



Patient Experience Bulletin

March 2026

The aim of this current awareness bulletin is to provide a digest of recent guidelines, reports, research and best practice on patient experience in the NHS.

If you would like to receive this or any of our other bulletins, please register here:
<https://www.nhslincslibrary.uk/bulletin-request-form>

Latest Evidence
Best Practice and Tools
<p>Messaging best practice</p> <p>Everyone working in or with the NHS should follow best practice when writing and sending NHS App messages, text messages, emails and letters. See here.</p> <p>Source: NHS England Digital</p>
<p>Good practice in caring for people with dementia</p> <p>This research looks at good practice in health and social care services when caring for people living with a type of dementia. See here.</p> <p>Source: Care Quality Commission (CQC)</p>
Carers
<p>Unpaid care: the realities of caring in the UK</p> <p>Unpaid carers play a vital role in society, supporting friends and family because of illness, disability, mental health problems or addiction. Caring is often rewarding but without the right support, it can come at a personal and financial cost. See more here.</p> <p>Source: The Health Foundation</p>
Health Literacy
<p>Spotlight on health literacy</p> <p>The extensive value of health literacy for individuals and nations cannot be ignored. Discover why tackling low health literacy requires a coordinated approach, and explore the key actions that drive improvement. See here.</p> <p>Source: Economist Impact</p>



Patient Safety

Independent Investigation into Maternity and Neonatal Services in England – Interim Report

Baroness Valerie Amos, Chair of Independent National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation states in this interim report that they have not yet finished evidence gathering and analysis, but wanted to share the insights gained so far, which reflect what families, staff and others have told the investigation team and what they have also seen. See [report](#).

Source: National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation

Patient Stories

Fetal Growth Disorder

This case story is illustrative based on a range of examples of real events. NHS Resolution is sharing the experience of those involved to help prevent a similar occurrence happening to patients, families and staff. See [here](#).

Source: NHS Resolution

Seeking help for chronic pain

“I have been experiencing chronic pain throughout my whole body and we have a history of fibromyalgia in my family. My grandma suffered and sadly passed away because of it. Her loss deeply affected me and left me with PTSD” see patient story [here](#).

Source: Health Communication Matters

Parental advocacy matters

“Bringing a child into the world is meant to be one of the most joyful and reassuring experiences in life. For me, it quickly became something very different. It became an experience that revealed just how critical communication is in healthcare, particularly when advocating for my son.” See patient story [here](#).

Source: Health Communication Matters

Service Delivery

The INTEGRATE report

The INTEGRATE report outlines a practical approach to integrating psychological support for common mental health difficulties during pregnancy and after birth within universal services. While specialist services exist for those experiencing moderate to severe mental health challenges, those with common difficulties often encounter fragmented systems and gaps in care. This report calls for urgent action to integrate psychological support within universal services, such as midwifery, health visiting, and general practice so that everyone receives timely, compassionate, and effective care. See [here](#).



Source: Anna Freud

EQUITY for RARE: Delivering fair healthcare systems for people affected by rare conditions

Rare conditions affect over 3.5 million people in the UK. People affected by rare conditions face profound systemic inequity, often experiencing a complicated diagnostic odyssey followed by fragmented care and limited access to treatments. See [report](#).

Source: Genetic Alliance UK

Solving the maze

For many people, accessing care through general practice can feel like opening the door to a maze. Equally, GPs find themselves in a tangled web of administrative burdens, mounting time pressures and are navigating a maze of referrals to get patients specialist help when they need it. That's why we worked together with the Patients Association to highlight how general practice can be made truly accessible and navigable for all. See [here](#).

Source: A joint project by the RCGP and the Patients Association

Fixing the front doors? Public perceptions of the NHS and general practice

The latest in The Health Foundation's series of surveys with Ipsos takes stock of public attitudes towards the NHS. In December 2025, they surveyed 2,214 people via Ipsos's UK KnowledgePanel. This briefing sets out the findings from this ninth wave of public polling. See [here](#).

Source: The Health Foundation

The state of health and social care in 2026

The NHS is saturated with statistics that aim to tell government, managers and clinicians how services are performing. Yet these only tell part of the story. Healthwatch's new report aims to show what care feels like for the people using it, and make recommendations to fix what isn't working. With Healthwatch due to close, it's essential that those who take over our work continue to value the public's voice and act on the issues they raise. See [here](#).

Source: Healthwatch

Menopause and mental health

This position statement examines how menopause affects mental health and its implications for clinical practice, services, and policy across the UK. See [here](#).

Source: Royal College of Psychiatrists

Bringing care closer to home

Bringing care closer to home: reducing inappropriate out of area placements in mental health services. See [here](#).

Source: NHS Confederation



Navigating cultural barriers: a qualitative study exploring clinicians' experiences of providing mental health support for ethnic minority groups in England

Ethnic minority populations are increasing in England, however individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds are less likely to access mental health support compared with their White British counterparts, despite experiencing parallel but also unique risks of developing mental health difficulties. Understanding the barriers for ethnic minority groups to accessing mental health services is therefore crucial. As clinicians are at the forefront of access to healthcare for all people, their perspectives on how ethnic minority groups are supported with their mental health are underexplored but may illuminate barriers to accessing mental health support. This study aimed to investigate clinicians' experiences in supporting patients from ethnic minority backgrounds with mental health difficulties. See [here](#).

