



Influence • Inspire • Empower

Learning from the best – 2026

Celebrating patient experience innovations to help deliver the Ten Year Plan

October 2026

About Picker

Picker is an independent health and social care charity with expertise in understanding, measuring, and improving people's experiences of care. We pioneered the patient experience approach, now widely adopted around the world, and advocate for *the highest quality person centred care for all, always*.

We work with policy makers, providers, professionals, and patients and the public to **influence**, **inspire**, and **empower** person centred care.

We are commissioned by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and NHS England to design, deliver and analyse the NHS patient survey programme, the cancer patient experience surveys (adult and under 16), the neonatal care experience survey and the NHS staff survey.



About the PEN Awards

The Picker Experience Network (PEN) Awards are the first and only awards programme in the UK dedicated to recognising and celebrating best practice in patient experience across health and social care.

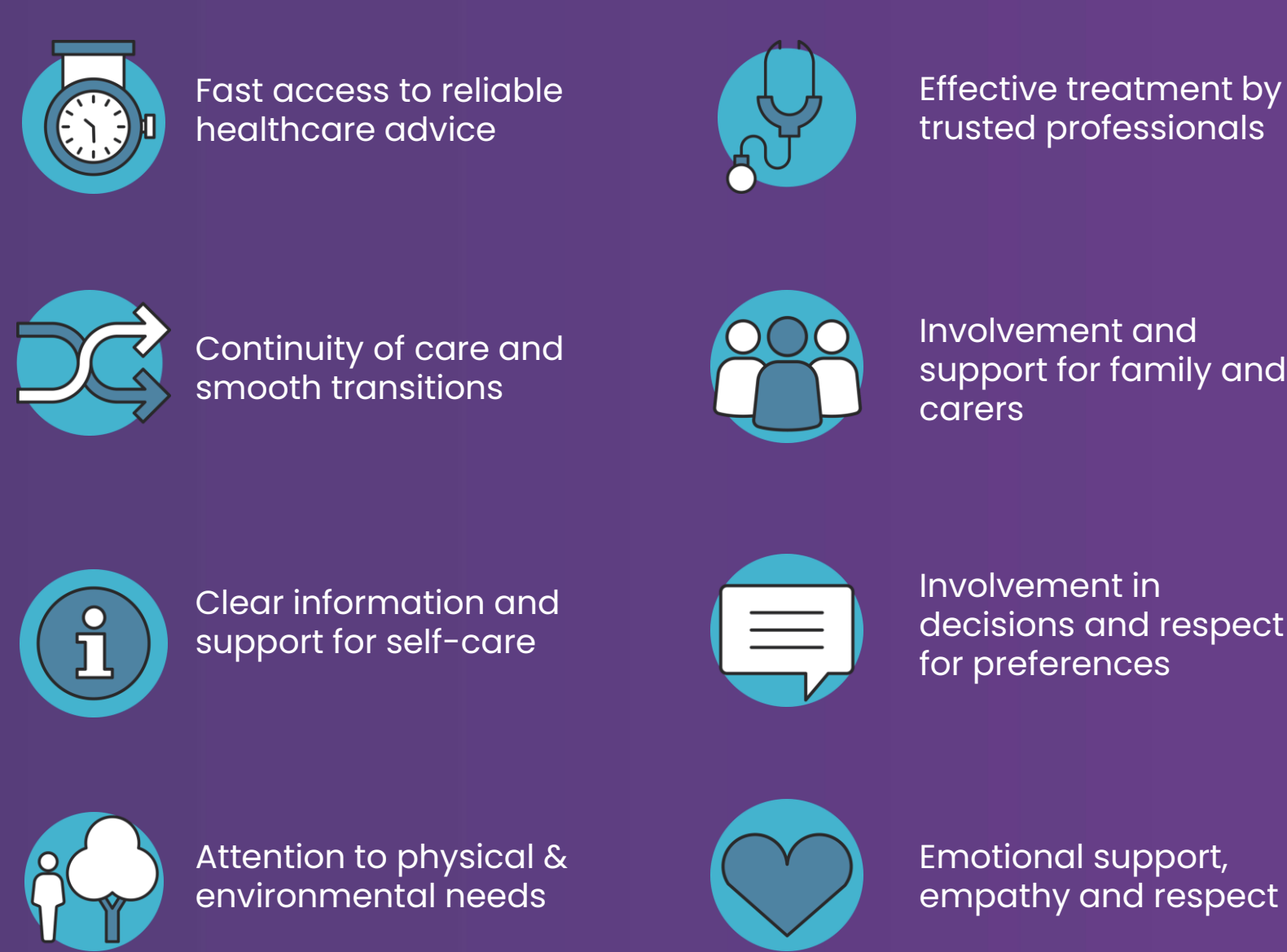
From hospitals and community services to independent care providers and international organisations, the PEN Awards showcase the incredible work being done to put patients, families, and carers **at the heart of care**.

