**Because we all care**

*Partner and supporter communications*

**News story title**

**How has lockdown affected people's mental health and dignity?**

**Intro**

New research highlights the challenges faced by health and social care services in England and the importance of giving feedback to help improve care.

**Main body text**

New research from the Care Quality Commission highlights the impact lockdown measures have had on the wellbeing of people who use care services:

• Nearly three-quarters of carers (73%) say that the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions have impacted on the mental health of the person they care for.

• Over half (56%) of carers say that the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions have impacted on the dignity and independence of the person they care for.

These findings reflect concerns we have received from people who use care services about the impact of isolation and restrictions on visitors.

**Call to action box out** [for local Healthwatch using the new website, choose the grey block type]:

**Join the campaign: #BecauseWeAllCare**

We launched #BecauseWeAllCare with CQC to help improve care services by encouraging everyone to share their experiences of health and social care services.

Your ongoing feedback has been vital in helping us tell services in [Insert local area] how care can be made better during the pandemic. Please continue to help by sharing your experiences with us in our short, confidential survey.

[**Share your feedback**](https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/have-your-say)

**Main body text continued**

**How else has care been affected?**

The research also found that throughout the pandemic, care was most commonly impacted by:

• increased waiting times for appointments and procedures (49%)

• a lack of resources and equipment (24%)

Despite almost half (42%) of respondents believing that sharing feedback would positively impact their care, just one in five (19%) care users have shared feedback on a negative experience since the start of the pandemic.

With just 17% of people in England expecting services to improve in the next 12 months, we are calling for you to feedback on the services you use as a crucial way to improve their quality.

**Quote**

[Insert quote from your Chair or Chief Executive. If you do not have one, use the following quote from Healthwatch England Chair, Sir Robert Francis.]

**Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England, added:**

“Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, public feedback has played an important part in helping the NHS and social care services spot and respond to issues caused by the virus.

"As we continue to live with the pandemic, the NHS continues to face huge pressures across the whole system. NHS staff are grappling with many difficulties, including increased COVID demands, while trying to tackle the backlog in elective care and diagnostics that the pandemic had made so much worse.

"It is important that this is managed as well as possible, to make sure that the risks and distress to patients are minimised. That’s why it is vital people have the opportunity to share their views and experiences of care whether they have needed treatment for COVID-19 or other illnesses. Their feedback will help services understand both key national and local issues and the steps they can take to serve patients better.”

So, if you've recently used a GP, dentist, hospital or other care service, let us know your experience and help improve care for everyone.

[**Share your story**](https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/have-your-say)