

Annual Review

of stories told about
NHS Scotland
services
in 2023-2024

Over a
Decade of
stories

Inspiring learning,
growth and change



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Introduction

The title and tagline of this year's Annual Review of stories told, says it all "**Over a decade of stories; Inspiring learning, growth and change**". Since Care Opinion launched in Scotland, **more than 45,000 members of the public** have shared their stories about NHS Scotland services.



Fraser Gilmore, Executive Director and Head of Scotland, Care Opinion

These patients, services users, relatives, carers and friends have taken the time to share their experiences of what was good and what could be improved. Services and staff have gratefully received these stories, so they can reinforce what worked for people and learn from what didn't, and they have shown their thanks, learning and what they are going to do with this feedback by **responding more than 58,000 times.**

Year on year, engagement on Care Opinion has increased and we were delighted to have supported and enabled **9,405 members of the public** to share stories of their healthcare experiences in 2023/24, about NHS Scotland services. Every one of these stories is an opportunity for celebration, reflection, learning and development. We are deeply grateful (as we know all of you are) to each and every patient, service user, relative, carer and friend, who has taken the time to share their feedback.

The public share their feedback on Care Opinion as they want to make a difference, to make services better for everyone, to express gratitude and share when things haven't gone so well. In 2023/24, **staff responded** to the stories shared **11,687 times**, thanking authors and explaining what they were going to do with the feedback.

Care Opinion gives services and staff the opportunity to be proactively learn about the public's experiences of Health and Care services. In 2023/24, **77% of the stories** told on Care Opinion about NHS Scotland services **were completely positive**, it is great for staff to know what they are doing well, so these practices can be reinforced. For the remaining 23% stories, which included some level of criticality, provided opportunities for learning, development and change.

Stories on Care Opinion go way beyond storytelling and responding. These gifts of feedback have a wide reaching impact supported by the fantastic number of stories read about NHS Scotland services. The **1.1 million views** in 2023/24 will have impacted the public, who share and read the stories, the staff and services, who respond and learn from them, those working in policy & strategy, researchers, educators, third sector organisations, politicians and many more.

We are delighted to see so many people across Scotland who value and actively seek feedback, leading to an incredible **45% increase in stories from 2022/23**. The increased engagement on Care Opinion in 2023/24 is down to over **3,900 staff** across the NHS in Scotland who are members, responders and administrators of the various health board Care Opinion subscriptions. As well as the many staff and volunteers across the country not on subscriptions who want to promote open, transparent dialogue between the public and healthcare services.

In the following pages of this year's review, as well as sharing the statistics nationally and for each board, we have some inspiring articles and case studies from around Scotland, celebrating the importance of listening to and learning from public feedback. We wanted to thank everyone who contributed to this year's Annual Review, which we hope inspires you as much as it did us.

As I often do in my introduction to our Care Opinion Annual reviews, I am going to end with a quote which I think is very relevant to what you will read throughout the pages to come:

“ I remind myself every morning: Nothing I say this day will teach me anything. So if I'm going to learn, I must do it by listening. ”

Larry King, CNN

Some of our most read stories

Care Opinion ensures that feedback from the public is shared with the relevant services, so they can actively learn from and respond to this public feedback. These narratives resonate widely, engaging not only with service providers but also a diverse audience including staff members, politicians, civil servants, researchers, educators, and the general public. This broad readership reflects the platform's role as a catalyst for transparency, and continuous improvement in health care.

This year, we are highlighting a variety of most viewed stories that demonstrate the diverse ways feedback is received and utilised. These include a story where change has been made based on feedback, a story enhanced with picture tiles using Talking Mats, and a story received via Care Opinion's freephone number.

About my brothers care

I have to compliment the staff of the Huntly ward for my brother's excellent care.

A big thank you to Chris, Stef, Daniel and Fae who does the nightshift.

Also the wonderful Fiona on the front reception of the building & Davie the porter.

What a wonderful job they are doing in supporting the NHS & clients & Family providing excellent service.

 747 views

Beautiful Home Birth

In early June I gave birth to a beautiful baby boy at home, supported by two amazing midwives, Laura and Kylie. [...]

[...] It's clear to see the whole home birth team love their jobs - we even met the lovely Audrey over the weekend when she came to do routine checks - and it's no wonder they are an award winning team. NHS Ayrshire & Arran should be so proud of this wonderful team!

 721 views

The atmosphere of care they create is exceptional

The venesections have been performed with exceptional skill and their organization in terms of arranging appointments is great.

All the nurses I have met have been extremely professional but I would particularly like to pay tribute to Jenny who has performed most of my venesections, who is incredibly professional but also a very lovely and funny person. Thank you so much for you care.

 356 views




They have been excellent, could not fault any of them

I just wanted to give feedback about the great care I've been receiving from the enhanced care team, they came out to see me in my home and have been excellent, could not fault any of them.

I can only remember the name of the doctor Dr Din who was lovely.

They sent me for a MRI head scan and X ray at Ninewells which also was lovely and all staff were superb, many thanks.




 455 views

Took my needs into account

They understand the difficulties transferring onto the beds and work round this, allowing me to remain in my chair when possible. They realised after my first visit how difficult transferring is, buying a sliding board to make this easier once they realised this equipment was missing.

The team are a cheery bunch making the appointments as pleasurable as possible in the circumstances.

 250 views

CHANGE MADE



This story led to a change

Realistic Medicine

“

Putting people at the centre of their care, and supporting shared decision making lie at the heart of Realistic Medicine.

”

This article was written by Anne Leitch, Value-based Health and Care Lead, CMO Division, Scottish Government

Over the last year, the Scottish Government Realistic Medicine team have continued to work in collaboration with the Care Opinion team. Engaging with feedback from the public continues to be a key driver to improving our health and care services. This example from NHS Lothian shows how feedback, through Care Opinion, can deliver improvements in care, and how much it means for service users to be listened to ([Thank you for listening & caring. | Care Opinion](#)).

Putting people at the centre of their care, and supporting shared decision making lie at the heart of Realistic Medicine. In practising Realistic Medicine, we will support the delivery of better value health and care. Value Based Health and Care (VBH&C) focuses on the need to deliver better outcomes for people while optimising the use of health and care resources.

In [Delivering Value Based Health & Care: A Vision for Scotland](#) the Chief Medical Officer set out his thoughts on the way we should deliver care in Scotland. The vision makes it clear that delivering VBH&C is everyone's responsibility, no matter their role.

In October 2023 we published [the VBH&C Action Plan](#). The action plan sets out thirteen high level actions (in line with six commitments set out in the Vision) which aim to support health and care colleagues to practise Realistic Medicine and deliver VBH&C. It also aims to ensure that we provide the leadership, support, tools expertise and strategic direction needed to promote and embed VBH&C across Scotland.

One of the six commitments within the VBH&C action plan supports the ongoing engagement with the public to promote understanding of Realistic Medicine and VBH&C and its benefits for Scotland. This includes empowering people to be equal partners in their care, through shared decision making enabling self-management, and promoting health literacy and healthy lifestyle choices.



As part of the ongoing work to support implementation of VBH&C, NES (NHS Education for Scotland) and the Realistic Medicine team have developed an online eLearning module - [Value Based Health and Care | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#). The module is relevant for all staff working in health and social care. It explains the link between Realistic Medicine and VBH&C and what we mean by outcomes that really matter to people.



We have also developed a shorter module on Shared Decision Making (SDM) [Shared Decision Making \(office.com\)](#). This resource is designed to introduce the fundamental principles, importance, and practical application of shared decision making in health and care settings. The aim is that health and care professionals will gain a comprehensive understanding of how shared decision making empowers people, improves health and care outcomes, and enhances the person-provider relationship.

Our annual Realistic Medicine conference, held on 22 April, was a celebration of the fabulous work that is helping people to practise Realistic Medicine across Scotland. Care Opinion fully supported the conference, and this is another example of our continued collaborative work. It was an opportunity to learn, make new connections and hear about emerging tools and approaches to support making that positive difference to the delivery of care and services. The conference was a tremendous success and had 240 delegates in attendance.

The Realistic Medicine Policy Team are supporting the re-run of the It's Ok to Ask (IOTA) campaign (resources/links and info below). The campaign launched on 8th April, and we see it as a huge opportunity to increase awareness about, and practice of, SDM and the BRAN questions.