These awards are more than just an accolade: they are a **platform to share inspiring stories, highlight innovative practices, and cultivate a community of learning and improvement**. Each submission represents a commitment to enhancing the patient experience, whether through compassionate care models, collaborative partnerships that span sectors and borders, or ground-breaking technology.



The Picker principles of person centred care

The eight principles that describe what truly matters to people in a care environment:



The five digital principles that support this:



Introduction

NHS reform and patient power

In June 2025, the government published its [Ten Year Plan for Health](#): a roadmap for reform of the NHS over the next decade.

This plan is focused on three shifts: **from hospital to community**, **from analogue to digital** and finally, **from sickness to prevention**.

On patient voice, the plan boldly committed to “redistributing power in our society” (p.22) away from ‘the centre’ and towards patients and staff. But the [Dash review of the patient safety landscape](#) that followed, recommended the abolition of Healthwatch England and local Healthwatch.

These opposing messages place the NHS at a crossroads, which is being actively debated as the [Health Bill](#) progresses through parliament.

“There are three shifts, but only one core purpose: to put power in patients’ hands”

[NHS Ten Year Plan for Health](#)

June 2025

Introduction

Celebrating best practice

As this debate continues, there is a lot to be learned from the legacy of patient voice organisations, which have a 50+ year history in the NHS in England.

There is, however, also much that can be learned from examples of **best practice already happening** across the NHS in England, the devolved nations, the independent sector and internationally. For this reason, we proudly gather each year to celebrate examples of person centred care and co-design.

We are hopeful that **patient voice can be embedded in the everyday of a reformed health service** and continue to advocate for this becoming reality. The newly appointed National Director of Patient Experience at NHS England is a great starting place and our 'To do list' sets out a clear set of immediate priorities as that role embeds itself into the system.

“Leaders should foster a culture that treats people’s experience of care as a core measure of quality.”

Quality strategy for NHS-funded care in England

July 2026

PEN Awards 2026

The PEN Awards have celebrated excellence in patient experience for more than 15 years, and 2026 is no exception. This year, as last year, we have mapped the winners against the Ten Year Plan for Health to highlight where best practice is already happening: not just in the NHS in England, but in the devolved nations, in the independent sector, and internationally.

Our 2026 entrants demonstrate how patient experience initiatives continue to transform services – delivering person centred care, amplifying the patient voice, and driving improvement with patients front and centre. In many cases, our shortlist demonstrates how meaningful interventions can be low cost, while also being scalable and transformative to patient experience.

The 2026 winners and finalists – across 21 categories – were announced on Thursday 1st October 2026 at an award ceremony at the University of Birmingham.

The following pages showcase projects across a range of categories that align with the following chapters of the Ten Year Plan:

- [From analogue to digital: power in your hands](#)
- [From hospital to community: the neighbourhood health service designed around you](#)
- [From sickness to prevention: power to make the healthy choice](#)
- [A new transparency and quality of care](#)
- [An NHS workforce, fit for the future.](#)

This is only a snapshot of the initiatives that are already making a difference and helping to deliver person centred care.

Full details of the winners, runners up, and all shortlisted entries are available [on the PEN website](#) in our [Book of Best Practice](#). You can also access the Book of Best Practice via the QR code on the right.





Spotlight on:

Analogue to digital

Improving patient experience of cancer care

Bristol NHS Foundation Trust



10 Year Plan chapter: Analogue to digital

Location: South West, England

Sector: NHS

Themes: Cancer, Real time data, Health inequalities



Award categories: Digital and Technology Innovation for Experience / Leadership and Governance for Experience Excellence

Bristol NHS Foundation Trust, one of the largest NHS trusts in the South West serving nearly one million people, has transformed how cancer patient experience is captured and acted upon across its services. The Trust co-designed a real-time cancer experience survey with patients, carers and staff, aligned to the **National Cancer Patient Experience Survey**, and supported it with a **Power BI dashboard** that provides immediate access to feedback, trends and patient comments.

