

HOW DO NHS STAFF RESPOND TO ONLINE PATIENT FEEDBACK?

A TYPOLOGY OF RESPONSES PUBLISHED ON CARE OPINION

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Background: Patients are increasingly reporting about their healthcare experiences in a public manner online. This is facilitated by the digital culture of the 21st century, the growing focus on transparency in healthcare and a desire for patient anonymity. The objective of this study was to identify the types of responses that staff provide to online patient feedback published on Care Opinion. Care Opinion is a not-for-profit online platform on which patients provide feedback regarding health and social care in the UK using a free text narrative. **Methods:** Framework analysis was used to qualitatively analyse a purposive sample of 486 stories and their responses. **Results:** Five typologies of responses to online patient feedback were identified:

NON RESPONSES



Patient Story: "I am constantly having to chase secretaries from three hospitals for medical evidence for benefits. It is like getting blood out of a stone. GP's letters are useless. There is a strict time frame for medical evidence."

NHS staff response: No response.

GENERIC RESPONSES



"I got a copy of my medical records and it clearly states somebody else's name. They have tried to change it but their IT system won't let them. The CEO of both CCGs know but will not do anything about it. Very upset that people think this is ok in a modern NHS."

"We take all concerns raised seriously and respond to them through the appropriate forums."

APPRECIATIVE RESPONSES



"The staff were supportive, kind and communicative throughout. I can't thank the department enough for the brilliant care that my daughter and I received."

"Thank you very much for your kind comments expressing satisfaction around the care and treatment you and your daughter received in our maternity services. We have passed on your kind comments."

OFFLINE RESPONSES



"4 hours with a 9 year old in severe pain. No information. No communication from staff. Dr spent quite a while sitting down. He was not polite to his staff who he wouldn't function without."

"We are sorry to hear about your experience. Please contact our Patient Experience Team so that we can look in to this further for you. Email us or call."

TRANSPARENT CONVERSATIONAL RESPONSES



"It's disappointing when you arrive for a cuddle with your baby and find they smell like a nurses very overpowering perfume! Surely they should not be allowed to wear to such heavy perfumes around these little babies?"

"Thank you so much for taking the time to bring this to my attention. Sensory stimulation including smell is so important for our vulnerable babies and perfume is not an appropriate stimulant. I can reassure you that practice has changed from today, clinical staff will no longer wear perfume to work. Without feedback, nothing would progress or change."

Conclusion: This study advances the relatively unexplored area of online patient feedback, having practical and theoretical implications for those looking to use online patient feedback to inform improvement. Future research should focus on the relationship between online response type, and the ways in which feedback is used in practice.