Learn more about the 'It's OK to Ask' campaign and access resources for patients and healthcare professionals.

 NHS inform campaign page: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/its-ok-to-ask>

 Social media toolkit: <https://gloo.to/F6qh>

Information on how to promote the campaign on your own social media channels.

 Media release: <https://gloo.to/F6qu>

In this way, and with the ongoing support of Care Opinion we hope to see many more patients as active participants not only in their own care but using feedback to improve health and care for all.

 <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/18350/realistic-medicine>
<https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/63101>

Email contact:

 qualityimprovement@nes.scot.nhs.uk
anne.leitch@gov.scot

04

Learning from what was good and what could be improved

“

In making changes based on their feedback, we are able to show that we listen and care about the views of our service users.

”

This year, we are excited to present insights from two health boards, each offering a unique perspective on their journey with Care Opinion. They have shared their experiences and reflections with us, focusing on the theme '**Learning from what was good and what could be improved.**'

In the following two articles, NHS Lanarkshire and NHS Lothian have outlined their journey over 2023–2024 of engaging with the public on Care Opinion including; the lessons learned from public feedback, notable initiatives, highlights and some of their future plans for public engagement.

As you will see, their contributions offer practical insights and strategies that will inspire and inform anyone else looking to enhance their services and improve public engagement.

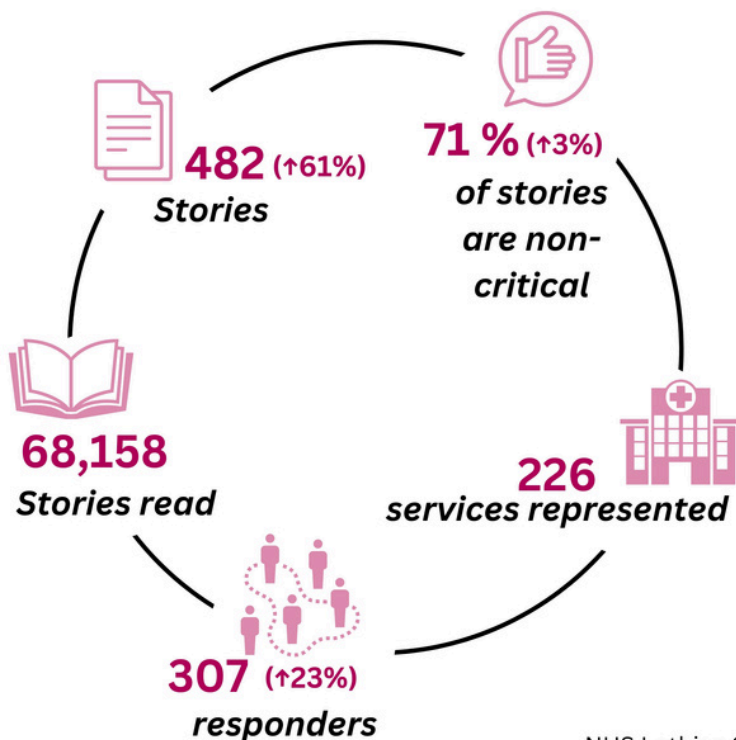
NHS

Lothian



*This article was written by Mariska Vernon-Stroud,
Patient Experience Team Leader, NHS Lothian*

NHS Lothian continues to prioritise making it easy and straightforward for our patients, their families and carers to share their experience with us. Care Opinion continues to be a valuable and central resource, enabling us to hear and respond to the experience of NHS Lothian patients. The past year we have sought to focus on promoting Care Opinion with staff and services across NHS Lothian. This has resulted in a 62% increase in stories and 23% increase in responders, but more importantly it has enabled those sharing their stories to receive valuable responses from those frontline staff delivering their care.

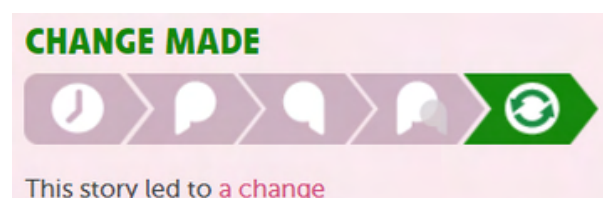


Over the past year we have provided promotional events on key hospital sites, directly reached out to services, spoken about Care Opinion at training events and introduced a quarterly newsletter. Each of these approaches has allowed us to share the value and importance of Care Opinion but also equip staff to understand the ethos and culture demonstrates the values of NHS Lothian.

Within our recent newsletter we engaged with our top ten services who receive the most stories to understand how they are using and promoting the platform. The services all used simple ways to promote Care Opinion, but it was the sharing of stories in staff rooms, staff meetings, and safety huddles on a regular basis which appeared to promote the value of the Care Opinion and encourage staff to reach out to patients. Discussing the stories both positive and negative gave understanding to what they are doing well, and what we could improve, boosted staff moral and is leading to changes in practice.

Over the next year we seek to encourage services to be learning from the stories they are receiving and when implementing an improvement or change to demonstrate this. We have had some of good examples this year of services implementing improvements following feedback, and patients then responding with gratitude to the change.

 www.careopinion.org.uk/1196456



We seek to encourage more of this and are currently undertaking a quality improvement project as a team to look at how we support service to be aware and demonstrate the changes they are making.

We are really excited to continue to support the use of Care Opinion in NHS Lothian, looking to increase services represented and responders. We continue to prioritise learning from the stories shared, as well as sharing the work of Care Opinion activity through the Patient Experience annual report and strategy.



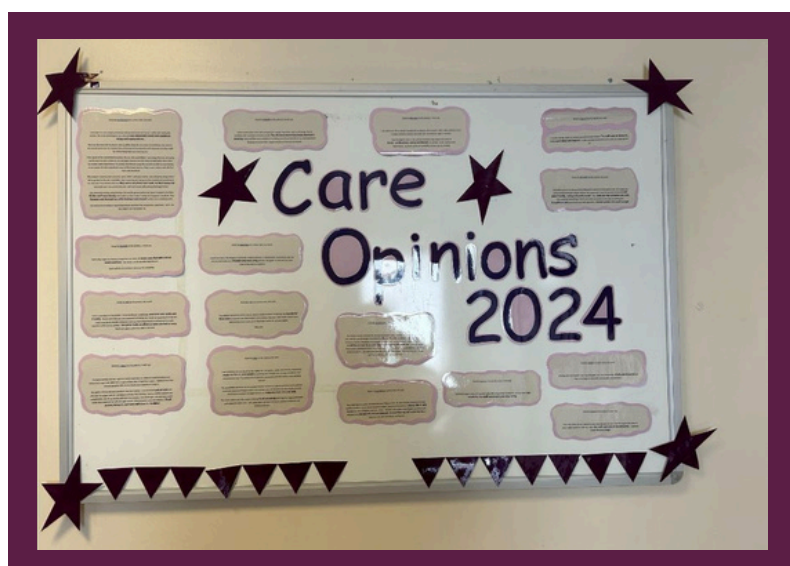
*This article was written by Jennifer Montgomery,
Improvement Co-Ordinator, NHS Lanarkshire*

Care Opinion is our primary source of unsolicited feedback in NHS Lanarkshire. During 2023/24, we created a real focus on promoting Care Opinion with our patients and in training staff on how they respond to, and use patient feedback.

We have seen an increase in responses from our departments, some of which remember the patient, and it makes the response all the more personal. It is important for us that authors receive a response from staff in the service they are writing about.

We have developed our responder training and refreshed our approach to using patient feedback as seen in University Hospital Wishaw's Day Surgery who display their Care Opinion stories.

We have carried out a review of our Care Opinion system and revised many processes from the basic administration tasks through to training documents.



We have increased the visibility of Care Opinion within our wards and have reviewed the service tree to ensure we have all areas included. With each new area we add, we are identifying responders at the outset, completing bespoke responder training and creating QR codes and invitation links for each of these services, so they are ready to go straight after being added to our system.

The opinions of our patients are very important to us and we encourage our patients to leave feedback on Care Opinion as this is an excellent way for their voice to be heard. In **making changes** based on their feedback, we are able to show that we listen and care about the views of our service users.