The initiative has embedded patient experience into routine governance across all 12 cancer specialities, ensuring regular review and accountability. It has achieved a 33% response rate, **significantly higher than previous feedback methods**, and an average patient experience score of 9.4/10. Insights from the data have driven tangible improvements, including **targeted engagement with underrepresented Black women** and communication training that **reduced communication-related complaints** from 66% to 45%, while **administrative support ratings improved** from 85% to 92%.

What makes this initiative stand out is **its combination of co-production, digital innovation and strong governance**. By creating a sustainable, organisation-wide framework that turns real-time patient feedback into measurable service improvements, it ensures every patient voice is heard and provides a model that can be successfully replicated across other healthcare services.

Delivering England's first fully digital PrEP pathway

Preventx and The Love Tank Community Interest Company (CIC)



10 Year Plan chapter: Analogue to digital

Location: UK-wide

Sector: Partnership

Themes: Sexual health, Public health, Digital healthcare



Award category: Partnership working

Preventx, the UK's largest provider of remote sexual health services, partnered with **East Sussex County Council and The Love Tank CIC** to create England's first fully integrated digital HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) service. Combining digital healthcare, public health expertise and community engagement, the initiative enables eligible patients to access online assessment, remote clinical consultation, at-home testing, prescribing and home delivery of HIV prevention medication through a single pathway.

Launched in East Sussex in July 2024 and subsequently expanded to 14 local authorities, the **service has delivered more than 6,000 PrEP prescriptions**, including over 1,400 new initiations and over 2,000 repeat prescriptions, demonstrating strong uptake and sustained engagement. The model has **successfully reached underserved and more deprived communities**, while **reducing barriers** associated with stigma, travel, waiting times and clinic access. **Patient feedback has been exceptionally positive**, with 71% saying they would not have started PrEP without the online service, 92% intending to continue using it, and an average recommendation score of 9.28/10.

What makes this initiative stand out is that it reimagines, rather than simply digitises, HIV prevention. Its **combination of innovative technology, robust clinical governance and genuine community co-production** has created an equitable, scalable and sustainable model that expands access to HIV prevention while relieving pressure on sexual health services.

Pathways app

East London NHS Foundation Trust



10 Year Plan chapter: Analogue to digital

Location: London, England

Sector: NHS

Themes: Digital, App, Access to information



Award category: Outstanding Contribution to Volunteering including patient, carer or community

Shuayb, a patient voice partner at **East London NHS Foundation Trust**, has demonstrated how lived experience can drive meaningful healthcare innovation by helping shape the Pathways App within secure forensic mental health services. Drawing on his lived experience of autism, alongside his technical skills and commitment to collaboration, he has played a pivotal role in improving communication, accessibility and patient involvement.

His contributions include **co-creating the Family, Friends and Carers webpage**, and providing accessible information about mental health services, multidisciplinary teams, legal frameworks and key terminology. He has also helped **develop patient feedback tools**, supported continuous quality improvement and empowered other service users to participate confidently in co-production activities.

The impact of his work extends beyond individual service improvements. His involvement has contributed to the **Pathways App receiving national recognition**, including the HSJ Digital Award for Empowering Patients Through Digital and the Occupational Therapy Excellence Award for OT Innovation of the Year. These achievements highlight the value of embedding lived experience within service design and improvement.



Spotlight on:

Hospital to community

Overall winner 2026: The Lighthouse Service

University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and The Lighthouse Service



10 Year Plan chapter: Hospital to community

Sub-theme: Neighbourhood health service

Location: London, England

Sector: Partnership

Themes: Co-location, Access to justice, Multidisciplinary teams



Award categories: Joined up care experience and long-term improvements in experience of care

The Lighthouse, London's Child House, led by University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (UCLH), is the UK's first [*Barnahus \(Child House\) service*](#), providing integrated support for children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation. Bringing healthcare, mental health services, advocacy and criminal justice support **together under one roof**, the service offers a child-centred, trauma-informed alternative to fragmented care pathways.

Since opening in 2018, the Lighthouse has supported more than 3,000 children and families across North Central London. Over 80% of children access mental health support, while on-site video-recorded interviews and court-related services have **improved access to justice and reduced the need for children to repeatedly recount traumatic experiences**. The model has delivered exceptional patient experience, with 99% of children and young people reporting that they felt listened to, respected and well supported. An independent evaluation also estimated around **£3 of future social and economic value for every £1 invested**.

