

Making the 3 NHS shifts a reality

Embedding credible, personalised health information and advice in the healthcare journey.
Briefing Paper on the Joint statement by PIF, SCF and PCI based on recent research

Background

To make the NHS fit for the future, the 10-year plan proposes three shifts – to communities, towards prevention and towards greater use of technology. All require the agency of individuals and communities to be supported by credible, appropriate and personalised health information and advice throughout the healthcare journey.

Without it the crucial personal behaviour change required, and that people want, will not occur, reducing the likelihood of the shifts making a meaningful impact.

Recent research by the Patient Information Forum (PIF), the Self Care Forum (SCF) and the Personalised Care Institute (PCI), although carried out independently of one another, paint a consistent picture of people keen to exercise agency and take greater responsibility. Yet they consistently struggle to obtain good reliable information; when they do find it is often unsuitable or they have difficulty in understanding it and assessing its importance.

Personalised, credible health information and advice is fundamental to the success of shifting care out of hospitals, increasing the use of digital tools and moving from sickness to prevention.

PIF, SCF and PCI make three detailed recommendations to achieve this. They will all require behaviour change within the NHS in the way that it deals with information advice, training and standards to create a health and digital literacy friendly NHS. Implementing these recommendations will enable people to make sense of the tsunami of information available, navigate care successfully and self-manage with confidence.

Calls for Action

Credible, personalised information should be embedded throughout the health and care system – Advice and information should be tailored to the individual's needs and embedded within an interactive, personalised NHS App that signposts to specialist patient organisations.

Ring-fenced funding should be provided within the NHS for training in personalising information – NHS staff and leadership training is required to ensure information and advice is personalised, accessible and supports individual agency.

All NHS health and care information should conform to robust, mandatory content standards – A maximum reading age of 9-11 should be a requirement for all NHS health and care information. All external information sources should be PIF TICK certified, particularly when signposted by the NHS.

Evidence to support the recommendations

In the UK, people are not being given information and advice which meets their needs.

People with long term conditions are disproportionately affected.

- Half of adults struggle to access trusted health information¹.
- Half of adults struggle to judge the advantages and disadvantages of different treatments and decide how to protect themselves from illness using information from the mainstream media².
- 4 in 10 people received health advice unsuitable for their individual needs in the last two years, rising to over 6 in 10 for those with multiple health conditions³.
- Only 1 in 10 adults with long term conditions is signposted to patient organisations, yet these are highly trusted by their users¹.

Inappropriate information disempowers people. This makes them less able to self-care and self-manage, leaving them at greater risk from misinformation, results in poorer outcomes and increases health inequality.

- Most people and professionals cannot remember basic NHS advice².
- Unsuitable advice leads to worsening conditions, people stopping following advice or treatment early, additional GP and A&E visits³.
- 1 in 10 adults have been affected by misinformation, rising to 2 in 10 for ethnic minorities¹.

There is public demand for trusted, accessible and personalised information and advice.

- 8 in 10 adults say access to trusted health information would help them manage their health¹.
- People want more responsibility to self-care².
- 4 in 10 of those unemployed for health reasons say creating a Personalised Care Support Plan with a healthcare professional would help them return to employment³.
- 2 in 3 adults state independent verification of health information would increase trust¹.

Reports and research from the three organisations.

Patient Information Forum	Self-Care Forum	Personalised Care Institute
Knowledge is Power report, 2024¹ <hr/> Research by PIF and Ipsos reveals inequalities in access to health information and the impact of misinformation.	The Living Self-Care Survey study, 2025² <hr/> Research with Imperial Self-Care Academic Research Unit covering personal and professional attitudes and engagement with self-care, professional support and health literacy.	A New Dawn for the NHS – A Manifesto for Putting Personalised Care at the Centre, 2024³ <hr/> A report collating seminal evidence supporting the pivotal role personalised care plays in successful NHS and personal change.

For further information contact: info@pifonline.org.uk

References

¹ Knowledge is Power: pifonline.org.uk/resources/knowledge-is-power

² The Living Self-care Survey (in process of publication) selfcareforum.org/self-care-forum-research/

³ Manifesto for Personalised Care at the Centre

personalisedcareinstitute.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Report_-_A-manifesto-for-putting-personalised-care-at-the-centre-1.pdf