Changes are highlighted quickly from patient stories and can be acted on as well as monitored. In making several changes we have facilitated departments working together to make improvements based on feedback from our patients. For example, providing a nursing chair and redecorating the baby feeding room at University Hospital Monklands.

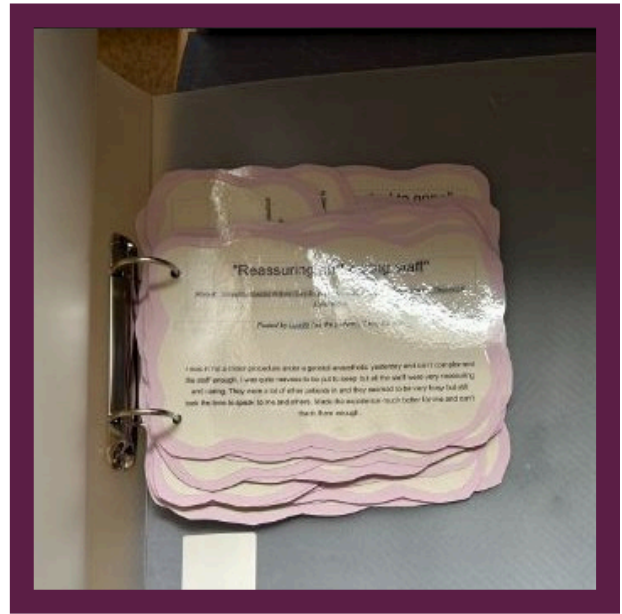


Within the Day Surgery Unit at University Hospital Wishaw a Clinical Support Worker has trained as a responder and now takes responsibility for all things Care Opinion within the department.



The Day Surgery Unit had a phenomenal number of stories (166) in 2023/24 and continue to be successful in gaining patient feedback therefore we are replicating this approach elsewhere and offering training to anyone passionate about patient feedback.

We have a steady increase in stories during the first 3 months of 2024/25, with our highest number (142) in May 2024, and we hope to see this continue to increase. We are seeing more engagement with the public in the targeted areas across our 3 hospital sites and hope that this continues. Ultimately we want to spread the success we have already had to other departments and services and see the same uptake in feedback from the public.



We will also be working with the Emergency Department Staff Wellbeing Champion who works across the acute sites in Lanarkshire to use patient feedback to promote staff wellbeing which will be a very exciting new project.

In the financial year of 2023–2024, NHS Scotland services have seen remarkable engagement through Care Opinion, with public feedback driving meaningful change across various areas. In the following pages, we have highlighted some inspiring case studies that showcase the power of stories from the perspective of services.

In these three case studies, services have shared why they chose to use the platform, their initial concerns about seeking patient feedback, and how they involved patient voices in their improvement efforts.

They have also explored and outlined their exciting future plans to continue using patient insights to enhance care quality, reveal the valuable lessons learned from patient feedback, and highlight the real changes made as a result.





Case study 1:

Using Care Opinion to improve Post Menopausal Bleeding care



This article was written by Sonya Y Sellar, Senior Macmillan Clinical Nurse Specialist, Gynaecology, Post Menopausal Bleeding

I instantly recognised the value of Care Opinion as a platform that allows for unfiltered feedback from patients and their families in an anonymous way. The feedback helps to identify areas for improvement and reinforces our service's commitment to patient-centred care.

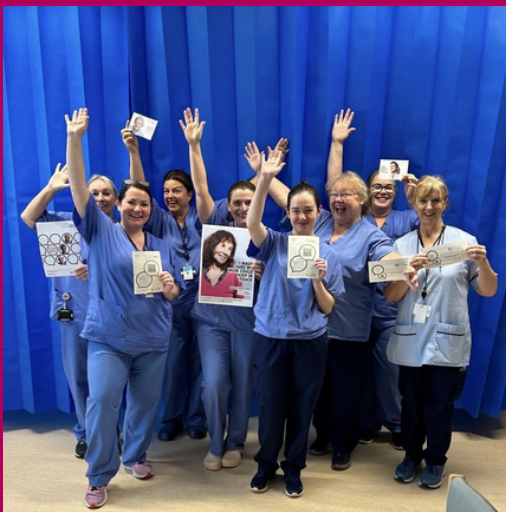
Before using Care Opinion, I had identified the need and willingness to hear patient feedback and to act on this, good and bad. As a specialist Nurse, I acknowledged the importance of continuous improvement, and this platform allows for honest and confidential feedback. In addition, Care Opinion is an easy-to-use resource for both patients and staff. I further recognised that by implementing a process for receiving feedback we would be able to establish greater understanding of patient experiences and ultimately enhance the quality of care.

When I learned that Care Opinion was being introduced, I reached out to Victoria Sullivan, Project Manager for Care Opinion for NHS Tayside. During our initial meeting, I gained detailed understanding of the platform and its implementation. Considering that my patients are generally over 50 years old, I wanted ensure accessibility for those less comfortable with technology and was pleased to discover that patients could provide feedback via phone, which could be more convenient for them.

Since using Care Opinion, I have gained valuable insight into the perspective of how patients experience our Post-Menopausal Bleeding Clinics within Perth Royal Infirmary.



Patients often arrive with high anxiety, so I was curious about which aspects were most important to them. The recurring themes have been both interesting and sometimes unexpected. Many patients comment on how we as a team help them to feel at ease, starting with a warm welcome to the department.



They also appreciate a sense of humour, kindness and the stories we receive often mention staff members by name. For the staff, sharing this feedback has boosted their confidence, and it's become clear through the positive feedback that service provision is aligned with patients' needs and expectations.

Care Opinion has proven to be a valuable feedback tool, benefiting both patients and staff in numerous ways, demonstrating a department-wide commitment to patient-centred care and continuous improvement. By actively engaging with patient feedback as a service, we can build trust, improve patient satisfaction and ultimately care. We all work hard, so its lovely to see the positive impact that appreciation has had on every staff member that patients interact with and how as a service we meet the needs of the patients.

Case study 2:

Patient-Centred Care: Insights from the Day Surgery Unit at New Victoria Hospital using Care Opinion



This article was written by Mary Taylor, Lead Nurse and Emma Miller, Senior Charge Nurse

There are a number of reasons why we wanted to use Care Opinion within the Day Surgery Unit at the New Victoria Hospital. Care Opinion is a tool to help us improve our quality of care. We believe that by listening to our patients we can deliver a more positive and person-centred experience as it helps us understand what our patients value in their care experience. It highlights good practice as well as identifying areas for improvement and the opportunity to address these.

Encouraging and acting on feedback demonstrates our commitment to transparency and accountability. This can help build trust between patients and staff, leading to improved communication and collaboration. This can help reassure patients who may be anxious and worried about their procedure.

Within the Unit we are committed to continuous improvement and Care Opinion provides valuable insights that can drive this. By regularly capturing and acting on feedback, we can make ongoing adjustments to ensure that we are meeting the needs and expectations of our patients.

We also find that Care Opinion is a source of continued motivation and morale booster for the staff. From April 2023 until March 2024 – **98% of our feedback was positive!**

At the beginning we were apprehensive about using Care Opinion.... Seeking feedback requires the department to be open and vulnerable to criticism, which can be uncomfortable and challenging for the staff. We had many questions about doing this including: Would negative feedback damage the Unit's reputation? We have made lots of changes within the department – would these changes be judged as positive? Feedback from patients may require us to make changes to our practice, which can be daunting and require effort and energy. Would we have the ability to make changes? Rejection – would we get any feedback at all? Would this be a waste of resources? Our fears proved unfounded and we have seen a 120% increase in the number of stories this year.

When embarking on our Care Opinion Project, firstly, we explained Care Opinion to our staff (what, why, how) to ensure they understood it and highlighted the importance of feedback and how it will help us improve our service.

We set up a Care Opinion board at the entrance to our department, promotional posters to encourage people to share their feedback. We also displayed examples of patient feedback.



Please tell us about your care today

What was good?
What could be better?

Share your story at

 [careopinion.org.uk](https://www.careopinion.org.uk)

Care Opinion is an independent website. We make it safe and simple for people to share honest feedback about their care.

Or Call  **0800 122 3135**
(Freephone)



We obtained the Care Opinion business cards which provide a variety of ways for people to get in touch including the website address; freephone telephone number and the QR code. We started to give these out when we were discharging patients home and explained to patients and relatives what Care Opinion is and the purpose.