What makes the Lighthouse stand out is its **pioneering rights-based, multidisciplinary approach**, which places children's needs at the centre of care. Combining **strong partnership working, meaningful co-production and measurable outcomes**, it has become a nationally recognised model of best practice and directly influenced the decision to roll out the Child House model across all seven NHS regions in England.

Building for better healthcare

Cygnnet Health Care



10 Year Plan chapter: Hospital to community

Sub-theme: Modernised hospitals

Location: UK-wide

Sector: Independent

Themes: Mental health, Patient experience, Staff Experience



Award category: Independent excellence in experience of care

Cygnnet, one of the UK's leading mental health and social care providers, delivered a £132 million programme, Building for Better Healthcare, to **expand specialist mental health capacity and improve patient experience**. Over two years, Cygnnet **opened seven new specialist hospitals and refurbished 181 existing beds**, creating recovery-focused environments co-designed with patients, carers, staff and Experts by Experience.

The initiative increased capacity by 230 beds, enabling around 1,500 additional people each year to access specialist care closer to home and **reducing the need for out-of-area placements**. Outcomes have been strong, with 95% of adults discharged to community settings, **93% of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) patients returning home or to community placements**, a 30% improvement in daily functioning, and a 17.1% reduction in average length of stay. **Patient feedback has also been highly positive**, with ratings of 4.5/5 for caring and supportive staff and 76% of Google reviews scoring four or five stars. Innovative Social Hubs further **reduced incidents by 25-35%, increased staff engagement and lowered burnout**.

What makes this initiative stand out is **its belief that the care environment itself is a therapeutic intervention**. By co-producing facilities with those who use them and linking patient experience, safety, staff wellbeing and clinical outcomes, Cygnnet has redefined how modern mental health environments can support recovery.

From patient voice to system-wise transformation

The Chinese University of Hong Kong



10 Year Plan chapter: Hospital to community

Sub-theme: Neighbourhood health service

Location: Hong Kong

Sector: Partnership

Themes: Patient feedback, Discharge, Self management



Award category: International excellence in experience of care

The **Chinese University of Hong Kong** (CUHK), through its Centre for Health Systems and Policy Research, developed the Post-discharge Information Summary (PDIS) to **improve the transition from hospital to home**. Created in partnership with Hong Kong's Hospital Authority, clinicians, patients and caregivers, the initiative was **designed in response to patient feedback** highlighting gaps in discharge communication, particularly around medications, side effects and warning signs.

Initially **piloted in four hospitals** and evaluated with more than 3,700 patients and staff, PDIS **significantly improved the clarity, usefulness and adequacy of discharge information**. Patients reported **better understanding of medication side effects** and warning signs, **increased confidence in self-management**, and **fewer medication-related side effects** following discharge. Staff also reported improved communication and discharge counselling. Following its success, PDIS was expanded to all 43 public hospitals across Hong Kong and embedded into routine electronic clinical systems.

What makes this initiative stand out is its direct translation of patient feedback into system-wide change. Through strong co-production, multidisciplinary collaboration and rigorous evaluation, the programme **transformed a long-standing patient experience issue into a sustainable, evidence-based solution**. Its successful scale-up across an entire healthcare system demonstrates a highly transferable model for improving discharge communication, medication safety and patient centred care internationally.

