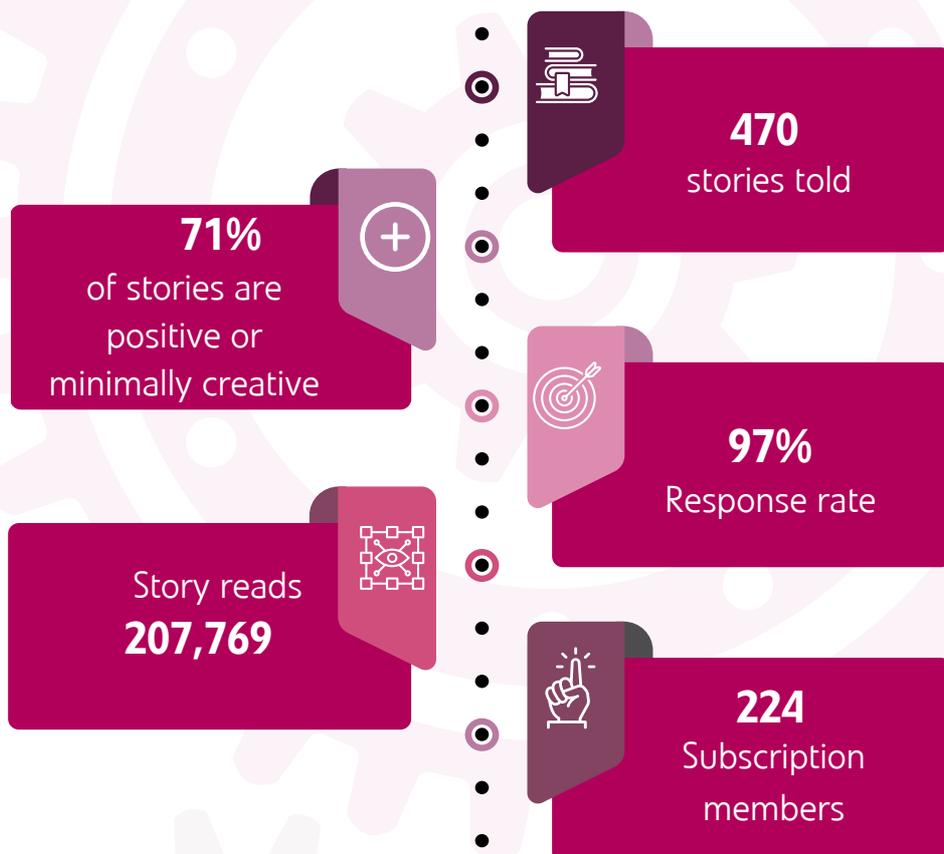
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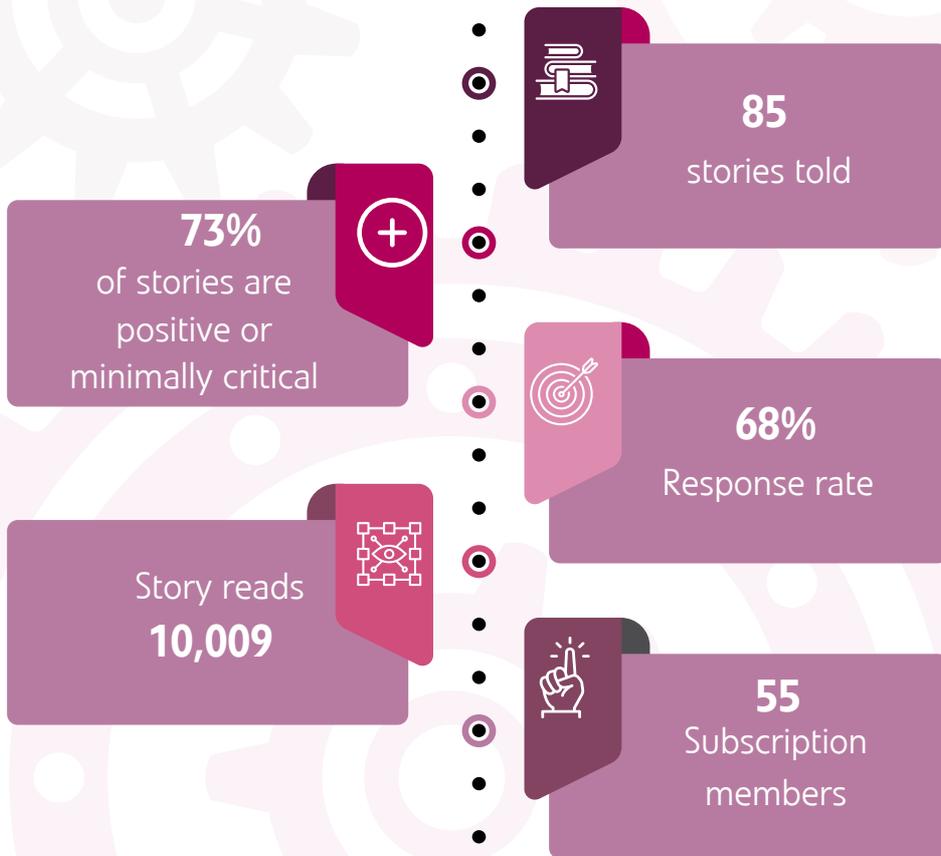
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde



NHS Grampian



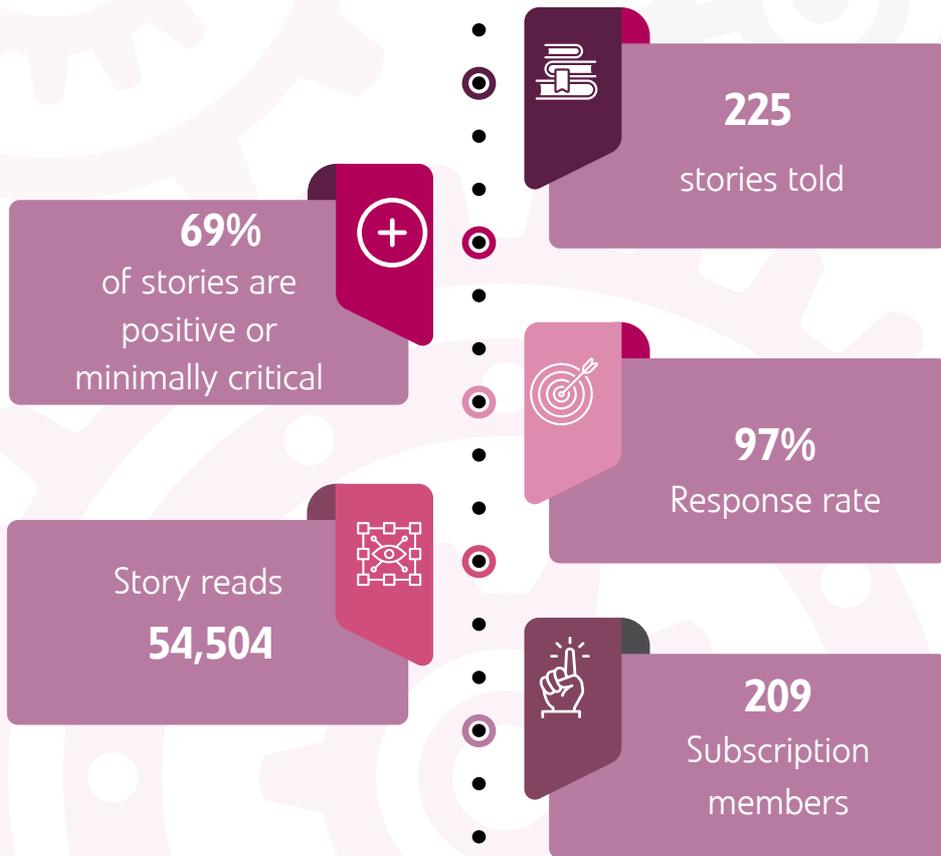
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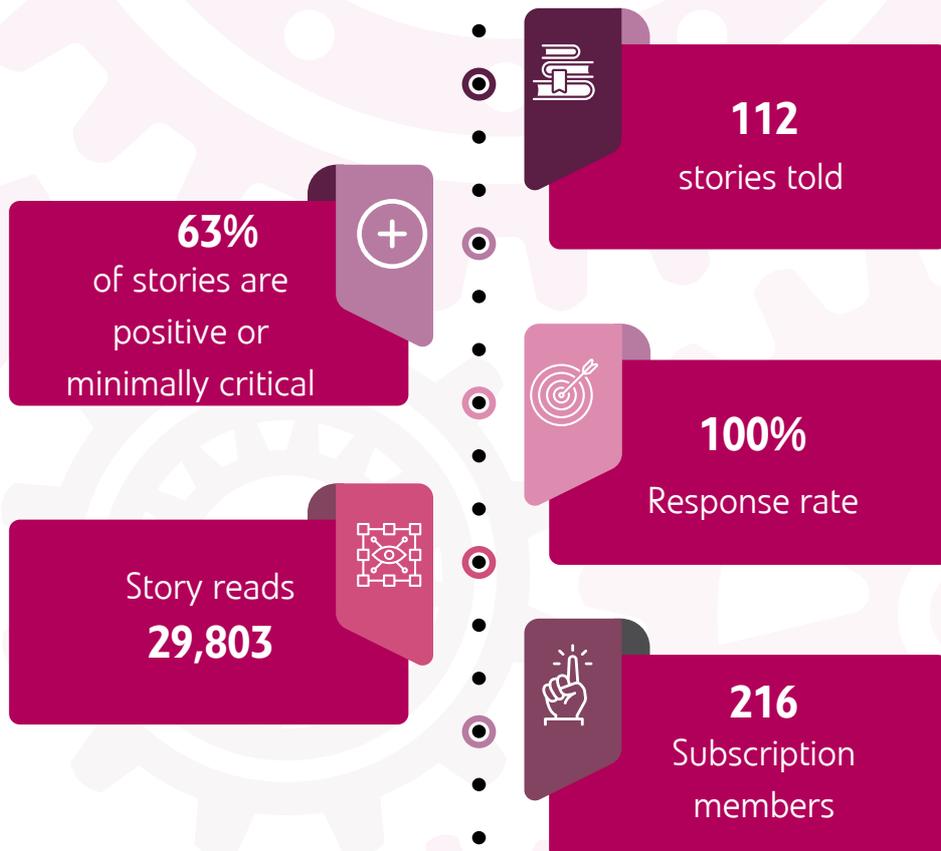
NHS Lanarkshire



