



Know your rights

What's this fact sheet for?

We know from talking to patients and carers that many people feel they can't get involved because they won't be listened to, or they have no real right to have a say. This fact sheet is here to dispel that myth.

Does the health service have to listen to me?

In a word, yes. The health service in all four nations across the UK is committed to what they call 'Patient and Public Engagement'. They have an obligation to listen to the voice of the people who are using the services they provide. The exact nature of this obligation varies depending on where you are, so here's a quick summary.



Your rights in England

In England, the **NHS Constitution** says:

The NHS also commits:

- to provide you with the information you need to influence and scrutinise the planning and delivery of NHS services (pledge); and
- to work in partnership with you, your family, carers and representatives (pledge).

You have the right to be involved, directly or through representatives, in the planning of healthcare services, the development and consideration of proposals for changing in the way those services are provided, and in decisions to be made affecting the operation of those services.

Your rights in Scotland

In 2010, the Scottish Government published a document called 'Informing, engaging and consulting people in developing health and community care services'. It provides updated guidance to help NHS Boards engage with patients, the public, and anyone involved in delivering local health care services. The principles are meant to be applied proportionally to any service change proposed by a Board, including major changes. It's worth consulting the **policy and legislation page** published by the Scottish Health Council for more details on your legislative rights.

Your rights in Wales

The Welsh Government has put together a **Governance e-Manual** to support decision-makers in the health service. It has a specific section on 'Patient Involvement' which includes the following statement:
"The services provided by the NHS should be genuinely shaped by, and meet, the needs of the people it serves. In order to do this, the NHS must put democratic engagement at its heart."

Your rights in Northern Ireland

The Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009 has a section outlining the 'Patient representation and public involvement' procedures and structures that should be in place across health care services. It was off the back of this Act that the **Patient and Client Council** was set up to help ensure your voice is heard when decisions are made.



Useful links

NHS Constitution (England)

<http://www.nhs.uk/choiceintheNHS/Rightsandpledges/pages/rightsandpledgeshome.aspx>

Policy and legislation, Scottish Health Council

http://www.scottishhealthcouncil.org/patient_public_participation/policy_and_legislation.aspx

Governance e-Manual (Wales)

<http://www.nhswalesgovernance.com/display/Home.aspx?a=143&s=2&m=141&d=0&p=0>

The Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2009/1/contents>

Patient and Client Council (Northern Ireland)

<http://www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net/about-us/who-we-are-what-we-do>

