Patients Association response to the Darzi Review

Thursday 12 September, 2024

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London, 12th September 2024: The Patients Association welcomes the honesty and transparency of Lord Darzi's diagnosis report on the state of the NHS. His conclusion that the service is in a critical condition is a stark wake-up call that demands urgent and comprehensive action. Patients deserve far better than they're getting right now.

Lord Darzi's report highlights several pressing issues that have led to this critical state and our patient survey in July 2024 of 1,210 respondents corroborates many of Lord Darzi's findings and further emphasises the urgent need for patient-centred change: Our survey showed:

- Less than a third (30%) of people have struggled to access GP appointments in the past six months
- Only 13% reported no difficulties accessing NHS services
- Less than a quarter (24%) of those needing care in the last six months couldn't access the services they required
- Just 2 in 5 (41%) felt their care was well coordinated
- Less than half (45%) were kept adequately informed about their care

Comment from Rachel Power, Chief Executive of the Patients Association:

"Lord Darzi's conclusion that the NHS is in a critical condition is deeply concerning but, sadly, not surprising given the experiences of many patients across the country. This diagnosis report provides a stark and necessary assessment of the challenges facing our NHS. We welcome this honest appraisal and the development of a long-term plan to address these critical issues. We now must stop normalising the abnormal."

For this long-term plan to truly succeed in reversing the NHS's critical condition, it must

- Acknowledge the critical condition of the NHS and treat the situation with the urgency it demands.
- Actively involve patients, carers, and patient organisations as true partners in every stage of the planning process.
- Use patient feedback and experiences as key metrics for measuring the plan's success.
- Prioritise improvements in areas that patients have identified as critical, such as access to GP appointments, better access to diagnostics, reduced waiting times, and better coordination of care.
- Ensure the plan addresses health inequalities and improves access for all communities.
- Build in regular review points where patient input is sought and used to refine the plan.

Lord Darzi's report provides a clear and urgent call for change. Now, by putting patient experience and partnership at the heart of this long-term plan, we can create a more responsive, efficient, and effective NHS that truly serves the needs of our communities. We stand ready to work closely with the NHS and government to make this vision a reality and to ensure that the critical issues identified by Lord Darzi are addressed comprehensively and with patients' needs at the forefront. The time for half-measures has passed – we need bold, patient-centred change.

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Notes for editors

About the Patients Association

The Patients Association is an independent patient charity campaigning for improvements in health and social care for patients. We believe patients should be actively involved in decisions made about their care and in the design of the health and care system. As an independent charity campaigning for improvements in health and social care, we believe improvements can only be achieved if the system works in partnership with patients. Through our helpline and information services we provide information to thousands of people each year about the health and social care system, enabling them to advocate for themselves.

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