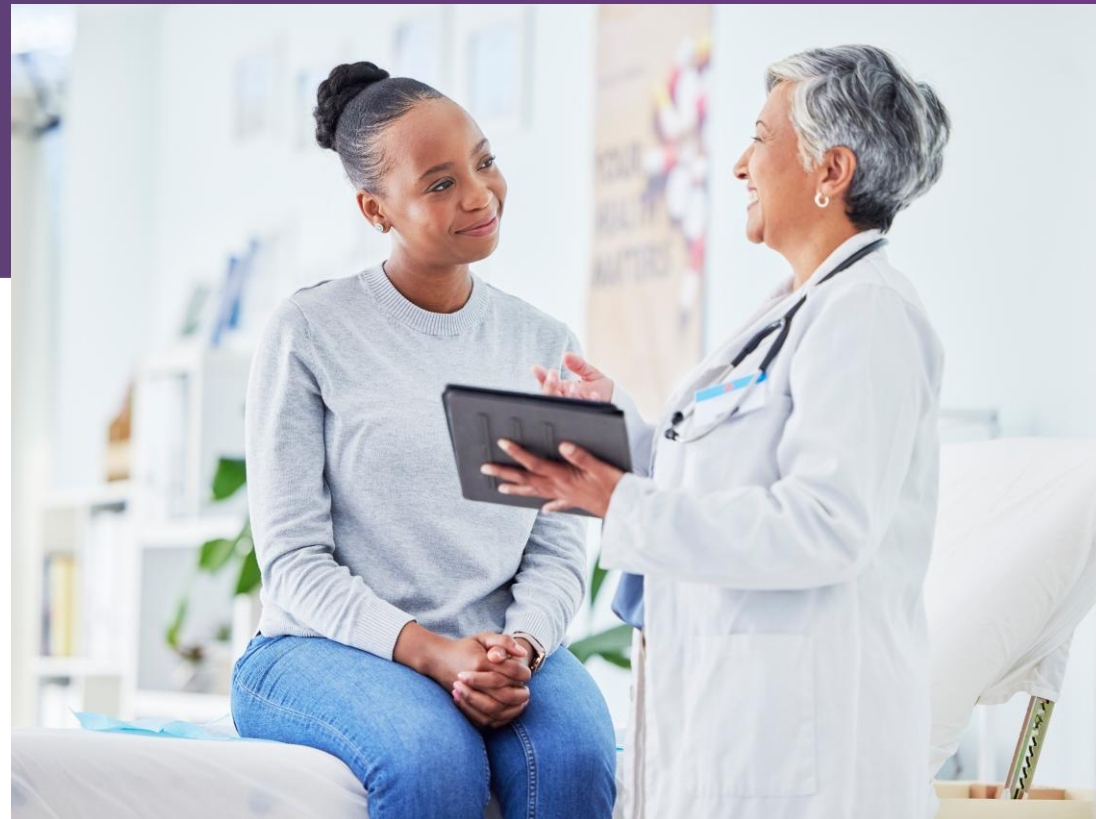


Spotlight on:

From sickness to prevention

Familial Hypercholesterolaemia Identification Hub

NHS East Genomics, Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Norfolk and Suffolk ICB



10 Year Plan chapter: Sickiness to prevention

Location: East of England, England

Sector: NHS

Themes: Proactive identification, Early intervention, Digital tools



Award category: Commissioning for better experience of care

Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (NNUH), working with the **Norfolk and Suffolk Integrated Care Board (ICB)** and **East Genomics**, has developed an innovative Familial Hypercholesterolaemia (FH) Identification Hub to improve detection of **one of the UK's most underdiagnosed inherited conditions**. Using digital case finding, remote specialist review and genetic testing, the programme **proactively identifies people at risk** of FH and **provides faster access to assessment and treatment** closer to home.

Since launching in January 2026, the Hub has invited 1,435 patients into the pathway, with 521 undergoing testing and 32 receiving an FH diagnosis. The programme has **achieved a 19% diagnostic yield**, significantly higher than traditional approaches, while **reducing costs by 42%**. Patients benefit from convenient access, clearer understanding of inherited cardiovascular risk and **earlier intervention**, while cascade testing helps identify at-risk family members. The initiative has also **reduced pressure on primary and secondary care services** and driven wider professional engagement through a regional Community of Practice.

What makes this initiative stand out is its combination of population health management, genomic medicine and patient co-production. By **using data-driven identification, accessible digital tools and multilingual resources**, it **delivers a scalable, cost-effective model** that improves early diagnosis, reduces health inequalities and prevents avoidable cardiovascular disease and premature deaths.



Spotlight on:

Quality of care

Calm Connections Clinic

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust



10 Year Plan chapter: Quality of care

Sub-theme: Patient voices

Location: Midlands, England

Sector: NHS

Themes: Maternity, Trauma-informed, Health inequalities



Award category: Excellence in personalised care

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, which provides acute and community services to around 286,000 people, developed the Calm Connections Clinic to support women experiencing pregnancy following birth trauma, pregnancy loss, severe anxiety, perinatal mental ill-health or previous negative maternity experiences.

Launched in June 2024 in response to patient feedback, the clinic is the first multidisciplinary service of its kind in the Black Country. It brings together expertise in birth trauma, bereavement and perinatal mental health, **providing personalised emotional support**, advocacy, birth reflections and care planning without requiring women to repeatedly retell their experiences.

