

CARE OPINION NEWS



Care
Opinion

What's your story?

ISSUE
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The patient and public voice is not loud enough

One of the first acts of the new Labour government was to commission a report on the state of the NHS in England – the Darzi Report, published in September 2024. The report describes the NHS as being in a “critical condition”.

In addition, Darzi draws attention to the inability of those who use the NHS to influence it in any meaningful way. “The patient and public voice is not loud enough”, says the report. “There are real problems in responsiveness of services to the people they are intended to serve.”

There are echoes here of the 2013 Berwick Report. In that report, on patient safety, Don Berwick is remembered for urging us to “hear the patient voice at every level – even when that voice is a whisper.” So why are we still here, over 10 years later?

In fact, there has been substantial progress in other parts of the UK. In Northern Ireland the 2016 Bengoa Report recommended “a platform for a more open and immediate conversation with staff and service users.” As a result, Care Opinion is now used widely in that country’s health system. Meanwhile, the Scottish government has championed the power of online patient feedback since 2014. Today all Scottish health boards and growing number of health and social care partnerships are using Care Opinion. The patient voice is getting louder. [Recent research](#) argues that the experiences and concerns of patients should now be seen as “fundamental safety critical information” and that healthcare regulators should use this information in monitoring system performance. Indeed, Care Opinion is already being used in this way.

That the Darzi Report still needs to highlight a problem in England’s NHS suggests that current approaches are not really working. Perhaps clear support for the use of Care Opinion in England would catalyse progress in the next 10 years?



In My Own Words: Being Heard and Making Impact

Are you free on November 7th 2024 between 9.00-12.30pm? If so, then please make a date with the Care Opinion Autumn Online Conference, which is to set to be our best conference yet.

Author voice focussed and driven by the Care Opinion values, you will have the opportunity to hear from Professor Catherine Calderwood and Professor Alex Gillespie who will explore why we have a patient safety problem, and how patient feedback might be part of the solution. You will have the chance to meet and listen to a number of patient-first and dedicated staff including Catherine Labinjoh at NHS Forth Valley Royal, and Abbigail Barkham, Hampshire and Isle of Wight NHS Foundation Trust, who will share their thoughts on the wider impact of responding. You will hear from authors who have lived experience of using Care Opinion. You will meet some of the wizards behind the curtain, our moderators, who will join Emma Berry, Research Fellow based in Aberdeen Centre for Evaluation, in giving us insight into her fascinating paper, ‘Using Humanity to Change Systems’ and where Lisa Townsend, from RDUH NHS Foundation Trust will share her thoughts on working with Care Opinion to manage both the positive and less positive feedback. It is going to be very special.

To reserve your virtual seat and join the 448 people registered than please [click here](#).

Invitation Links – did you know?

Invitation Links are a great way to promote Care Opinion and ask for people to share their story digitally. People can share a story direct from a mobile phone by following a simple link or scanning a QR code. Below are just some of the benefits of using invitation links.

You can:

- Customise various aspects of our story-telling workflow
- Create easily accessible widget codes, kiosk links or QR codes to share with patients
- Keep track of which stories came via which invitation links
- Link out to an additional survey
- Add a child-friendly theme to your Invitation link (Bear)

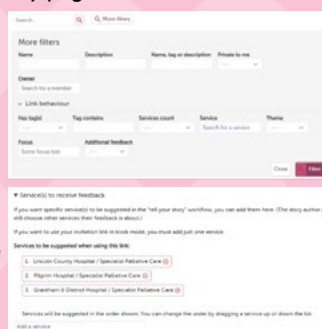
We also have 2 VERY exciting updates to share, thanks to our brilliant dev team:

1. Filtering functionality. We know subscribers often set up a new invitation link when a new team is introduced to CO and often you have many pages of different links.

You can now easily search for an invitation link using these filters including the ‘**Link behaviour**’

2. Linking multiple services. You can now add up to six services for the author to select, e.g. you might have several specialist palliative care services across your organisation but only want one invitation link, then the author gets to select the service they used!

Have a play around with them and don’t hesitate to contact your Care Opinion support lead for more guidance via their email address or sending a message to: 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

This year, we proudly published our first ever Impact Report

Care Opinion is a space designed to make it safe and simple for people to give feedback in ways which lead to learning and change.

In the early days of Care Opinion, almost 20 years ago, we hadn't anticipated all the different impacts and benefits in so many settings and for so many. Sharing a story online can create worthwhile benefits for:

- the story author, other patients or carers
- staff in the team providing care
- others in the providing organisation
- other local healthcare organisations such as commissioners, funders, patient groups, local authorities
- healthcare regulators
- policymakers
- researchers
- teachers and students in health professional training

Independent research has shown that the impact for any of these groups can include an increase in morale, confidence, understanding and culture.

For a feedback author: "It felt empowering to be able to feedback on healthcare 100% from my perspective and with the freedom

of anonymity... knowing my story would get heard was fantastic..."

For health and social care staff, impact can manifest in numerous ways. Practical changes can be made as a direct result of feedback, meaning a better service for patients and staff alike. We know that positive feedback can affect staff morale and culture, too.

"The Care Opinion platform is hugely beneficial to our team and department as it helps us to identify areas for development and improvement and to drive positive change within the unit. The feedback is also a great morale boost for our team..." Sister at Treiske Hospital.

We hope you're inspired by our impact report! If you are interested in finding out more, have any questions or would like to discuss our services for your team, Directorate or Trust get in touch by email at: subscribing@careopinion.org.uk



Click here to view the report



Star Responder!

Our latest Star Responder is Robyn Jones, Sister, Emergency Department, Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust. Robyn shines in many of their responses, but this one stands out, winning them their award. They start with a frank and compassionate recognition of the situation:

"I completely empathise and agree. You should not have had to be reduced to tears in order to get standard advice."

Robyn then follows steps that make for a truly effective response by:

- apologising for specific things
- maintaining an open tone without a hint of defensiveness
- detailing the next steps they've taken - checking if relevant information is available
- saying what they'll do next: "I will liaise with the senior medical team, orthopaedic and physio teams to instigate we obtain this advice for future patients."
- thanking the author for sharing their story

Robyn's careful and personal response recognises the humanity in the author. And the author is moved to respond:

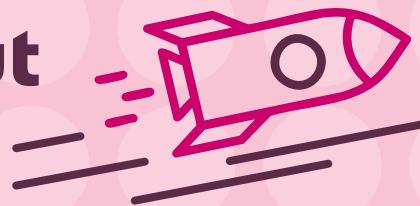
"Robyn thank you; your response is thorough and lets me see that you have read my comments carefully...."

Congratulations, Robyn!

Read the full story and response [here](#).

Know a potential Star Responder? Nominate them today [here](#).

RDaSH Rollout Care Opinion



In June 2024, Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH) accepted the Care Opinion (CO) challenge with both hands and rolled out the Care Opinion platform with a bang, choosing to use CO as their main platform for collecting stories and FFT responses. Since the implementation in June, a fantastic 100 stories have been told via Care Opinion, with 1 change planned and 1 change made already. Impressive work.

In a video, RDaSH Chief Executive, Toby Lewis, speaks proudly about using Care Opinion and the 'exciting opportunity to communicate'. Toby mentions how Care Opinion is 'important to our organisation' and how the stories can be used to show off the fantastic work of our colleagues and simultaneously help our organisation to 'improve, change, adjust and develop services'. To read the blog on the RDaSH journey so far, [click here](#).

In addition to the launch video, the print room has been hard at work generating some great materials, including lovely posters and bookmarks, too! Care Opinion gets everywhere at RDaSH!



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