Two members of staff are responders and this ensures that we respond in a timely manner.

The feedback has shown us that we are doing a good job and providing high quality patient care (98% of feedback was positive). The feedback shows that small unspoken things that can make all the difference to a patient e.g. holding a patient's hand during a procedure. We have also learned how to take on board constructive criticism and to make improvements. Staff enjoy seeing the difference they make to a patient journey – they love being mentioned by name. Our top 'what's good' tags were 'staff'; 'kindness' and 'caring'.

What's Good Themes – 2023-2024

We ensure that the feedback is shared with our staff via our internal communication channels, as well as with other members of the Multi-Disciplinary Team including our facilities and reception staff. It is important that we share the success.



Case study 3:

Patient Feedback in Practice: How NHS Fife's Sexual Health Services Utilises Care Opinion



This article was written Dr Sue Brechin, Consultant in Sexual & Reproductive Health, NHS Fife

Sexual Health Fife is an integrated service including teams across sexual and reproductive health, genitourinary medicine, blood borne viruses, gender based violence and health improvement. We offer a wide range of treatment and prevention to a diverse population in community locations across Fife. We seek feedback from our service users as an opportunity to make improvements to the care we provide. Feedback improves outcomes for patients, is cost effective, increases trust in staff, improves user experience and satisfaction, and improves staff experience.

We started using Care Opinion in 2022 as one way of getting feedback from service users. Now it is business as usual with all staff actively promoting Care Opinion using cards or posters with QR codes across all our clinics in Fife. Our small service trebled Care Opinion feedback between April 2023 and March 2024 with 51 stories received. Moderators for Care Opinion rate the stories for **criticality**. Those deemed to be **not critical** increased from an already high 85% to 90% between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

We had two challenges. Firstly, to avoid reflecting only on critical feedback and possibly missing opportunities to look at **what we do well and consider how we do more of that**. We made a choice to reflect on all Care Opinion stories, identify themes and look for improvement ideas.

Secondly, bridging the gap between **getting feedback** on the quality of our services then using feedback to focus on what matters to service users and meeting the needs of service users.

We were able to identify themes emerging from Care Opinion stories over time. Themes relative to components in the system: people, service and environment. In particular, **same staff** – supporting trusting relationships and feeling heard; **flexibility in how people can access care** – meeting needs of individuals; **welcoming safe clinic environment** – non-judgemental kind caring staff. These provided us with ideas for improvement direct from service users.

The stories and themes emerging have informed the **discovery phase** of our project to re-design sexual health services for young people in Fife so we deliver care in a way that gives everyone the same chance of that good experience that was reflected in Care Opinion stories.

Using an improvement model we **delivered** more options for young people in Fife to flexibly access advice and care: on-line booking; easy and rapidly responsive text messaging; increased booked appointments by 100%; almost doubled the locations across Fife where young people can attend; opened a new drop-in for the most vulnerable young people. We also now have a **consistent core team** of clinical and non-clinical staff who provide the care for our young people across Fife and ensure a similar environment in all clinic locations.

We plan to continue to use Care Opinion across our service and in addition, seek more in depth feedback. We will do this using the Care Experience Improvement Model (CEIM): undertaking **discovery conversations** with service users to provide a picture of the quality of care experience over time; and reflecting on these as a team to identify and prioritise improvement ideas that will be planned and tested.

Star Responders

“

... the heart of my approach to care (is) being person centred and valuing every person as a human.

”

At Care Opinion, we value the role of responding to patient stories in creating meaningful connections between healthcare providers and the public. These responses go beyond acknowledging patient experiences – they help build trust and connection. Last year, at Care Opinion’s Autumn Conference, the organisation was thrilled to celebrate Star Responders on the platform – those who have gone above and beyond in their commitment to engaging with public feedback in a meaningful way.

What Are Star Responders?

Star Responders are individuals within health and social care services recognised for their exceptional responses to stories on Care Opinion. These responders excel in demonstrating empathy, compassion, and a genuine commitment to improving patient care. Their responses are carefully crafted to acknowledge both positive and critical feedback, provide constructive engagement, and outline actionable steps taken to address any issues raised.

Why Responding Well Matters

Responding well to public feedback is important for several reasons:

- **Creating Connection:** Thoughtful responses show patients that their voices are heard and valued, building trust and strengthening relationships.
- **Driving Improvement:** Public feedback provides invaluable insights into their experiences, helping health and social care services make meaningful improvements.
- **Promoting Transparency:** Engaging with public feedback demonstrates a commitment to transparency and continuous improvement, fostering accountability.

Who were our Star Responders and what do they think now?

One of our Star Responders last year was Lee-Anne Abel from NHS Tayside. When asked about being awarded as a Star Responder and what she learned from responding to public feedback, she said:

“To be recognised as a Star Responder via Care Opinion is an absolute honour and privilege. Responding to stories is such an important part of my role as Senior Midwife and I feel the value Care Opinion brings us in service to hear the voices of women and families accessing all of our services across women, children and families is not to be underestimated.”



Lee-Anne Abel, NHS Tayside

The stories so openly and honestly shared by women and families who are often vulnerable due to either pregnancy loss, pregnancy/birth or other health concerns are heart-warming, inspiring and full of rich narrative that allows us to listen to learn from their experience and improve services. Without this understanding we cannot measure the quality of care we receive with varying perspective and understanding. Equally, the wonderful positive stories give our teams a great boost knowing that the work they are doing is making such a positive difference for so many.

I am touched to be recognised for what is a part of my role that I enjoy participating in but more so for the acknowledgement that the heart of my approach to care being person centred and valuing every person as a human has been the key feature that has inspired this.

NHS Tayside are using Care Opinion widely across our services and in particular within maternity and gynaecology services we are using the feedback to initiate change, share ideas and celebrate our services. Care Opinion is a wonderful resource that adds insight and value with every story. We are currently working locally to promote the use of care opinion and plan to implement story boards in the clinical areas for staff to celebrate the positive stories and learn/reflect about those stories that could have been different. This board will hopefully raise the profile of Care Opinion for women and families too and support them to provide their feedback more regularly for us to gain better understanding of how care feels for them."

Victoria Sullivan, Care Opinion Manager at NHS Tayside also commented on Lee-Anne's Star Responder recognition:



"NHS Tayside was delighted that Lee-Anne was awarded as a Scottish Star Responder as Lee-Anne clearly takes this role to heart. It's always a joy to read the responses Lee-Anne posts to stories we receive for Maternity Services in Tayside because they are clearly heartfelt and reflect the pride she takes in her work, and the gratitude she feels for all the feedback that's received. It's truly admirable how she puts

Victoria Sullivan, NHS Tayside

herself in the patient's shoes and responds in the most meaningful, respectful and genuine way, regardless of whether the feedback is positive or negative. Lee-Anne's responses are always timely and wherever required, she shows that the feedback is shared across teams so that everyone gets the opportunity to see the difference they're making to mums across Tayside. Well done Lee-Anne!"

Care Opinion's other Star Responder last year was Theresa Keicher, formerly from NHS Fife, who emphasized the importance of providing opportunities for individuals to share their opinions on services. Now, in her new position as Practice Educator in Palliative & End of Life Care in NHS Tayside, Theresa continues to leverage Care Opinion for quality improvement and collaborates with colleagues to incorporate feedback into communication education.

"What matters to me...I want to ensure people are given every opportunity to provide an opinion on services being delivered. No matter what that service is, we are paid for by the taxpayer, we are accountable to the people we serve. Care Opinion provides a neutral platform where individuals can share their story and know it is taken seriously.



Theresa Keicher, NHS Tayside

Feedback is shared at local and national level and, as I have learned over the past few years it is read by and shared with service leaders and managers. People have an opportunity to share the areas we excel in whilst also have a safe space to highlight their concerns. It is important we acknowledge the feedback received from the anonymised writer, I believe this is a gift they share with us and allows us to develop our services as we move through challenging times. Personally, I want to know on behalf of the service I am part of when we are getting care right and equally where we need to improve. This is why in my previous role I took time to thank the writer and give a quality response.

