



# The NHS Patient Safety Strategy



**NHS England and NHS Improvement**



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# Introduction



This document is the Easy Read version of the NHS Patient Safety **Strategy**.



A **strategy** is a plan of things to be done over a period of time.



This strategy explains how the NHS will carry on improving and making things safer for patients over the next 5 to 10 years.



In December 2018 we asked people what should be included in this strategy.



The things that people said have helped us to write this strategy.



It explains how we will improve:

- How it feels to work in the NHS.



- The way we look after and organise healthcare services.



It also explains what we will do to:

- Understand more about how we can keep people safe in healthcare.



- Help staff, patients and families to make the NHS safer for everyone.



- Make improvements in important parts of healthcare to keep people safe.

# How it feels to work in the NHS



We want all NHS staff to work in a way that keeps everyone safe.



## **Treating our staff well**

Our staff work hard to keep patients safe.



To be able to do this our staff must be treated well and have good working conditions.



We want staff to be treated fairly if:

- Things go wrong.



- They speak up about something they think is wrong.





## **Different people working well together**

Staff will work best when people from all different backgrounds are treated with respect.



## **Doing something good**

Staff work well when people believe that they are doing something good.



## **Managers**

Managers need to encourage staff to support each other.



Managers need to help staff to work as well as they can.



## **Learning**

Our staff should always be learning and using new ways to do things more safely.



## **Being kind**

Staff should always treat patients and each other with kindness and respect.

# Looking after and organising healthcare services



## Our workers

Many health services find it difficult to get enough staff.



We must have enough well trained staff to provide the health services that people want.



## Checking the quality of our work

There are different organisations that check that healthcare services are safe.



For example there are organisations that check the standard of work of doctors and nurses.



There is an organisation that checks that medicines and equipment are safe.



The Care Quality Commission checks all health services. You can read their report on the different health services on their website:

**[www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)**



## **New ways of using computers**

The NHS is always looking for new ways of using computers to help keep people safe.



Computers can:

- Help doctors to quickly make the best decisions about someone's **treatment**.



**Treatment** is the medical care that is given to a patient for their illness or injury.



- Help to share information about a patient with all the different health professionals who are treating them.





But we have to make sure that people's personal information is kept safe.



## Local health services

We want to help local doctors to work more closely with other local health services like pharmacies, **optometrists** and dentists.



**Optometrists** are health specialists who look after people's eyes and eyesight.



We want local doctors to provide more services for patients.



We are looking at improving how local doctors use computers to make sure that patients are safe.

# Learning more about how to keep people safe

We will learn more about how to keep people safe by:



- Keeping good records about patient safety. We will use these records to learn about how people can be kept even safer.



- Using computers to learn about keeping people safe.



- Getting better at learning from incidents where things have gone badly wrong.

We must do all we can to stop things from going badly wrong again.



- Working with the **Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB)**.

The **HSIB** does very detailed investigations into things that have gone wrong so that we can learn how to keep people safer.

They also look at how we deal with things that have gone wrong and recommend other things we can do to keep people safe.



- Looking closely at what happens to people at the end of their lives.

By doing this already we have improved the care of children and people with learning disabilities.



- Looking at information from the whole country. This means we can see which health services are doing well.



- Improving how quickly we can tell people about things that might go wrong and being more clear about what they can do to keep patients safe.



- Learning from cases that have gone to court. Sometimes when something goes wrong, the patient's family takes the doctor or the NHS service to court. We must learn from these cases so they don't happen again.

# Help staff, patients and families to make the NHS safer for everyone



Patients and families can help to keep people safe, as well as staff.

## Involving patients and families

Health services should involve groups of patients and families when they plan their services.



Patients and families can help staff to understand how to make improvements. They can also help staff to get things right.

Patients and families can help to make services safer.

They can also do things to keep themselves or their families safer as well.



## Staff training

We want all NHS staff to be able to get some training in ways to keep people safe.







## **Specialist staff**

Each health service should have someone who is an expert in keeping people safe.

They will help everyone in that health service to be as safe as possible.



## **Looking at what works well**

We should look at what works well, as well as what goes wrong.



We can encourage other health services to do the things that work well.



## **Independent health services**

Some independent companies provide health services for the NHS.

We must make sure that these companies are as safe as any NHS service.

# Make improvements in important parts of healthcare to keep people safe



The NHS will make improvements which will help keep people safe.



## **Always improving**

We want our staff to carry on learning from things that happen.



We want our staff to carry on making changes that keep people safer.



## **The National Patient Safety Improvement Programme**

The National Patient Safety Improvement Programme looks at ways to keep people safe.



The National Patient Safety Improvement Programme has been looking closely at:

- Ways to stop people dying from **sepsis**.



**Sepsis** is a very serious condition that happens when an **infection** spreads around somebody's body in their blood. Sometimes it is called blood poisoning.

An **infection** is where germs get in the body.



- Improving the safety of pregnant women and very new babies.



- Improving the way we give patients medicines.



When they discover a new, safer way of working they help all health services to start using it.

# The Mental Health Safety Improvement Programme

This programme supports mental health trusts to:

- Look at safer ways of working.
- Check that patients are safe.



## Older people

Older people are more likely to be unsafe in hospital.

Older people are more likely to have a fall, get an infection or not eat or drink enough when they are in hospital.



We are working to:

- Find ways to stop older people from falling and hurting themselves.
- Stop older people getting sores because they are in bed a lot.
- Make sure that older people get enough to eat and drink.





## Safety and learning disabilities

We have been working to improve the care of people with learning disabilities.



We have been working to:

- Make sure that people with learning disabilities are not given medication they don't really need.



- Help staff to listen to people with learning disabilities.



- Check that people with learning disabilities are being given their treatment in a place that is best for them.



We want health services to work to a new, higher standard of care for people with learning disabilities.





## **Treating infections**

For a long time we have been able to treat infections with a type of medicine called 'Antibiotics'.



More and more antibiotics are no longer fighting infections.



We are working to find new ways of treating infections.



## **Finding new ways of doing things**

We have to keep on looking for new and better ways to do things.



We work with different universities to look at new ways of keeping people safe.

# Checking this strategy works



This strategy has many things that we have to do.



We will be checking that everything is being done properly.



We will write reports about how well we are doing.

# For more information

If you need more information please contact us by:



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