Demand has grown substantially, from 22 referrals in 2024 to 85 in 2025, with 70 more received by July 2026. **Women report reduced anxiety, greater confidence and renewed trust in maternity services, while the service has increasingly reached women from ethnic minority communities.** Its impact has been nationally recognised through the 2025 Make Birth Better Award for Best Birth Trauma Project.

What makes Calm Connections stand out is its proactive, trauma-informed and co-produced approach. By addressing emotional recovery alongside clinical maternity care, it helps vulnerable women **regain confidence, feel heard and empowered**, and approach birth with greater hope and trust.

Improving experience for patients with Dysphagia

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust



10 Year Plan chapter: Quality of care

Sub-theme: Patient voices

Location: Northern Ireland

Sector: Public

Themes: Catering, Dysphagia, Rehabilitation



Award category: Support Operations

Excellence in Improving Experience

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Northern Ireland's largest integrated health and social care organisation, has **transformed catering for patients with dysphagia** through an innovative in-house model for producing meals that meet International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) standards. Developed collaboratively by Catering, Dietetics and Speech and Language Therapy teams, the initiative places patient safety and experience at the heart of meal provision.

The programme provides safe, clearly coded meals across IDDSI levels 4–6, **reducing choking risks while improving nutritional intake**, menu choice and staff confidence. Patient involvement has shaped menus to ensure meals are appealing, varied and inclusive, including vegetarian and vegan options. Producing meals in-house using fresh, local ingredients has also **reduced reliance on external suppliers, strengthened service resilience** and **generated annual savings of approximately £143,780**.

What makes this initiative stand out is its combination of patient safety, co-production and multidisciplinary innovation. By **positioning catering as an integral part of clinical care**, rather than simply a support service, the Trust has created a sustainable, responsive model that delivers safer care, better patient experiences and significant financial efficiencies.

Music for health

Lime, Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust



10 Year Plan chapter: Quality of care

Sub-theme: Patient voices

Location: North West, England

Sector: NHS

Themes: Music therapy, Rehabilitation, Acute care



Award category: Environment of care

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT), through its award-winning **Lime Arts and Health programme**, has developed an innovative Music for Health service that uses specialist music practitioners to improve patient and staff experience across acute hospital wards. Working alongside clinical teams, the programme delivers **personalised music interventions that complement care, support rehabilitation** and create calmer, more compassionate healthcare environments.

During 2025-26, the programme delivered 565 participatory music sessions across 26 wards, supporting patients in services including stroke, critical care, dementia, frailty and transplantation. Independent evaluation involving 226 participants found **significant improvements in wellbeing and ward atmosphere**. Sixty-four per cent of patients achieved peak relaxation, 65% experienced positive distraction from pain or anxiety, and 80% of wards reported a calmer, more therapeutic environment. **Staff also reported reduced stress, improved morale and stronger patient engagement**.

What makes this initiative stand out is its unique combination of artistic excellence and clinical integration. **Rather than treating music as entertainment, Lime embeds highly trained practitioners within healthcare teams** to deliver evidence-based, person-centred interventions tailored to patient needs. Supported by workforce development, clinical partnerships and independent evaluation, the programme demonstrates how creative health can deliver measurable improvements in patient experience, staff wellbeing and the overall environment of care.

‘That one person’

Mid Yorkshire Teaching NHS Trust



10 Year Plan chapter: Quality of care

Sub-theme: Clear incentives and accountability

Location: North East and Yorkshire, England

Sector: NHS

Themes: Partnership working, Patient safety, Complaints



Award category: Patient involvement in patient safety (in partnership with Patient Safety Learning)

Patient Safety Partners are helping embed the patient voice at the heart of safety, experience and organisational culture through the “That One Person” initiative. Acting as **critical friends**, they work alongside staff to develop safety training, review safety documentation and complaints, and **promote the principle that every individual can make a lasting difference** to a patient’s experience.

The initiative is already influencing practice. Patient Safety Partners sit on a panel reviewing anonymised complaint responses, **helping make communications more compassionate and patient centred**. The Trust has seen **no increase in reopened complaints** compared with previous years, while **positive feedback from the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman** indicates a reduction in complaints received about the Trust. The approach is also **strengthening openness, psychological safety and confidence to raise concerns**.

What makes “That One Person” stand out is its simplicity and reach. Rather than treating patient involvement as a separate activity, Patient Safety Partners **embed its principles across meetings, training, safety reviews and complaint handling**. By encouraging staff to listen, respond without judgement and recognise their individual impact, the initiative is fostering a more compassionate, accountable and learning-focused culture, with potential for sustainable improvements in both patient and staff experience.