I have moved on from my role as Team Leader with Fife Specialist Palliative Care and I now work in an education role in another NHS area. I want to continue to use Care Opinion in anyway I can for quality improvement and in my new role I am collaborating with colleagues in the patient experience team to deliver communication education incorporating feedback collated from the Care Opinion website. I can feed forward the statistical data and use anonymised stories to improve practice. Research has shown staff find the use of personal stories a very effective learning tool, one that has lasting impact for change.

Of course we would ideally not want to hear we have let the public down in any way, nevertheless when we do we need to learn from it and provide the writer with our plan for taking things forward. It takes time and thought into how you respond to that feedback as the memory of care provision lives on in others and can affect confidence in public services. Sometimes we only get one chance to do something right and in my profession as a palliative care practice educator I try to keep this value at the forefront of my practice and hope I can influence others either in their health and social care practice or their Care Opinion responses.”

In addition to Theresa’s own reflections on the value of Care Opinion, her recognition as a Care Opinion Star Responder has been praised by Siobhan McIlroy, Head of Patient Experience at NHS Fife. She highlighted that Theresa’s award reflects NHS Fife’s commitment to compassionate care and patient-centred excellence.



Siobhan McIlroy, NHS Fife

"NHS Fife is deeply committed to fostering a culture of compassionate care. As the Head of Patient Experience, I am deeply proud that a dedicated member of NHS Fife has been honoured with a Care Opinion Star Responder award. This recognition signifies more than just an accolade; it resonates with the core values of patient-centred healthcare and the tireless efforts invested by our staff to enhance the overall care experience.

Patient satisfaction is paramount in healthcare, and the Care Opinion platform has emerged as a powerful tool for patients to share their experiences and for staff to engage in meaningful dialogue. Witnessing an NHS Fife colleague receive the Star Responder award is akin to seeing the embodiment of a commitment to excellence in patient care.

Care Opinion allows patients to voice their opinions and fosters a transparent and responsive environment within NHS Fife. This award underscores the significance of patient feedback as a driving force for positive change within NHS Fife. It showcases a commitment to actively listening to patients, addressing concerns, and continuously refining care processes. This award is a testament to Theresa's exceptional responsiveness and dedication to promptly addressing patient feedback. It signifies recognition of Theresa's ability to connect with patients on a personal level.

This acknowledgement goes beyond a mere pat on the back; it reinforces the importance of Theresa's ability to shape positive patient experiences and highlights her significant contribution to NHS Fife's commitment to continuous improvement. The Care Opinion Star Responder Award symbolises excellence in patient care, reflecting Theresa's dedication and NHS Fife's as a whole. It marks a milestone in the journey toward providing unparalleled patient experiences, creating a positive feedback loop that benefits patients, staff, and NHS Fife's overarching mission of delivering compassionate and patient-centred healthcare."



Continuing the conversation

Care Opinion empowers individuals to voice their stories while facilitating meaningful conversations between these people and health & social care services. Remarkably, in the financial year 2023–2024, 9,405 members of the public shared their stories on Care Opinion and these stories were responded to 11,687 times by health and social care staff from around the country.

Having so many responses to stories shared by the public is testament to healthcare services in Scotland's commitment to active listening and engagement. It encourages more members of the public to share their experiences, knowing their voices will be heard and valued.

Particularly noteworthy is that these numerous responses from healthcare staff sometimes prompts further engagement from story authors. Many patients, service users and their families, upon receiving responses from services to their original stories, have felt compelled to continue the conversation. This level of interaction highlights the importance of feedback, gratitude, and ongoing communication in enhancing patient care.

From these continuing conversations, several key themes emerged, which we have explored in the following pages.



In the following pages, you will find a shortened version of this article that captures the essence of the key themes.

Gratitude and Appreciation

Authors often express renewed gratitude and appreciation for the care they received. Their follow-up responses frequently include heartfelt thanks and acknowledgment of the continued support from healthcare staff.

"Many thanks and once again thanks for all the amazing care and support."

<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/1176484>

Recognition of Individual Staff Members

Specific staff members are often mentioned by name in these follow-up messages, with authors recognising their exceptional service and kindness once more.

"Thank you we'd appreciate Lauren receiving the thanks she hugely deserves as we've been able to thank the team and nurses but not her personally."

<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/1175640>

Importance of Feedback

The value of giving and receiving feedback is highlighted, with authors acknowledging how this exchange motivates staff and enhances services.

"I'm just happy that I had the opportunity to provide feedback because it's rare to be able to do so and my father has had numerous positive experiences within the NHS."

<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/1167221>

Emphasis on Compassion and Kindness

Compassion and kindness from healthcare staff are significant contributors to positive experiences, often reiterated in follow-up feedback.

"Thank you so much Daisy, honestly the care, dignity and respect I received was incredible.."

<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/1169111>

Empowering Voices and the role of Care Opinion

The visibility of praise and the dedicated space for sharing feedback are also highlighted within responses.

"I am so happy I now have this platform. Give credit where credit is due. I always hope this allows for confidence boosting and the knowledge that they do make such a positive difference even if a lot of times they may feel they don't."
<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/1067484>

Desire for Continued Improvement

Some responses include constructive suggestions for further improvements in care or facilities, showing a commitment to ongoing dialogue and enhancement of services.

"The discussion I had in response to my post was helpful and much appreciated. I hope that practice can be improved for the future as a result."
<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/1160871>

Specific Instances of Care and Updates

Authors share detailed accounts of specific instances where staff went above and beyond in their care, often updating their original stories with new experiences of care.

"I totally forgot to mention another amazing midwife from the Peterhead team who was with me throughout my pregnancy even though she wasn't able to be there at the birth. Iris was my community midwife for pregnancy appointments and was always so reassuring and caring. [...] Thank you Iris!"
<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/1167460>

Alleviating Others Fears

Responses often express relief and reassurance with an aim to alleviate fears for others.

“Thank you for your comments and I did hope to allay any fears someone may have. My treatment was wonderful.”

<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/1160523>

Emotional Impact

The emotional support and reassurance provided by staff are highlighted as crucial elements of care and are often emphasised in follow-up messages.

“Thank you both, I am recovering well and able to move around, I have a new view on life after nearly losing mine and my husband and children thank you all. Again, all the staff were amazing and very caring with my situation which makes it so much easier.”

<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/1090387>

Impact on Family

Several responses describe the impact of care not just on the patient but also on their families, emphasising the importance of empathy and support during difficult times.

“My daughter also found staff to be compassionate and empathetic when she was fearing the worst.”

<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/1070576>

Team Acknowledgment

Many responses highlight the importance of teamwork, with authors thanking entire teams or departments for their collective efforts.

*“Thank you Bob and all the team once again! I never felt just like a case number – always someone who was cared about. I wish I could remember the names of every single one but I would like to say each and every one are doing an amazing job so keep it up
”*

<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/1139114>

Unexpected and Personalised Responses

Authors often express surprise and gratitude for personalised responses from staff, which were not always expected and are highly appreciated.

“Thank you, Nikki, for your lovely response, it made me smile to see it and thanks for taking the time.”

<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/1163492>

The engagement and conversations seen on Care Opinion demonstrate a shared commitment to improving healthcare experiences for everyone. Through these genuine exchanges of stories and responses, healthcare professionals and the public, alike, show their dedication to understanding and enhancing care practices.



You can read the full article following the link below:

[https://www.careopinion.org.uk/
blogposts/1196/continuing-the-
conversation](https://www.careopinion.org.uk/blogposts/1196/continuing-the-conversation)

Your Care Opinion Scotland team

“

What achievements or developments do you feel most proud of in the advancement of Care Opinion's mission?

”

At Care Opinion, our Scottish team is a small yet passionate group with extensive experience dedicated to making a difference. The team bring a diversity of backgrounds and a wealth of unique perspectives and skills to our shared **mission** - supporting people to share their experiences of health and care in ways which are safe, simple, and lead to learning and change. Together, we celebrate daily triumphs and revel in the joy of our collaborative efforts. Our team's passion and commitment are at the core of everything we do, making our work incredibly fulfilling.



Looking back on the past year, we asked our team to reflect on what they are most proud of in advancing Care Opinion's mission. Here are their inspiring insights:

"Last year, I had the privilege of leading and contributing to several impactful projects that align closely with our mission. We recognised the importance of developing our own character to assist children and young people in telling their stories on the site. With Bear now part of our team, we welcomed an inviting character that embodies our values with a touch of kindness and trustworthiness.

