Care Opinion News

Issue 01 - Autumn 2026

Care Opinion
What's your story?



A word from our CEO

When we listen, learning travels

Hello to our Care Opinion community across the UK! I'm pleased to announce that we are bringing our newsletters together. Until now, we have shared news and learning separately.

This first organisation-wide edition gives us more opportunity to carry an idea from one service, or one part of the UK, to another. That learning starts with people who choose to tell us their health and care stories.

Some people share stories to thank a team or staff member for something that mattered. Others explain what was difficult, hoping it will be better for the next person. Either way, sharing feedback publicly takes trust and often courage. As you read about the work of health and care organisations across the UK, I invite you to remember the power of an individual story and the ripples of learning it can inspire.

28,500 STORIES IN 2026

Since the start of 2026, more than 28,500 stories about health and care services have been shared across the UK on Care Opinion. Of these, 82% were positive, while 18% included some level of criticality. Positive stories show what people value; critical elements highlight where experiences could have been better. We need both for an honest picture of care.

Staff have listened and responded more than 30,000 times: acknowledging what happened, explaining what services can do and showing authors that their words have been heard. Because these exchanges are public, others can see how services respond and may feel encouraged to share their own stories.

A person may never know how far their words travel, but one story can prompt discussion in another service or help a team notice something in its own practice. I hope you find an idea from another part of our work that speaks to your own, and that the public's powerful stories on Care Opinion continue to inform and inspire your practice every day.

Healthcare staff responses

There has now been a lot of research on the stories people share on Care Opinion. But there has been much less research focusing on the responses from healthcare staff.

A new study from the London School of Economics (LSE) has examined what responses might be able to tell us about the culture of healthcare organisations. This is important because much research suggests that organisations with a "corrective culture" will provide safer care: they will listen to feedback, engage with it, learn from it, and make changes to improve the care they provide.

The LSE researchers analysed 157,000 responses on Care Opinion, using AI to see if they could detect "engagement" and "organisational learning", which are important components of a corrective culture. They found they could reliably detect engagement, but organisational learning was more difficult to do.

This matters because it can help us measure and understand how healthcare culture and patient safety are related. Perhaps more intriguingly, future research might explore whether Care Opinion could help not only measure culture, but actually change it: for example, in reducing defensiveness or increasing openness to learning from patients. We'll keep you updated!

Northern Ireland Visit

Our twice-yearly visits to Northern Ireland are highlights in our calendar. In October, Care Opinion's very own Sarah and Liz enjoyed two days with colleagues in the Public Health Agency, the Health & Social Care Trusts, and the NI Ambulance service.

The Public Health Agency and Care Opinion have worked together for 6 years, collecting and analysing feedback from service users from an increasingly diverse range of health and social care services.

That's 37,486 stories, which have been read an incredible 6,062,417 times, allowing staff, managers, and the public a unique insight into healthcare experiences across Northern Ireland.

Our colleagues are now focussing their efforts on hearing from people in traditionally harder to reach groups. Care Opinion shares their determination to provide safe and simple ways for everyone to share their health and social care stories. Together we will help ensure that health and social care provision is shaped by the people it serves.



Three months in: what we're learning together

Earlier this year, following a nomination and selection process, we offered nine-month subscriptions to selected teams at Livewell Southwest, Torbay and South Devon, and Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals.

This gives them the opportunity to experience Care Opinion for themselves with full support from our team.

Three months in, it has been a pleasure to see how quickly teams have made Care Opinion part of their everyday work. They are using patients' stories to celebrate good care, understand experiences more deeply and identify opportunities for improvement. That is exactly what we hoped to see.

What has struck me most is that engaging with feedback is not being treated as an additional task. Instead, reading and responding to stories is becoming embedded in the way teams listen, learn and connect with the people they care for.

We are learning too. By working closely with teams from the outset, we are gaining valuable insight into what helps teams get the most from Care Opinion, where additional support is useful, and how we can make working with us as straightforward as possible.

At Care Opinion, we believe care teams should hear directly from the people they care for and have the opportunity to respond. This programme is helping make that possible for teams that may otherwise not have had the chance to work with us.

For a closer look at how each team is getting on, Tracy Molloy, our Subscriber Services Manager, shares their progress and experiences in her latest blog: Free Team Sub Cohort 2026 – Update.

If you would like your team to be considered for a future cohort, or simply want to explore what a subscription could offer, I would be delighted to hear from you. Please get in touch at miriam.rivas-aguilar@careopinion.org.uk and we can arrange a time to chat.



Behind the scenes of a Care Opinion Story

You hear the ping of an email to say you have a new story on Care Opinion and it can seem like someone has shared some feedback and we immediately send it on to you. But there is much more happening behind the scenes.

