

# Patients' Charter

## Part 2

**Communication and involving you: your right to be informed about your healthcare and services, and to be involved in decisions about them**



# Communication and involving you



## Communication and information

- I have the right to clear and honest communication from NHS staff about my care and treatment
- I can let my healthcare team know what matters to me

My thoughts should be listened to carefully when my treatment choices are being talked about



- NHS Staff should introduce themselves to me

I should be told the names of the staff responsible for my care and how to contact them.



- I have the right to get information about my care and treatment including:
  - what it will involve
  - if it is needed
  - what are the risks, good things, and **side effects** – symptoms that happen because of the medicine you are given
  - what other things could be done
  - what might happen if I choose not to have treatment



- I should be given information about my treatment and care in a way I can understand and in a format or language that meets my needs - for example in:

- audio
- Braille
- British Sign Language
- or in a language other than English



NHS staff must check whether I have understood the information they have given me and if I would like more information



- I can ask NHS staff to:
  - give me information about my condition, treatment or care
  - explain anything I do not understand about my condition, treatment or care, including any words I do not understand

## Communication support



- I have the right to be given communication equipment and the support I need to help me use that equipment in health services, hospital, the community or at home
- I can find more information on the Provision of Communication equipment and Support on the [UK legislation website](#) and Guidance on communication equipment and support at: [gov.scot](#)
- if I let NHS staff know before my appointment they can:
  - arrange support like an interpreter
  - arrange a longer appointment for me if I will be using an interpreter or other communication support
- If English is not my first language or I prefer to speak another language, I can use an interpreting service available through the NHS inform helpline on 0800 22 44 88.

Language Line is available for all NHS helplines.

## Making decisions



- I have the right to be involved in decisions about my care and treatment
- I will be supported to take part in discussions and decisions about my health and treatment.



I can ask NHS staff for more information to help me make decisions about the care and treatment that is available to me.

The leaflet 'It's OK to Ask' has handy tips and advice on asking questions.

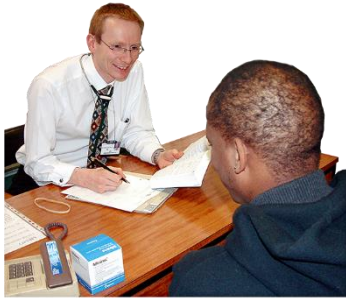
I can find it online at: [nhsinform.scot](https://www.nhsinform.scot) or I can contact the NHS inform helpline on 0800 22 44 88



- I can expect to be given enough time to make up my mind about any examination or treatment, including extra time I might need for my communication needs, with the support of NHS staff



- I understand that in emergencies, decisions may need to be made quickly



- I can ask for a **second opinion** before making a decision about my care and treatment

A **second opinion** is when you ask another NHS professional for their thoughts about your care and treatment



- I have the right to accept or refuse any advice, care or treatment, examination, test or screening procedure that is offered to me, or to not take part in research



To accept or refuse any of these, I must understand the information I have been given and I must be able to make a decision for myself.



- if I refuse any care and treatment, this will not change the way I get care and treatment from NHS staff in future

## Support when making decisions



- I have the right to ask for support when making decisions about my healthcare



- I have the right to be given information about support and any follow-up care that is available to me from the NHS and other organisations



- I can ask to have an **advocate** to help me give my views

An **advocate** is a person who will support me to have my views heard and help me to make decisions.



- I can ask to speak to a member of a spiritual care team.

A member of NHS staff can arrange this for me.



- if there are times when I cannot make a decision for myself, I must still be supported and encouraged to be involved in decisions about my care and treatment

Staff should listen carefully to what I want to happen.

NHS staff who make decisions about my care and treatment may also consider:



- the best medical option for me
- what I have said in the past about how I want to be treated
- the views of others who are close to me
- the views of my parent, guardian or other person responsible for me if I am a child
- the views of anyone who has legal authority to make a decision on my behalf



- if I am a carer of an adult who cannot make decisions about their healthcare and treatment without support, I can expect to be involved in making decisions as set out by the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 law



- I can find information about the rights of people who cannot give their permission for medical treatment and the rights of their carers at: [nhsinform.scot](https://www.nhsinform.scot) or I can call the NHS inform helpline on 0800 22 44 88





- if I am under the age of 16 I can make decisions about my own healthcare and treatment, if the health professional looking after me believes I can make decisions for myself



- If I am a parent or legal guardian of a person under 16 who cannot make decisions for themselves, I can decide about their healthcare and treatment



- The [NHS Inform website](#) explains how a young person under 16 should be involved in decisions about their healthcare and treatment.

I can call the NHS inform helpline on 0800 22 44 88

## Support if I have a mental disorder



In this Patients' Charter a **mental disorder** means a mental illness, personality disorder or learning disability.

- I have a right to support from an advocate

My mental health officer can arrange this for me.



I can also get more information about advocacy in the 'A guide to independent advocacy: Information for Service Users and their Carers' guide on the Scottish Government website [gov.scot](http://gov.scot)



- if I have difficulty making and keeping my appointments because of my mental health disorder, I can ask NHS staff about support



- if I need medical treatment under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 I can choose someone to help protect my interests

They are called 'a named person'.



I can find out more about named persons in the 'Mental health law in Scotland: guide to named persons' guide at: [gov.scot](http://gov.scot)



- when I am well enough to do it, I can make a written statement setting out the care and treatment I would like (or not like) if I become mentally unwell in the future

This is called an 'advance statement'.

I can find out more about making an advance statement at: [mwcscot.org.uk](http://mwcscot.org.uk)



- If my mental disorder means I **am** a danger to myself or others, I might be kept in hospital or treated **against my will** – when I do not want this to happen

If this happens I should have my rights explained to me.

- I can find out more about my rights from the [Rights in Mind booklet](#)



I can contact the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland at:

Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace,  
Edinburgh EH12 5HD.

Freephone: 0800 389 6809

Email: [enquiries@mwcscot.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@mwcscot.org.uk)

Website: [www.mwcscot.org.uk](http://www.mwcscot.org.uk)



## Looking after my health

- I have the right to get support to look after my health condition.

For example, I can expect to be given information on:



- how and when to take my medication
- how to control pain
- how to use any equipment I am given
- how to get other services that could help me



- I will take responsibility for my own health as much as I can

I can ask NHS staff involved in my care, for support to help me look after my health condition and live in a healthy way.



- I will be as open and honest as possible when discussing my care and treatment.

I will tell NHS staff about anything they need to know about my care and treatment.

This includes information about:

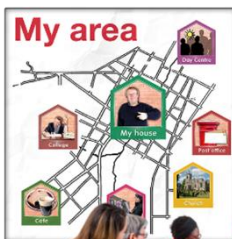
- changes in my health condition
- any over-the-counter, herbal or alternative medication that I may be taking



- NHS staff must make sure I have been given clear information about my condition in a way I can understand

## Taking part in designing and providing local services

- I have a right to be involved meaningfully in the design, development and delivery of health services in my area



- I can do this by:
  - contacting my local health board to find out how to become involved
  - getting involved with [Healthcare Improvement Scotland- Community Engagement](#) to develop local services and make sure everyone's voice is heard.