Organising and producing our conferences has been another highlight for me. It's truly amazing to witness how these passionate gatherings of individuals inspire each other and contribute to our collective mission. The energy and ideas exchanged during these events propel us forward in our commitment to empowering the public and driving positive change in health and social care."



Krisztina Patocs, Business Administration and Support Officer

"As Care Opinion continues to expand, moderation of the stories submitted to us remains a core part of what we do, and the past year has brought with it plenty of new challenges and discussions. We're continuously updating our thinking and refining our practices to make sure that we keep up with the ever-changing landscape of healthcare across the country - whilst keeping our mission and values central in everything we do and making sure that everyone can safely tell their story.

In the last 12 months, we've continued to expand our team of dedicated moderators and to develop our training processes as we look to the future, with more healthcare service users engaging with Care Opinion every day. We've also expanded our team of senior moderators and our safeguarding team. As a senior member of the moderation team, it's always amazing to see the many ways that each new set of eyes and ears in moderation brings fresh perspective and energy, as we continue to grow our moderation team and Care Opinion as an organisation."



Alastair Patrick, Senior Moderation Officer

“The last year has been exciting, with lots of developments in subscriber support. Care Opinion is now becoming more familiar and recognised by the public as an avenue to influence improvements in health and care services. I have been working closely with board and partnership leads, to help services generate feedback from as many people as possible.



Promotion from staff, as well as the ‘ripple effect’ of stories being told publicly, has prompted more people to share their stories. There has also been an increase in staff and volunteers supporting people to share their experiences, with a stronger recognition that this is often needed by vulnerable people, whose voices are just as important as any other person.

A lot of new services have been added to the platform, and reporting features are now used more regularly by staff to show evidence of performance and service quality. More people are now responding to stories, meaning the most appropriate people can thank story authors and/or help them find solutions for themselves and other patients. I have had conversations with staff, who now have a genuine interest and keen enthusiasm to know what has been good and what could be improved, with much less fear involved. As a result, response quality has improved. Subscribers can now nominate ‘Star Responders,’ which highlights those who go an extra mile when communicating, signposting or showing empathy. Responders are now embracing the ‘Change’ site features more, to demonstrate listening, reflection, communication and innovation.

The last year has also involved relationship building between Care Opinion leads across the country, with many sharing ideas and supporting each other in our UK-wide conferences, peer support sessions or on a 1-1 basis. I hope this collaboration and positive support will continue to grow for all involved in helping voices be heard safely on Care Opinion.”

Lisa Dendy, Engagement and Support Officer



“As Care Opinion’s newest member of staff, starting recently in May of this year, I have been in a unique position of growth and learning when it comes to Care Opinion. Much like many of our subscribers, I have been learning the functionality of the site, building the necessary basis to carry out my role as Engagement and Support officer, using this newfound knowledge to then help support and guide subscribers on their Care Opinion journey.”

As our subscribers will know, the many avenues of support that we provide here at Care Opinion is not a role that can be learnt in one day, but rather the process resembles more closely a building block analogy, with each new element of training contributing to the formation of a solid building block tower. I am really enjoying the process of learning thus far and look forward to solidifying each element as time passes and my experience grows.

A lot of new services have been added to the platform, and reporting Care Opinion’s mission aims to allow members of the public the opportunity to, “share their experiences of health and care in ways which are safe, simple, and lead to learning and change”, with this being something that I feel like is at the forefront of all that we do. Through engaging with subscribers and discussions had with my colleagues, I have learnt all about the seismic growth of Care Opinion over the last decade and have loved seeing just how engaged our subscribers are in promoting the strive for feedback, irrespective of whether they are new on their Care Opinion Journey, or whether they are seasoned subscribers.

Having only been in my role for a short time, I already feel so positive about the impact that Care Opinion is having! And I’m so excited to play my part in the growth of the organisation moving forward.”

Charlotte Borthwick, Engagement and Support Officer

“As the longest serving Engagement and Support Officer in the Stirling team, I’ve witnessed so much positive change and development over the last (almost) 5 years. It’s exciting to be part of such an encouraging and passionate organisation like Care Opinion, as we are always moving forward, always looking for ways to make things better and find ways to hear experiences from as many people as possible to help make health, care and support services better for everyone.”



One of the greatest achievements of the past year I feel, has been setting up and facilitating our peer support groups, for staff who lead on Care Opinion within their organisations. Everyone involved has jumped right in and selflessly shared the amazing work they are doing within their own service areas. It’s great to see the energy in the ‘virtual’ room during these meetings, and for us to be part of the creative ways that people are not only encouraging feedback from service users, but the varying ways feedback is being used to improve services and celebrate staff for the great work that they do.

I feel there has been a real shift in the last 12 months of how organisations in Scotland are approaching feedback within health, care & support services. We are now not just witnessing learning and change, but also the celebration of the people who work tirelessly every day to help others and are being mentioned in the thousands of stories that we publish every year. Our subscribers continue to go from strength to strength and I’m excited to see what the next year brings!”

Danielle McEwan, Engagement and Support Officer

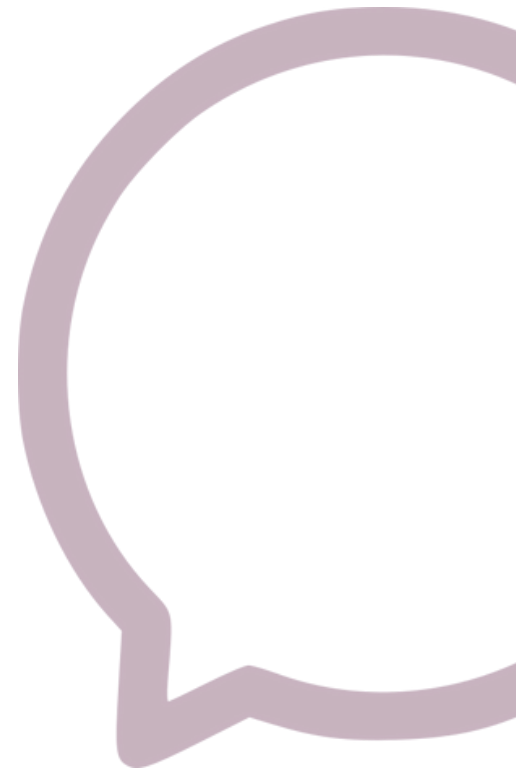


"Reflecting on the past year and my first year working at Care Opinion as a moderator, I've had the privilege of witnessing first hand the transformative power of our efforts and the positive impact of which I am feeling continually humbled and proud of.

It's awe-inspiring to see how our mission and commitment to foster and enable constructive conversations between healthcare staff and their patients, and as a result, making a real difference in their interactions. In my role, I have seen countless instances where our moderation has provided a platform for sharing open and respectful feedback, facilitated dialogues that often lead to significant positive changes, opportunities for growth and shared understanding.

As we move forward, I am excited to see what we can achieve by making positive difference in how healthcare is being provided and experienced."