Source: Patel, S., Rattu, N.R., Patel, P. et al. Navigating cultural barriers: a qualitative study exploring clinicians' experiences of providing mental health support for ethnic minority groups in England. *BMC Health Serv Res* 26, 353 (2026). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-026-14146-5>

Technology and AI

New report calls for systemic changes to stop kidney disease diagnosis through NHS app, without proper support and guidance

Kidney Care UK have published their latest report which highlights that systemic changes are needed to ensure thousands of people do not find out they have chronic kidney disease (CKD) via the NHS App, without the support and context needed to come to terms with the diagnosis. See [here](#).

Source: Kidney Care Uk

Patients call for transparency around the use of AI in healthcare

The Patients Association has called for more transparency around the use of AI in healthcare, as it emerged that patients believe they are often not informed about its use. In its response to a call for evidence from the Medicine and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) on the use of AI in healthcare, the charity said that patients want to see more transparency, stricter regulation and assurances in the privacy of their personal data. See [here](#).

Source: Digital Health

Attitudes to technology and AI in health care

Technology and AI are central to the government's plans for improving the NHS. In England, the recent 10-Year Health Plan commits to greater use of the NHS App and ambient voice technology, as well as development of a single patient record. Making this happen, however, is not straightforward: take-up and effective use of technologies such as these will depend in part on the confidence and support of both the public and NHS staff. Understanding attitudes towards technology and AI



in health care is therefore critical if these national ambitions are to translate into meaningful and sustainable change. See [here](#).

Source: Heath Foundation

Understanding Patient Experiences and Conditions

Raynaud's, and everyday challenge

Raynaud's can be painful and can have a real impact on everyday life. Along with the pain and numbness, constantly worrying about avoiding attacks can take a toll on your mental health. Raynaud's isn't just about cold fingers. Last year, over 4,200 of you took part in our Raynaud's survey — making it one of the biggest “citizen science” studies into the condition ever. Now, we have a better understanding of how symptoms present, the impact of your lives, what triggers them, what you do to try to adapt and cope and your experiences in healthcare. See [here](#).

Source: Scleroderma & Raynaud's UK

Living with anosmia: The problem of long-term loss of sense of smell

Millions of people experienced sudden loss of their sense of smell during the Covid-19 pandemic. Most recovered, but for some, the changes were permanent, affecting their health, safety, and how they experience the world. This briefing looks at the impacts of anosmia, its other causes and the latest research into treatments. See [here](#).

Source: UK Parliament

Children and young people's patient experience survey 2024: national qualitative report

This report, produced by Solutions Research and NHS England, shares national insights from qualitative thematic analysis of written responses to the NHS Patient Survey Programme, coordinated by the Care Quality Commission and Picker. The programme includes five surveys, with this report focusing on the 2024 Children and Young People's Survey. See [here](#).

Source: Solutions Research and NHS England

Understanding patient experiences of buying medicines online

This report presents the findings of a project delivered by the Patients Association and sponsored by Lilly UK to better understand the experience of patients when purchasing medicines from unregulated online sources, including website and social media. Lilly UK provided sponsorship funding for this project and has had no influence on the project or the development of any materials for this project. See [here](#).

Source: Patients Association



Strengths-based support for neurodivergent children and young people

Up to 70% of neurodivergent children and young people experience significant mental health problems at some stage of school. Prevalence of mental health difficulties is particularly high among autistic girls and young people from racialised communities. When neurodivergent children's needs are not understood or supported by services, this can worsen their mental health. See [here](#).

Source: Centre for Mental Health

Waiting Lists and Other Statistics

Will specialist advice and guidance reduce the waiting list for planned care as the government hopes?

Increasing the amount of advice and guidance – where hospital specialists provide advice to GPs so that they can manage the patient without a referral to hospital – is a key part of ambitions to bring down NHS waiting lists. Lucina Rolewicz, Stuti Bagri and Sarah Scobie look at whether the target to increase advice and guidance is likely to be met, and what it might mean for those hopes that it will reduce waiting lists. See [here](#).

Source: Nuffield Trust

BBC investigation finds 50,000 people waited over 24 hours in A&E corridor care

More than 52,000 patients waited longer than 24 hours to be admitted to hospitals across north-west England last year, a BBC investigation has revealed. See [here](#).

Source: BBC

Endometriosis UK release new report highlighting alarming increase in endometriosis diagnosis times

New data released by Endometriosis UK has revealed that the average time to receive a diagnosis of endometriosis in the UK has now reached 9 years and 4 months. Alarming, this figure has increased from an average of 8 years reported in 2020. See [press release](#) and read report here: [The state of endometriosis care in the UK: A roadmap for driving down diagnosis times and improving access to care](#).

Source: Endometriosis UK

Accredited official statistics: A&E attendances and emergency admissions for February 2026

Monthly A&E performance and emergency admissions for all A&E types, including Minor Injury Units and Walk-in Centres. See [here](#).

Source: NHS England



Community health service waiting lists for January 2026

This publication contains monthly information on waiting lists and times for community health services in England. See [here](#).

Source: NHS England Digital