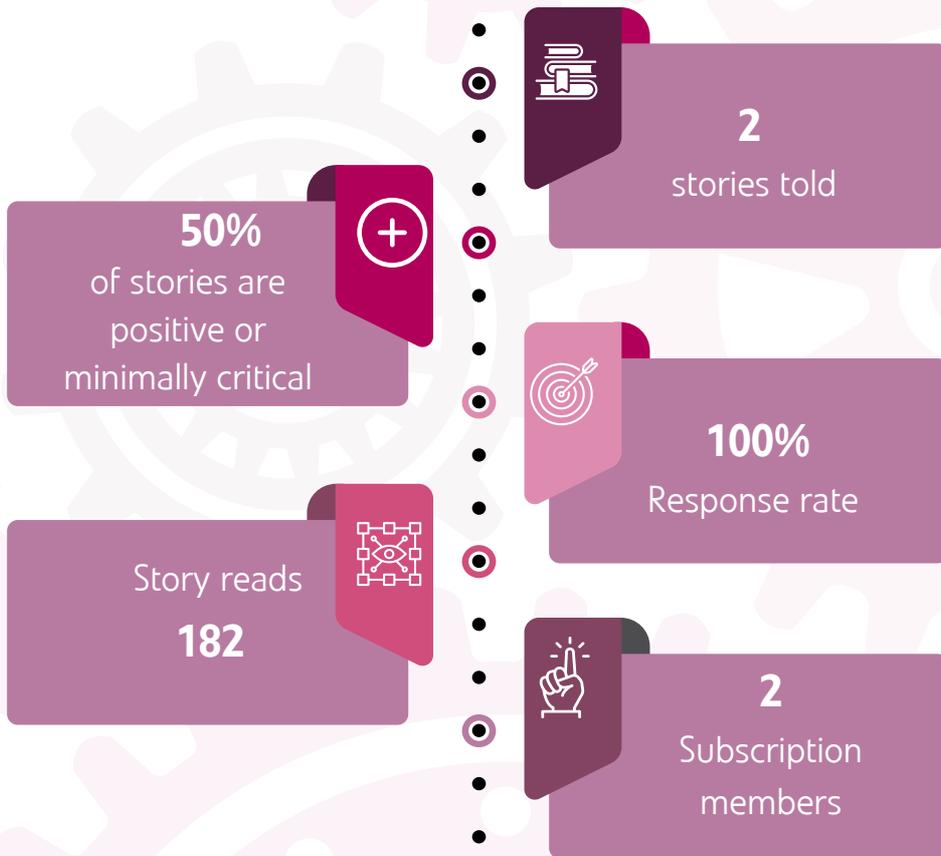
NHS Lothian



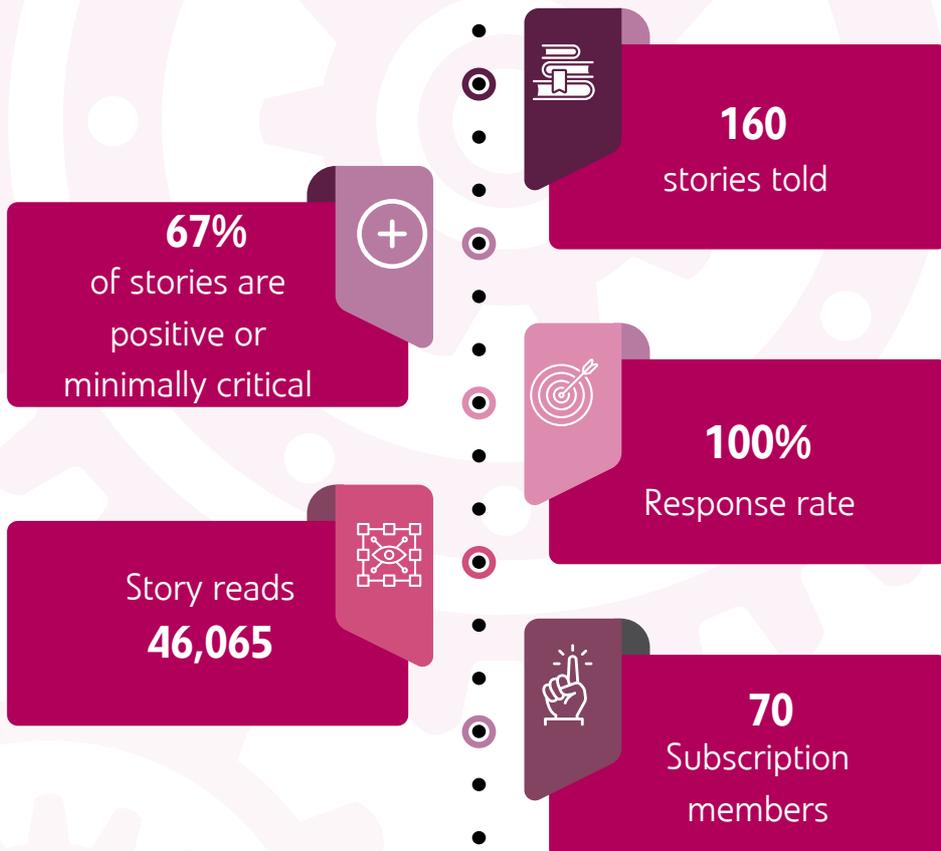
NHS 24



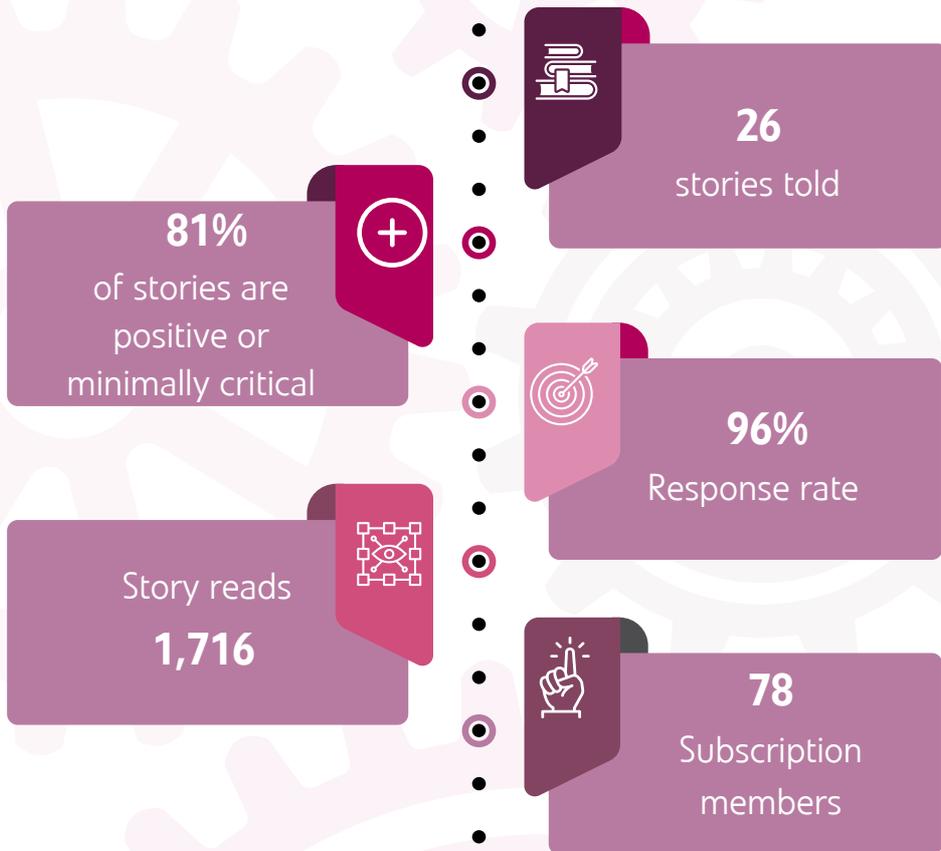
NHS Orkney



