



Press Release
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A Patient Safe Future: The Launch of a Green Paper

Patient Safety Learning launches a new Green Paper for a Patient-Safe Future.

Despite global efforts and good work by many people, healthcare services around the world are still characterised by an uncomfortable but glaring truth: everyday people are harmed and killed not because of their underlying condition but because of avoidable problems in how their healthcare is delivered.

We propose that healthcare needs to move away from a reactive approach to avoidable patient harm, towards a pro-active approach where healthcare leaders, staff, policy makers and regulators work together to create the conditions that support and enable safe care.

This Green Paper makes some bold proposals for change; focusing on leadership, better use of patient safety data, culture, improved mechanisms for sharing learning and the pressing need for healthcare organisations to adopt and implement the kind of professionalised approach to safety that we see in other high-risk sectors.

Consultation

The Green Paper publication starts a three-month consultation where Patient Safety Learning will be engaging widely with as many people as we can to discuss the ideas within the paper. Details of how people can get involved will be published on our website <https://www.patientsafetylearning.org/>. We will use contributions to inform a White Paper that we will publish in January 2019.

Helen Hughes, CEO and James Titcombe, Director

Supporting Statements

The Green Paper is being widely welcomed across the healthcare system and supportive statements include:

“A Patient-Safe Future is a masterful and comprehensive guide to what it really takes to assure the continual improvement of patient safety in health care. It's a highly readable resource that pulls together decades of research and experience, offering a truly science-based roadmap to the system we can build together. It will be useful for everyone who wants safer care - professionals, executives, Boards, patients, families, and communities.”

-- Donald M. Berwick, MD, MPP, FRCP, KBE, President Emeritus and Senior Fellow, Institute for Healthcare Improvement, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Peter Walsh, the Chief Executive of Action and Against Medical Accident (AvMA), said:

“A Patient-Safe Future is a must read for anyone who is passionate about patient safety. It is insightful and thought provoking – a valuable contribution to thinking on patient safety”

Rob Behrens, the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, said:

“Our casework demonstrates all too often how defensiveness can inhibit NHS Trusts from identifying mistakes and learning from them. We fully support the proposals in this Green Paper, which highlights the need for a continued focus on patient safety across the NHS. We are committed to working with Patient Safety Learning and partners across the system to ensure this focus is maintained.”

Charlie Massey, Chief Executive of the General Medical Council, said:

‘Increasing pressure on the health service poses a real risk to patient safety and to the wellbeing of doctors, and new thinking is urgently needed to address these risks and identify new opportunities, not least in the context of NHS England's 10-year-plan.

‘The GMC exists to protect patients and is already working hard to support the profession in delivering safe high quality care. But too often our out-dated legislation prevents us from doing more, with too much emphasis on lengthy fitness to practise procedures when a quicker, local response would be better for everyone. That is not only a barrier to creating a just, learning culture when things go wrong for patients and doctors, but means we cannot invest our resources as we would want in better medical education, learning and the prevention of errors through positive learning cultures in medical teams.

‘We welcome this green paper and the bold ideas it sets out and look forward to supporting a constructive discussion on how it can be taken forward.

Note to editors:

Patient Safety Learning is a new independent organisation. Initially established as a not for profit company, we are currently awaiting approval of our application for charity status from the Charity Commission. We aim to work collaboratively with patients, healthcare professionals, policy makers, researchers and academics to support healthcare organisations around the world to provide safer care for patients.

The Green Paper focuses on:

- Patient safety today: an overview of the patient safety landscape
- The persistence of patient harm: a diagnosis of why problems continue
- The future: what a patient-safe future looks like
- Our role: how Patient Safety Learning proposes how to help make a difference
- System wide proposals: our thoughts on changes that we believe are needed in the wider healthcare system