



Make your voice heard

What's this fact sheet for?

Making your voice heard is very important – it's the best way to help others in future. There are many ways to do it and they vary depending on where you are. Some areas have a lot happening, while others unfortunately are still catching up. The best thing is to get out there and do some research. This fact sheet suggests some good places to start.

Online patient surveys

If you go to the website of your GP, local hospital or any other service you use, you might find they have a survey that gives a chance to influence future decisions. (See [Example 1](#) [Example 2](#))

Online comment boxes

Even if there's no formal survey on the website of a particular health service, you may still find a feedback or comments section. (See [Example 3](#) [Example 4](#))

Traditional surveys / suggestion boxes

When you next visit your GP or other health care service, check whether they have anything in or around the waiting room that's designed to collect your feedback. Suggestion boxes are very common. If you have an idea that might change things for the better, don't hold back. (See [Example 5](#))

Patient Panels

Most Trusts have a mechanism for getting patients together and consulting them on specific issues. A common name for this is a 'patient panel', but they have other names too. Some may exist exclusively online, while others may meet monthly or annually. Contact your Trust to see what's available. (See [Example 6](#))

Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)

A lot of GP practices have what they call Patient Participation Groups. These are open to everyone registered at the practice. The aim is to involve patients in discussions about how the practice is run and make sure their views count when decisions are made. If your practice doesn't have one already, feel free to ask about getting one set up. (See [Example 7](#) [Example 8](#))

Local Engagement Teams

Some Trusts will have dedicated 'Engagement Teams' or 'Patient and Public Engagement' Professionals. They can give you plenty of information on what's going on and how to add your voice. (See [Example 9](#) [Example 10](#))



National consultations

There are often bigger consultations going on, usually organised by national health service organisations such as the Department of Health and NICE in England, or the Welsh Government in Wales. Some of them simply invite you to share your thoughts and experiences, while others may be more in-depth, asking you to download and review proposals and documents before commenting. Whenever we hear about consultations going on, we post them up on the Heart Voices pages, so check back regularly. And please let us know if you come across any that we haven't yet listed. (See **Example 11** **Example 12**)

Complaints

When things go wrong, making a complaint is one way to reduce the chances of it happening again. The first step is to ask the service in question about their complaints procedures. You can also get information and support from the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service** (PALs).

PPE organisations

There are many organisations in place to support Patient and Public Engagement (PPE). Here's a list of some of the key ones.

UK-wide: Patient Opinion

England

- **Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)**
- **Healthwatch** (England and Local – replacing LINKs in April 2013)

Scotland

- **The Scottish Health Council**

Wales

- **Community Health Council**

Northern Ireland

- **The Patient and Client Council**



BHF e-campaigns

Of course, we're here to help as well. We'd be very happy if you wanted to sign up as a **BHF e-campaigner** – it's a great way to add your voice to the work we're doing.

Start your own campaign

While many official feedback mechanisms exist, sometimes there's no substitute for setting up your own campaign to tackle a specific issue. We've put together a **campaigning toolkit** that gives you an inspirational step-by-step guide on how to run a successful campaign. We also have plenty of useful factsheets you can download to support your work.



Find out more information
at bhf.org.uk/heartvoices

Useful Links

Example 1: East Cheshire Patient Survey

<http://www.eastcheshire.nhs.uk/Get-Involved/Patient-Surveys.htm>

Example 2: West Hertfordshire Hospital, Patient Survey

<http://www.westhertshospitals.nhs.uk/patients/surveys.asp>

Example 3: The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital, Patient Survey

<https://www.rjah.nhs.uk/Patient---Visitors/Talk-to-us/Comment-Card.aspx>

Example 4: Richmond Practice, Comments and Suggestions

<http://www.richmondpractice.scot.nhs.uk/commentform.php>

Example 5: NHS Bury, Comment Box/Suggestion Scheme

<http://www.burypct.nhs.uk/here-to-help/commentboxes/index.aspx>

Example 6: West Hertfordshire Hospitals, Patient Panel

http://www.westhertshospitals.nhs.uk/patients/patientservices/ppi/patients_panel.asp

Example 7: Hetherington Group Practice, Patient Participation Group

<http://www.hetheringtongp.co.uk/ppg.aspx>

Example 8: Library House Surgery, Patient Survey

<http://www.libraryhousesurgery.com/surveyreport.aspx?p=P81044>

Example 9: NHS Bury, Public Engagement

<http://www.burypct.nhs.uk/here-to-help/engagement/index.aspx>

Example 10: Hywel Dda Health Board, Wales NHS. Public and Patient Engagement

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/862/page/57884>

Example 11: Department of Health, Open Consultations

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/category/publications/consultations/consultations-open/>

Example 12: Royal College of Psychiatrists, Current Welsh Consultations

<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/members/divisions/rcpsychinwales/currentwelshconsultations.aspx#alcohol>

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALs)

<http://www.pals.nhs.uk/>

Patient Opinion

<https://www.patientopinion.org.uk/>

Local Involvement Networks (LINKs), England

<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/links/Pages/links-make-it-happen.aspx>

Healthwatch, England

www.healthwatch.co.uk

Scottish Health Council, Scotland

<http://www.scottishhealthcouncil.org/home.aspx>

Community Health Councils, Wales

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/899/home>

The Patient and Client Council, Northern Ireland

<http://www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net>

BHF e-campaigner

http://www.bhf.org.uk/get-involved/campaigning/what-you-can-do.aspx?sc_id=FP-00297&utm_source=SLP-GI-Camp-3&utm_medium=SLP-GI-Camp-3&utm_campaign=SLP-GI-Camp-3%20081210

Campaigning Toolkit

<http://www.bhf.org.uk/get-involved/campaigning/what-you-can-do/toolkit.aspx>