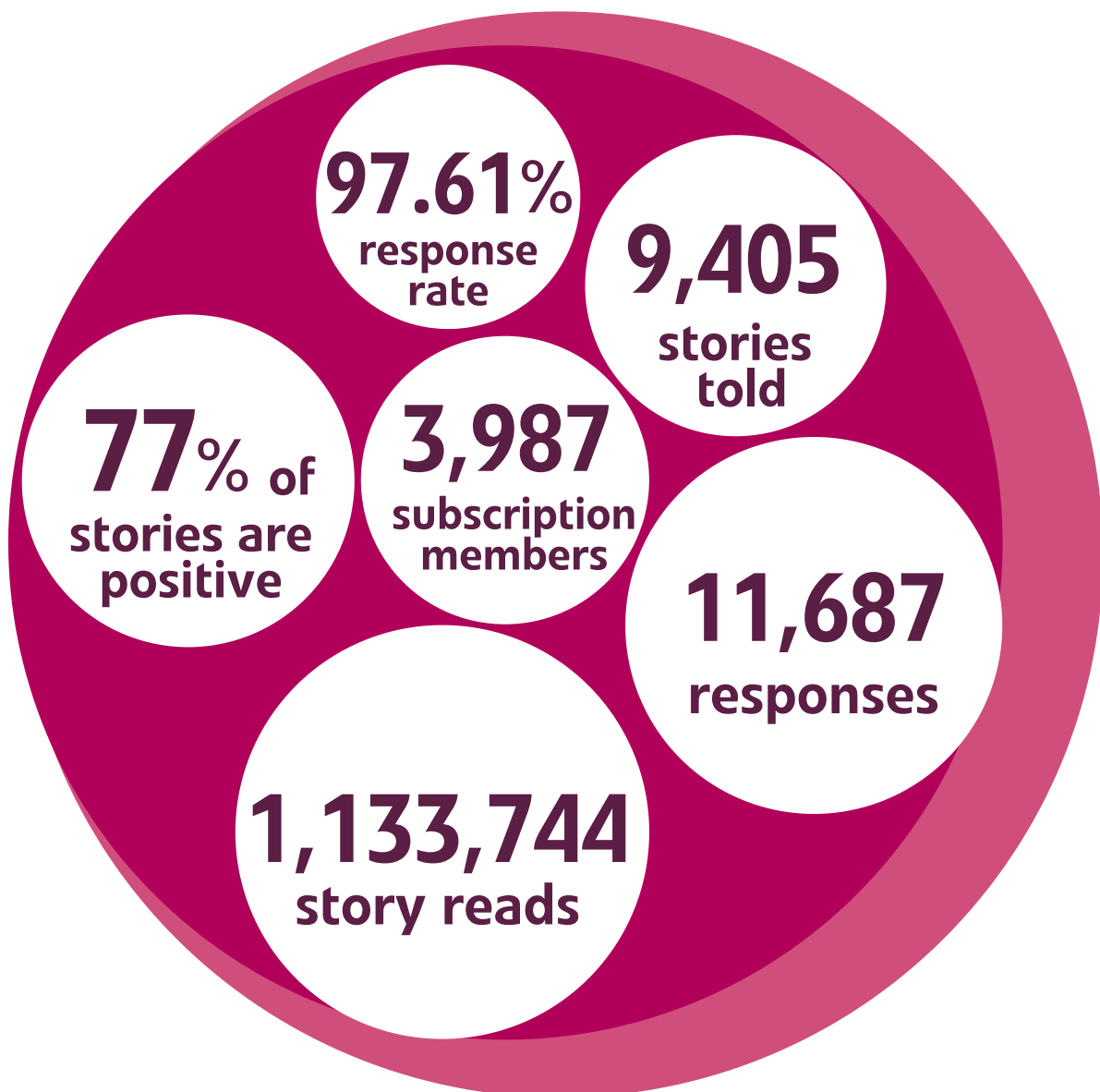
Arpad Patocs, Moderator



Activity across NHS Scotland services



The below infographic outlines activity on Care Opinion about NHS Scotland services during 2023/24.



The following pages have infographics outlining activity on Care Opinion for each Health Board during 2023/24.