Streamlining the Death Certification Process

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust



10 Year Plan chapter: Quality of care

Sub-theme: Better data

Location: Northern Ireland

Sector: Public

Themes: Bereavement, Accountability, Complaints



Award category: Emerging good practice

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Northern Ireland's largest integrated health and social care organisation, has transformed the process for completing Medical Certificates of Cause of Death (MCCDs), **reducing delays that caused distress for bereaved families** and pressure across hospital and partner services.

Using a structured Quality Improvement approach, the Trust introduced a proactive Ward Clerk MCCD tracking role, **providing real-time oversight, coordination and escalation**. This **simple, low-cost intervention significantly improved accountability and consistency**. Maximum delays fell from more than seven days to under 20 hours, while average completion time reduced from 34 hours to just eight hours, with the 24-hour target consistently achieved. The initiative also **reduced interruptions, complaints and unnecessary ward visits**, while **enabling more timely funerals and supporting culturally important bereavement practices**. Ward clerks reported 100% satisfaction with the new process.

What makes the initiative stand out is its combination of data-driven improvement and compassionate care. Rather than focusing on average performance, it **targeted the exceptional delays causing the greatest distress**. Through strong multidisciplinary collaboration, co-production with families and a straightforward redesign of existing roles, the Trust has created a sustainable and transferable model that delivers significant benefits for families, staff and partner organisations.

The PREMIERE Project

South East Wales and Vascular Network



10 Year Plan chapter: Quality of care

Sub-theme: Better data

Location: Wales

Sector: NHS

Themes: Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREMs), Data, Digital



Award category: From insight to improvement

The **South East Wales Vascular Network** (SEWVN), working with the Centre for Healthcare Evaluation, Device Assessment and Research (CEDAR), vascular networks, patients and the Circulation Foundation, developed PREMIERE, the **UK's first validated vascular-specific Patient Reported Experience Measure (PREM)**. It addresses a major gap in understanding the experiences of vascular patients, who often navigate complex pathways involving surgery, rehabilitation and long-term care.

Co-produced with patients and validated across three Welsh vascular networks, the 14-item tool **turns lived experience into measurable, actionable data**. Testing with 240 patients demonstrated strong feasibility, with an average completion time of seven minutes and 82.1% completing it independently. Importantly, PREMIERE **identified significant opportunities for improvement**, including 88.3% of patients lacking written post-discharge information and 60% receiving no pain-management guidance, giving services clear targets for change.

What makes PREMIERE stand out is its ability to capture aspects of quality that traditional clinical outcomes and generic surveys can miss. By measuring communication, compassion, involvement and transitions in care, it **gives a voice to patients facing complex and sometimes life-changing decisions**. With national partners now supporting wider adoption, PREMIERE offers a scalable model for embedding meaningful patient experience data into vascular services and national audits.



Spotlight on:

A workforce fit for the future

Patient Experience and Public Involvement Team

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde



10 Year Plan chapter: A workforce fit for the future

Location: Scotland

Sector: NHS

Themes: Skills, Cultural change, Patient voices



Award category: Teams making a difference to experience

The Patient Experience and Public Involvement (PEPI) team is a seven-person team supporting an organisation of 41,000 staff serving 1.3 million people. Its approach focuses not on delivering involvement itself, but on **embedding the skills, confidence and culture needed for staff and teams to involve patients and the public routinely.**

The team has trained 432 staff to engage openly with feedback through Care Opinion, **reached more than 500 staff through Lunchtime Learning, and supported 125 teams to lead their own engagement.** Initiatives including the Waiting Well resource and Care Opinion Bear demonstrate how co-designed approaches continue improving patient involvement without ongoing hands-on support from PEPI.

The model has also **influenced work beyond the organisation,** including national blood-borne virus testing and deprescribing engagement.

What makes PEPI stand out is its **focus on sustainable culture change rather than its own visibility.** By building capability across the workforce, the small team has created an approach that can operate at considerable scale without a large budget. Its success is ultimately measured by whether the **public voice becomes embedded in service design,** decision-making and everyday responses to patient experience, providing a highly transferable model for healthcare organisations.

