

Content

The Charter contains information on rights and responsibilities in six areas: Access, Communication and Participation; Confidentiality; Respect; Safety; and Comments and Complaints.

There are also sections describing what you can do if your rights have not been respected, and where you can get further information and support.

A leaflet will be produced to summarise this information further, and factsheets will provide practical examples of your rights and responsibilities in the six areas described above.

Question 1

- a) Do you think the level of detail in the Charter is useful and appropriate?
- b) Is there any information not included in the Charter that should be covered?
- c) What would make it better?

Question 1 Answer

The SPSO is the independent stage for those who wish to complaint about the NHS. Since 2011, as well as handling complaints, the SPSO has had an additional role to help improve complaints handling.

In responding to this consultation, we have concentrated on the questions where I thought our input would be most helpful.

The Scottish Government and Health Rights Information Scotland should be congratulated for the care and thoroughness with which they approached this task. The Charter is, as was envisaged, comprehensive. We have noted that it is intended that a summary version be prepared and that document may be more used than the complete version which will perhaps be more of an essential reference tool than a quick guide.

We will only comment in detail in this answer on the content of the Feedback, Comments, Concerns and Complaints section about which the SPSO has most experience.

These four categories are referred to throughout this section but it is unclear what is the difference between them. This may make it difficult for a member of the public to know which route is appropriate for the comments they wish to make and what will happen as a result of these comments. This may be clearer if examples were used or if the section was written more from the point of view of the person who wishes to feed back into the NHS system. Someone who is unfamiliar with the NHS system may struggle to know what best to do.

For example, it would be possible to say something like: You may wish to let the NHS know how you feel about your care and experience? You may be unhappy about the care you or a friend or relative has received. There are a number of ways you can let us know. You could then go on to explain the

ways and what the outcomes of those are. This would allow you to provide in the Charter broad definitions of what falls under each of the four categories. This would not only be useful for patients but also for those advising them and NHS staff.

We would also recommend that you are clearer about the timescales within which a person making the complaint can expect a response. There is a requirement for NHS boards to achieve this within 20 working days whenever possible and if that is not possible to keep people informed. This is an important and reassuring right for people who are often anxious about a response. It is also something which would be helpful to anyone giving advice to someone who wishes to complaint and I anticipate the Charter will be particularly used by advice and support agencies.

Accessibility

We want the Charter to be as accessible as possible. This means that the language is easy to understand, and it is set out in a way that is easy to read.

Question 2

- a) Do you think the information in the Charter is written in a way that is easy to understand?
- b) Does the format of the Charter make it easy to find the information you need?
- c) What would make it better?

In this question and in the response to question 3, the comments are based on our own experience of creating documents for the public.

The Charter is seeking to distil what is, at times fairly complex information. There is also a great deal of information contained within it. Given this, and based on our own experience, we would recommend that a plain language organisation is involved in the final drafting. This can be very helpful for uncovering unintentional and unnecessary use of jargon and also for doing very simple things like encouraging the use of more straight-forward language “give” instead of “provide” for example which can make a document much less intimidating and much more user friendly. In a document of this length and complexity, that could be of particular value.

It is not always possible to avoid jargon or technical language and, in a document of this length, a section which explains some of that language in a glossary format can be very helpful.

The sections are logical although the use of descriptive headings such as “Communication and Participation” can make it feel rather more like a corporate document rather than the guide and tool for patients than we think you intend it to be. They may be looking for something more direct about their situation such as: Your rights to be kept informed and to be involved in decisions, this is partly set out in the subheading but it is not clear why you need both when the sub-heading is possibly more useful.

Design

The Charter is presented in A4 format, with a different colour and icon for each section.

Question 3

Do you have any comments on the design of the Charter?

Question 3 Answer

The A4 format is a very good idea for the amount of information and we would recommend it be retained. This size of format does also allow for more use of images and increasing the number of images may help to break up some of the text and help the reader to navigate through the Charter. The font size seems to become smaller after page 5 and that does not help with the accessibility of the text.

Availability

The Patient Rights (Scotland) Act 2011 says Health Boards must make copies of the Charter available without charge to patients, staff and members of the public.

The Charter will also be published online, and supporting information such as a summary leaflet and fact sheets will be available.

We are considering what the most appropriate alternative formats for the Charter or the supporting information is. For example, different languages, large print or audio may be produced. We would normally make available alternative formats on request.

Question 4:

- a) What do you think is the most appropriate way for people to get a copy of the Charter?
- b) Do you agree that we should only make alternative formats available on request?

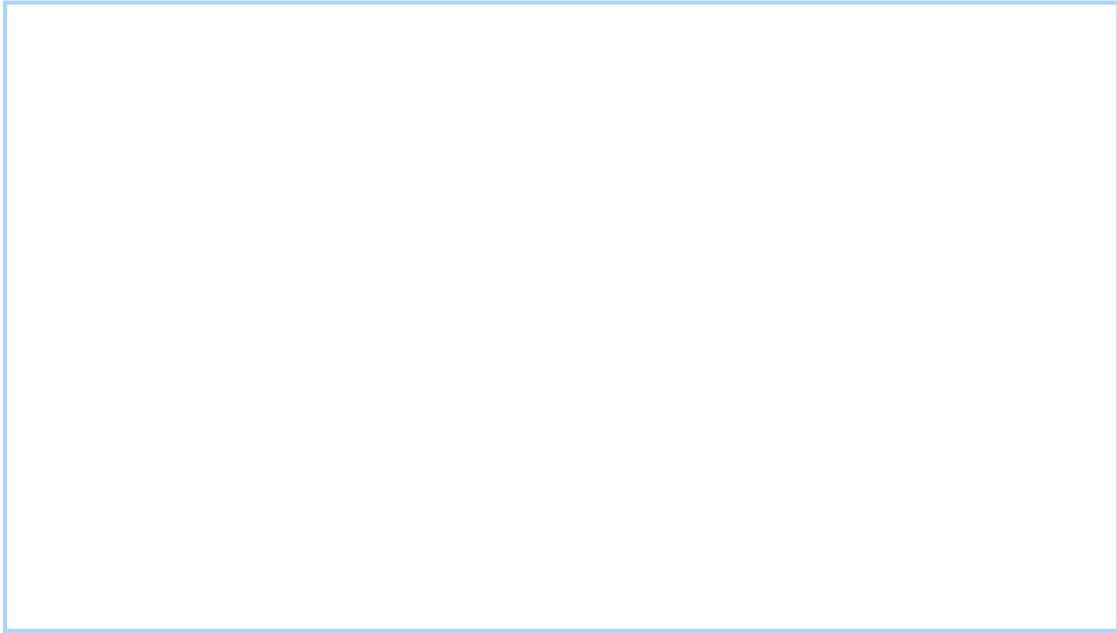
Question 4 Answer Rights and Responsibilities

The Charter outlines responsibilities as well as rights. These are things that people using health services can do to help the NHS in Scotland work effectively and deliver quality care and treatment.

Question 5

- a) Do you have any comments on the balance of rights and responsibilities set out in the Charter?
- b) What would make it better?

Question 5 Answer



General

Question 6

Do you have any additional comments to make about the Charter of Patient Rights and Responsibilities?

Question 6 Answer