Our moderators read every single story submitted to Care Opinion. Firstly, we check there are no safeguarding concerns. If there are then we act on these. If not, we review the text and may make tiny changes to protect patient and staff identities. We check the services the story is linked to (otherwise you won't get the right alerts) and add additional tags to highlight positives and negatives. We review usernames and check the author's other stories to make sure the platform is being used fairly. Then for more complicated stories, we often have a back and forth with the author by email to get to a publishable version.

All this work happens behind the scenes, so when you hear that ping you know you have a story ready to read and reply to.

A star is born

It's always wonderful for the Care Opinion team to hear how sharing feedback can make a meaningful difference to staff working across health and care services.

Positive stories and thoughtful words of appreciation can offer encouragement, recognise the care people provide and remind staff that their everyday actions matter. We were therefore delighted to receive this lovely reflection from one of our subscribers, Kirsten Dickson of NHS Grampian, after she received a Star Responder Award:

"It's the wee bits of appreciation that make this job a happy one to be in. Whether it's being able to help a patient find their way to the answers they need, or getting a Star Responder Award, it's nice to be able to leave my desk knowing a smile was had."

Kirsten Dickson, Quality Improvement & Assurance Facilitator, NHS Grampian

Celebrating our latest Star Responders!

As always, we are impressed by the care and humanity shown by staff responding on Care Opinion. This edition's Star Responses stood out for treating authors with respect, handling difficult concerns sensitively and demonstrating a commitment to using the stories constructively.

Our first Star Responder is Steven Brennan-Collis, Operational Manager from the Eating Disorders Service at Sheffield Health Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust. Steven recognised the author's individual experience, addressed the points raised and replied warmly, ensuring they felt heard and valued.

Our second Star Responder is Kirsten Dickson, Quality Improvement and Assurance Facilitator, NHS Grampian. An author living with PCOS felt frightened, brushed aside and unsupported after raising progesterone's severe effect on their mental health. Kirsten went above and beyond: her response took these concerns seriously, avoided defensiveness and showed that the author's voice mattered.

Our third story came from a bereaved relative whose late husband received care on the Stroke Unit at Antrim Area Hospital. They described damaged and missing belongings, unexplained bruising and concerns about personal care. Natasha McGlinchey, Assistant Clinical Services Manager, Care of the Elderly, NHSCT, responded sensitively and respectfully. Importantly, change was planned, turning difficult feedback into an opportunity to improve.

Congratulations to all three Star Responders! Their replies were personal, compassionate, non-defensive and focused on learning. Read Steven's story and response, Kirsten's story and response and Natasha's story and response in full.

11 CHANGES



Time for a change

Stories shared in July and August this year have led to over 11 simple but important changes to services.

Each change is a reminder that sharing an experience can help shape care for others. Well done to all the staff involved in listening to feedback and turning it into action. To explore the changes and see how people's stories have made a difference, take a look at our summertime changes blog.

Care Opinion, Imperial University and a trip on the tube

On Tuesday 20th October, our Dr James and Emma ventured away from Sheffield and embarked on a voyage to the big smoke.

Care Opinion work takes us into the world of education too and they were fortunate enough to spend the day in South Kensington sharing their wisdom of all things Care Opinion with year 4 students studying humanities, philosophy and law as part of their medical degree at Imperial University. James and Emma teamed up with the great humans, Dr Giskin Day and Dr Adrian Raby to encourage students to be curious about the power of story-telling and the impact of words.

In the jam-packed session they were able to share how Care Opinion can support their studies in medicine through reading and analysing anonymous and honest experiences of care and responses from staff. It was fantastic that students were so engaged, keen and curious to learn about Care Opinion and patient experiences. Objective achieved!







Dr James Munro and the students in action.

And finally, after years of avoiding, our Emma travelled on the tube for the first time ever! Evidence of feet on the tube above!



Our webinar programmes

Recently, we've been reviewing feedback from our subscribers about our webinar programmes and thinking about how we can build on what works well while addressing areas for improvement.

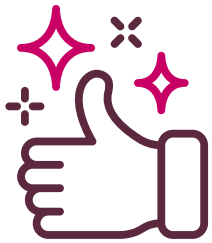
These conversations have sparked new ideas and encouraged us to think creatively about how we continue to support subscribers. As innovation is one of our core values, we're always looking for opportunities to learn, improve and try new approaches. Read more about the feedback we've received and how it's helping shape future developments - Turning Feedback into Innovation.

Welcome to the team



We are delighted to introduce you to our newest team member at Care Opinion, Iona O'Lenskie.

Iona joined the Subscriber Support Team as an Engagement and Support Officer in August and is settling in nicely. She's a pleasure to work with. Find out more about Iona here.





Our Social Network

Keep up to date with what's happening in the world of Care Opinion, and give us a follow on…

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Spring Conference 2027

Join our online Spring Conference on 21 April, 9am–12:30pm, for inspiring, practical sessions.
Programme details will follow.

REGISTER NOW

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