Scottish Ambulance Services



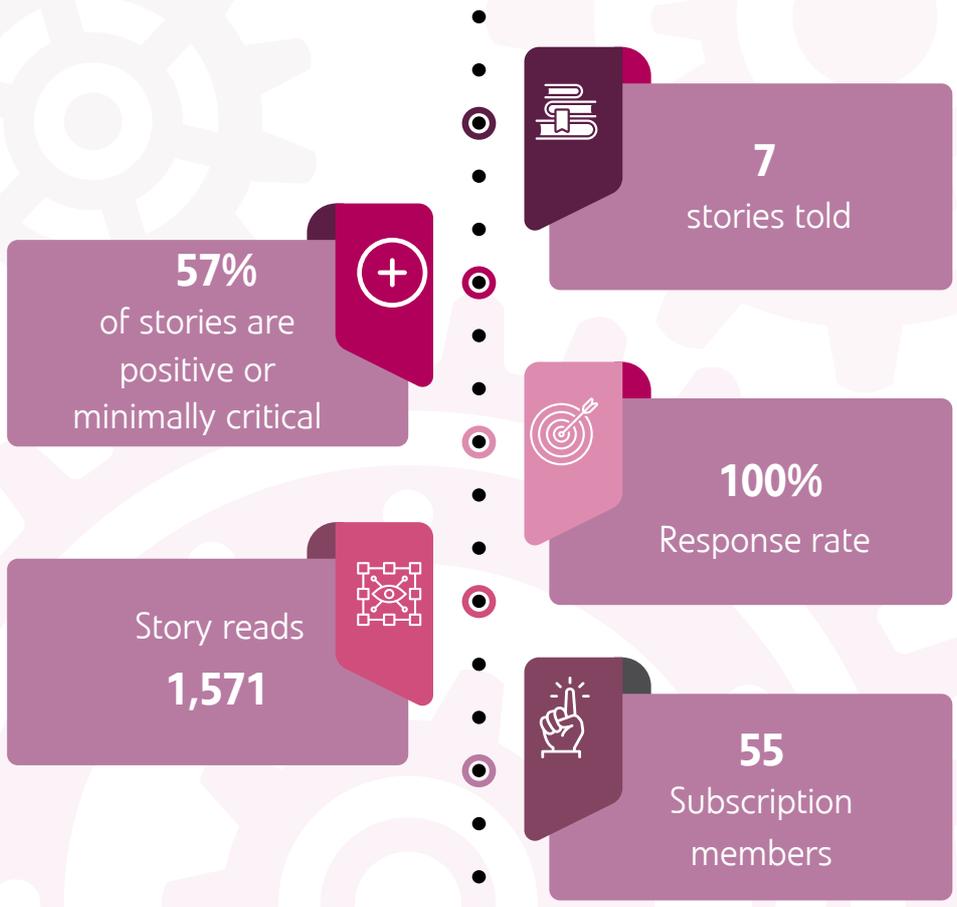
NHS Shetland



NHS Tayside



NHS Western Isles





Contact us

If you need to contact the Care Opinion team, you can:



info@careopinion.org.uk



www.careopinion.org.uk



Unit 6 Alpha Centre, Stirling University Innovation Park,
Stirling, FK9 4NF



01786 583 661



@CareOpinionScot