NHS Ayrshire & Arran

558
stories
told

646
responses



92.11%
response
rate

71,426
story
reads

70% of
stories are
positive



NHS Borders

235
stories
told

230
responses



80.42%
response
rate

24,973
story
reads

80% of
stories are
positive



NHS Dumfries & Galloway

160
stories told

171
responses



129 
Subscription members

96.87%
response rate

15,057
story reads

75% of stories are positive



NHS Fife

1,223
stories
told

1,756
responses

450 
Subscription
members

98.03%
response
rate

121,449
story
reads

82% of
stories are
positive



NHS Forth Valley

943
stories told

1,110
responses

260 
Subscription members

97.98%
response rate

91,608
story reads

79% of stories are positive



Golden Jubilee National Hospital

52
stories
told

69
responses



90.38%
response
rate

6,683
story
reads

85% of
stories are
positive



NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde

2,345
stories
told

2,897
responses

471 
Subscription
members

99.23%
response
rate

297,747
story
reads

78% of
stories are
positive



NHS Grampian

560
stories
told

668
responses



283 
Subscription
members

97.32%
response
rate

170,947
story
reads

70% of
stories are
positive



NHS Highland

203
stories
told

198
responses

91 
Subscription
members

88.66%
response
rate

14,477
story
reads

69% of
stories are
positive



NHS Lanarkshire

1,101
stories
told

1,425
responses



99.90%
response
rate

152,522
story
reads

72% of
stories are
positive



NHS Lothian

482
stories
told

698
responses

321 
Subscription
members

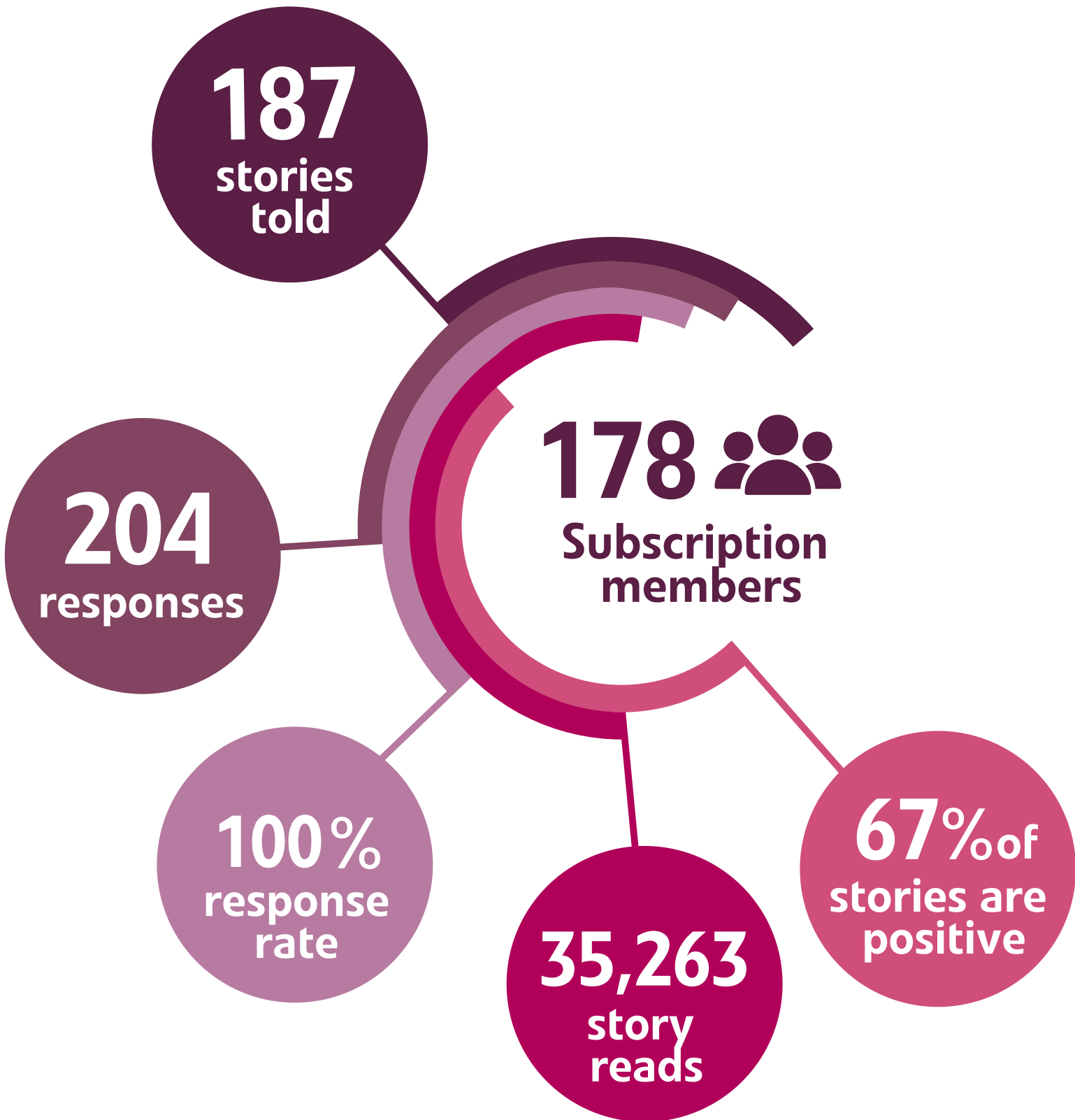
99.17%
response
rate

56,695
story
reads

71% of
stories are
positive

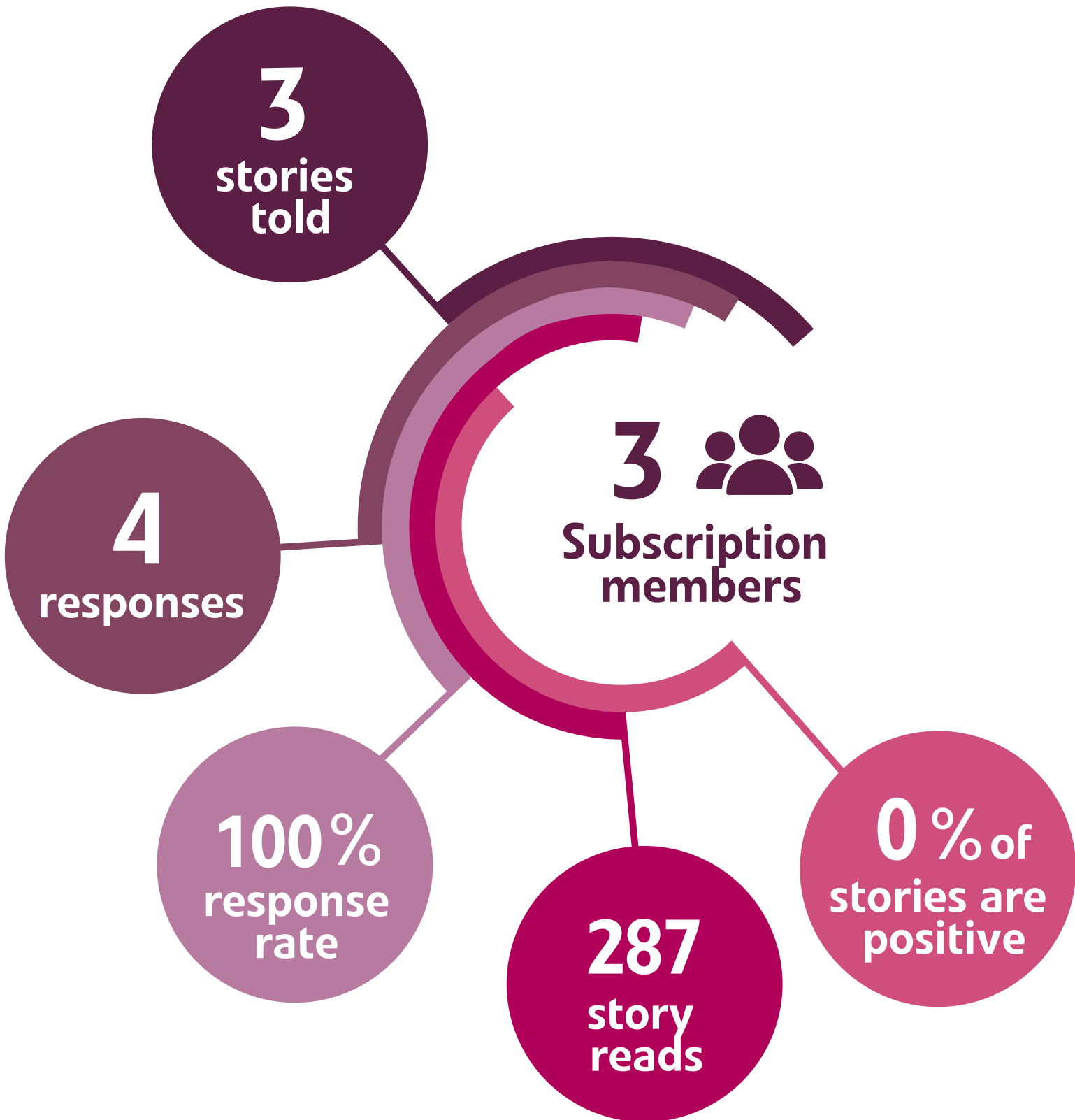


NHS 24





NHS Orkney





Scottish Ambulance Service

310
stories
told

324
responses



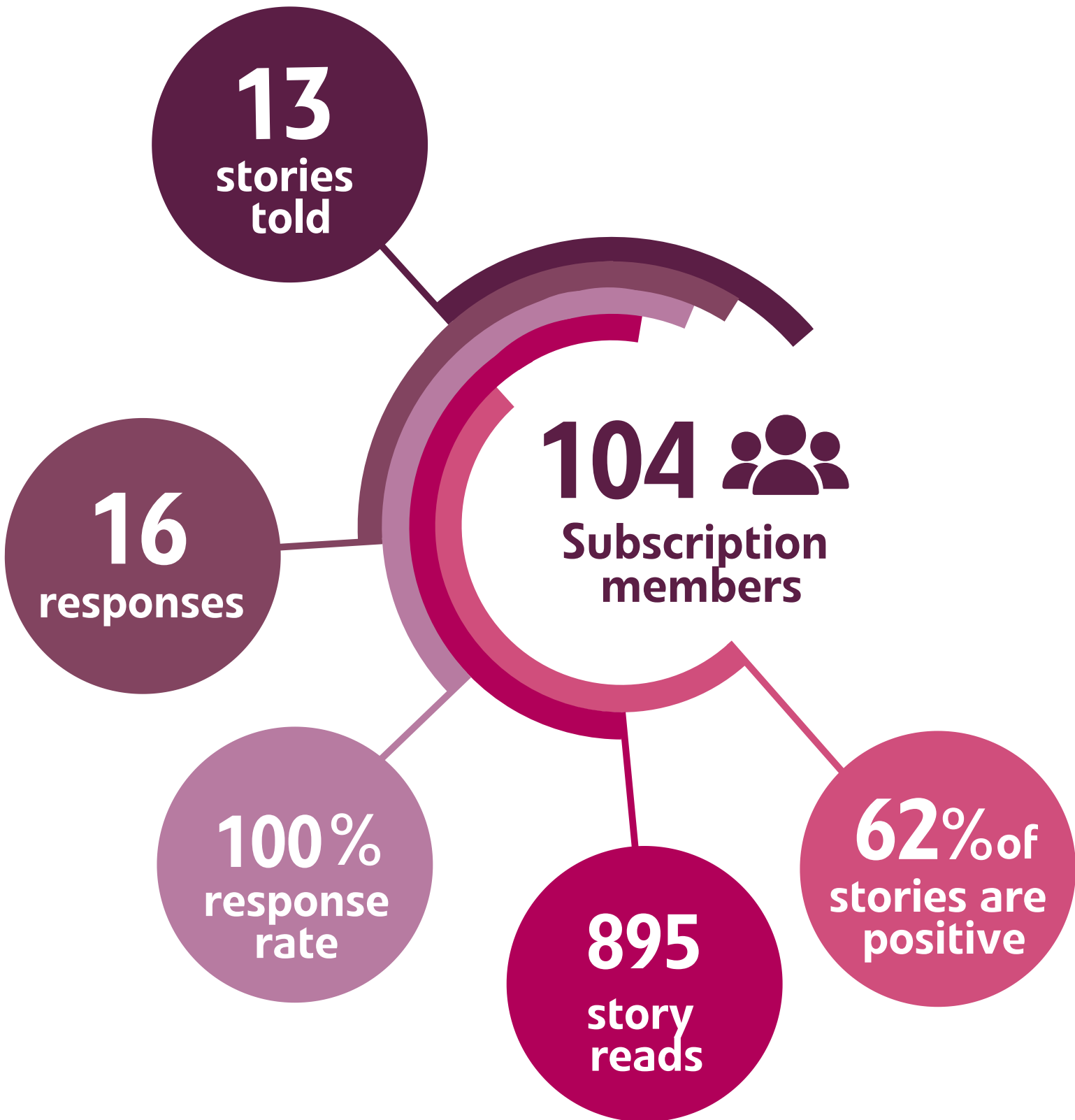
100%
response
rate

57,261
story
reads

76% of
stories are
positive



NHS Shetland





NHS Tayside

1,506
stories
told

1,899
responses

709 
Subscription
members

99.00%
response
rate

114,390
story
reads

79% of
stories are
positive



NHS Western Isles



Contact us

If you would like to get in touch with the Care Opinion team, you can:



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**Care
Opinion**

What's your story?