

Patients Association Response to Wes Streeting's Speech at Labour Party Conference 2024

Wednesday 25 September, 2024

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The Patients Association welcomes the Health Secretary's commitment to addressing the challenges facing the NHS and social care system, as outlined in his Labour Party conference speech.

Rachel Power, Chief Executive of the Patients Association, said:

"We appreciate the Secretary of State's recognition of the major challenges facing our healthcare system. The commitment to end the 'two-tier system of healthcare' and focus on reducing waiting lists is crucial. However, solutions must be firmly rooted in patients' needs and experiences.

"The focus on reducing waiting lists is crucial, but it's only part of the picture. Many patients are struggling with conditions that don't require surgery but significantly impact their quality of life and ability to work. We look forward to hearing concrete plans for strengthening all services in the NHS.

"We welcome the emphasis on honesty about the NHS's state and the acknowledgment that fixing the NHS requires fixing social care. The proposed Fair Pay Agreement for care workers is a positive step towards building a National Care Service. However, patients and families need clarity on what this service will mean for them and when they can expect to see improvements.

"The transformation of the NHS into a 'Neighbourhood Health Service' and the focus on preventative, personalised care align with patients' needs. However, we must ensure that digital innovations don't leave behind those who can't access or use these services.

"As these plans develop, we urge the government to work closely with patients, carers, and patient organisations. Only by putting patients at the heart of healthcare reform can we create a system that truly meets everyone's needs."

-Ends-

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.

For more information contact: media@patients-association.org.uk

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