



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

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SHARING BEST PRACTICE with James Munro, Chief Executive

"I'm finding this website very therapeutic"

There was a time when online feedback from patients, users and carers was seen as an unnecessary distraction from the real business of care. But public feedback, including stories, is now seen as important and even essential to quality improvement and transparency across the health and social care sectors.

As the volume of feedback has risen – especially with the arrival of the NHS Friends and Family Test in England – so people have started to ask some challenging questions: what learning or change is actually resulting from all this feedback? How do we make sure that those who share their stories of care can see the impact they make?

At Patient Opinion we think these are things which should be "built in" right from the start. Feedback can be a powerful source of both information and motivation for service improvement and culture change. But for us, feedback is about far more than data collection: it is also about relationships.

Recently, after an exchange with member of staff on Patient Opinion, one service user commented: "I'm finding this website very therapeutic". That's not something you'll see on a typical survey form.

We want everyone to learn from the really impressive use of Patient Opinion that we see. So, over the coming year

we'll be working with a select number of organisations that we think are national exemplars in using Patient Opinion to resolve issues, encourage learning and support service improvement. We'll be encouraging them to go further both in achieving local impact, and then in sharing what they do and how they do it.

Although Patient Opinion has been around a few years now, it's not our service that matters – it's the way people use it. Let's all keep sharing and learning from one another.

VOLUNTEERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Over the last few months, we have had the opportunity to work on two exciting projects where volunteers have helped take our work to another level.

In Scotland, Fife Young Carers have been enthusiastic about sharing their own experiences on Patient Opinion for a while now. So when we asked them if they'd be willing to help others to do so too, they jumped at the opportunity! We talked them through what it might be like to have someone share a story with them and how to handle that, and how to guide someone to share a really powerful story. A couple of weeks later, four trained FYC were on the Patient Opinion stand at the Young Carers Festival. Their enthusiasm, encouragement and support resulted in some [amazing](#)

[stories](#) from other young carers from across Scotland.

In England, our work with South London Health Innovation Network has resulted in volunteers helping people to share their experiences of diabetes and dementia care, across a range of local health and social care services. The volunteers have done a great job in talking to patients about their care and sharing stories on the Patient Opinion site.

Given their independence, their affinity towards people using health and care services and, often, their own personal experiences, volunteers are great at encouraging others to share their experiences. If you want to work with volunteers to hear from people in your area, please get in touch.

PO PIONEER - NHS FIFE

Louise Ewing, Patient Relations Manager from NHS Fife is our October Patient Opinion pioneer. We are constantly blown away by her honest and problem solving responses to stories on Patient Opinion. Two that seriously stand out to us are; her heartfelt response to [patient's journey with ME](#) and her fast action when someone questioned [surgery waiting times](#).



Louise

We are very excited to announce that Louise will be hosting a WebEx on **5th December at 2pm** to talk about how she tackles responding, which stories she has found difficult and how she replied. If you want to join in, be inspired and ask questions email sarah.ashurst@patientopinion.org.uk for details.

INSPIRING THE FUTURE

When people share their stories of care on Patient Opinion, they want to make a difference. Overwhelmingly, contributors are hoping that their stories can make care better for future patients. And, of course, one way this happens is that healthcare staff read, learn and make improvements in real-time. But that's not the only way. What if your experience could also influence the health professionals of the future?

That's the thinking driving our new work programme with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Increasingly, patient experience is an important part of the curriculum for health professionals in training. Stories on Patient Opinion represent a rich resource, available to all, for learning, reflection, discussion and debate.

The University of Edinburgh has pioneered the use of Patient Opinion in nurse education, and you can see how students

reacted on [our site](#). In October, Sheffield Hallam became the first university to use Patient Opinion to support interprofessional education across a whole cohort of students. And Kingston University in South London is exploring how student mental health nurses can give feedback on the care they observe on placement, using our service.

We're excited by all these developments because they support our core mission: to ensure the experiences of patients and carers are used in ways which really make a difference. We want to keep the story author at the centre of what happens to their story, so our next challenge is to make sure that when a story is used in education we let the author know.

If you'd like to know more about our work in education, please contact Tim Hunt: email tim.hunt@patientopinion.org.uk or call 0114 281 6256.

Meet

Mike Hamilton



Mike

What is your role at Patient Opinion?

I'm the Integration Development Officer for PO in Scotland. Integration is crucial for health and social care services, and I'm excited to be working on piloting Care Opinion for the first time in Scotland. In partnership with the Health and Social Care Alliance (who champion and support the third sector in Scotland) we will be working with two Health Board areas to encourage people who access social care services to tell their stories.

How would you improve social care?

In future, successful services will be ones that listen to the people who use their services, and use that knowledge and experience to co-produce services. Too often, services get caught up 'delivering a service' and forget the person behind the care they provide. Having access to real stories from real people will allow these services to understand the whole person, rather than just the problems/conditions they have.

What could you not live without?

I'm lucky to live in a beautiful part of Perthshire. I spend a lot of time in my garden, growing ornamentals as well as food crops. I find it very therapeutic working in nature with the earth under my feet and the sky as my roof.

HOW DO YOU PROMOTE PATIENT OPINION?

If you want to hear more stories from the people who use your services, then think about how you're promoting Patient Opinion. There are plenty of options and we're here to help.

Over the years, health services have come up with some really creative ways to promote Patient Opinion. Highlights include: using iPads, PO t-shirts, PO cupcakes, and even PO branded condom packs! We'd love to hear what you've done, so do tweet or email us with pictures. We'll blog the highlights.

There are a few simple and effective things you can do to let your service users know about Patient Opinion. Use our [widgets](#) on your website. Share the great new PO animation (which you can see on our homepage) – some services are even using it in waiting rooms. And remember, all subscribing organisations get a free pull-up banner (so claim yours, if you haven't already!). We have also created a simple card for staff to hand out to ask for feedback directly.

If you want to know more, get in touch and we'll be happy to help.



Contact us...

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