Expanding the reach of reasonable adjustments

North Bristol NHS Trust



10 Year Plan chapter: A workforce fit for the future

Location: South West, England

Sector: NHS

Themes: Training, Reasonable adjustments, Cancer, Disabilities and long-term health conditions



Award category: Equity in experience

North Bristol NHS Trust (NBT) and University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust (UHBW), working with primary care, the Integrated Care Board, the Somerset, Wiltshire, Avon and Gloucestershire (SWAG) Cancer Alliance and research partners, developed an **innovative programme to improve cancer care for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions**. The initiative aims to move beyond simple compliance with reasonable adjustment requirements by embedding personalised, compassionate care that identifies and responds to individual patient needs throughout the cancer pathway.

Using research, co-production with patients and carers, and targeted education, the project **translated lived experience into practical tools and training for healthcare professionals**. A key outcome was the development of an **e-learning programme designed to improve understanding and application of reasonable adjustments** across a broad range of conditions, including physical, sensory, cognitive and mental health needs.

The impact has been significant. More than 200 professionals have completed the training, with **staff reporting a substantial increase in confidence**. Those describing themselves as “extremely confident” in applying reasonable adjustments rose from 12% to 72%, helping to drive more consistent, proactive and person centred care. The project’s findings have also been published in the Journal of Cancer Policy, extending its influence beyond the local healthcare system.

Co-creating a thriving workforce

Southport and Formby Health



10 Year Plan chapter: A workforce fit for the future

Location: North West, England

Sector: NHS

Themes: Wellbeing, Staff engagement, Peer support



Award category: Staff experience and wellbeing

Southport and Formby Health (SAFH), working with **Southport and Formby Primary Care Network**, has delivered a sustained workforce wellbeing and cultural change programme supporting staff across services serving 129,000 residents. Recognising **the link between staff wellbeing and patient care, the organisation adopted a listening-led approach, embedding wellbeing into everyday practice** through staff surveys, a “You Said, We Did” framework, co-created values, flexible working, menopause support, wellbeing activities and visible leadership engagement.

The initiative has **improved staff engagement, confidence in leadership, feelings of being valued and participation in wellbeing programmes**. Feedback from the menopause support programme was so positive that it was extended throughout 2026. The programme has also **strengthened peer support, cross-team collaboration and openness around mental health and wellbeing**. These improvements have **contributed to greater workforce stability, reduced burnout, improved morale and more consistent, compassionate care for patients**.

What makes this initiative stand out is its authenticity and long-term commitment. Rather than a short-term wellbeing campaign, it **represents a sustained cultural transformation shaped by staff and reinforced by compassionate leadership**. By acting visibly on employee feedback and embedding wellbeing into organisational strategy and daily practice, SAFH has created a sustainable, transferable model that demonstrates how investing in staff wellbeing can deliver lasting benefits for both employees and patients.

Patient Experience Excellence

Reem Hospital



10 Year Plan chapter: A workforce fit for the future

Location: United Arab Emirates

Sector: Independent

Themes: Coaching, Behavioural change, Training



Award category: Developing the capability of person centred care

Reem Hospital, a multispecialty healthcare provider in Abu Dhabi, developed “I Am the Patient Experience”, an organisation-wide programme designed to strengthen person centred care across its 850+ clinical and non-clinical staff. Rather than relying on standalone training, the **initiative integrates empathy-based recruitment, experiential learning, patient stories, coaching, governance and performance monitoring** to embed compassionate care into everyday practice.

Departmental engagement increased from three to 18 departments, participation beyond the Patient Experience team rose from 5.6% to 86.2%, and annual attendance increased by 156%. **Patient outcomes also improved, with outpatient satisfaction rising from 97% to 100%**, inpatient satisfaction from 96% to 100%, and the hospital’s Google rating increasing from 3.9 to 4.6. Despite a 30% increase in patient volume, complaints remained below 0.5%, with 98.5% of concerns resolved before formal escalation. The initiative also strengthened inclusion through targeted improvements for underrepresented groups.

Aligning recruitment, training, leadership accountability and patient involvement, creates **lasting behavioural change rather than isolated learning events**. Internally designed and highly scalable, it demonstrates how embedding empathy throughout an organisation can deliver sustainable improvements in patient experience, inclusion and quality of care.

Keeping the conversation going



This is just a snapshot of the best practice that is happening across the country and beyond.

To find out more about any of the winners included in this report and our 2026 entrants, you can read our [Book of Best Practice](#) on our website.

[Sign up to our newsletter](#) to keep updated on patient experience best practice, relevant news and updates on entering future PEN Awards.

If you would like to keep the conversation going or if you have questions, please contact:

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