



# **healthwatch**

## **INFORMATION GUIDE**

**NHS Constitution  
and Patient Rights  
and Choices**



## In this guide you will find:

- Information about the NHS Constitution
- Principles that guide the NHS
- NHS Values
- Your Patient Rights and Choices



# NHS Constitution

## What is it?

The constitution establishes the principles and values of the NHS in England. It sets out rights to which patients, public and staff are entitled to, and pledges which the NHS is committed to achieve, together with responsibilities, which the public, patients and staff owe to one another to ensure that the NHS operates fairly and effectively. It is renewed every 10 years, with the involvement of the public, patients, and staff.

## 7 Principles that guide the NHS

1. The NHS provides a comprehensive service, available to all irrespective of gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity or marital or civil partnership status.
2. Access to NHS services is based on clinical need, not an individual's ability to pay. NHS services are free of charge, except in limited circumstances sanctioned by Parliament.
3. The NHS aspires to the highest standards of excellence and professionalism
4. The patient will be at the heart of everything the NHS does.
5. The NHS works across organisational boundaries and in partnership with other organisations in the interest of patients, local communities, and the wider population.
6. The NHS is committed to providing best value for taxpayers' money and the most effective, fair, and sustainable use of finite resources.
7. The NHS is accountable to the public, communities, and patients that it serves.

## What are the NHS Values?

Patients, public and staff have helped develop this expression of values that inspire passion in the NHS and that should underpin everything it does.

### These values are:

**Working together for patients.** Patients come first in everything we do. We fully involve patients, staff, families, carers, communities, and professionals inside and outside the NHS.

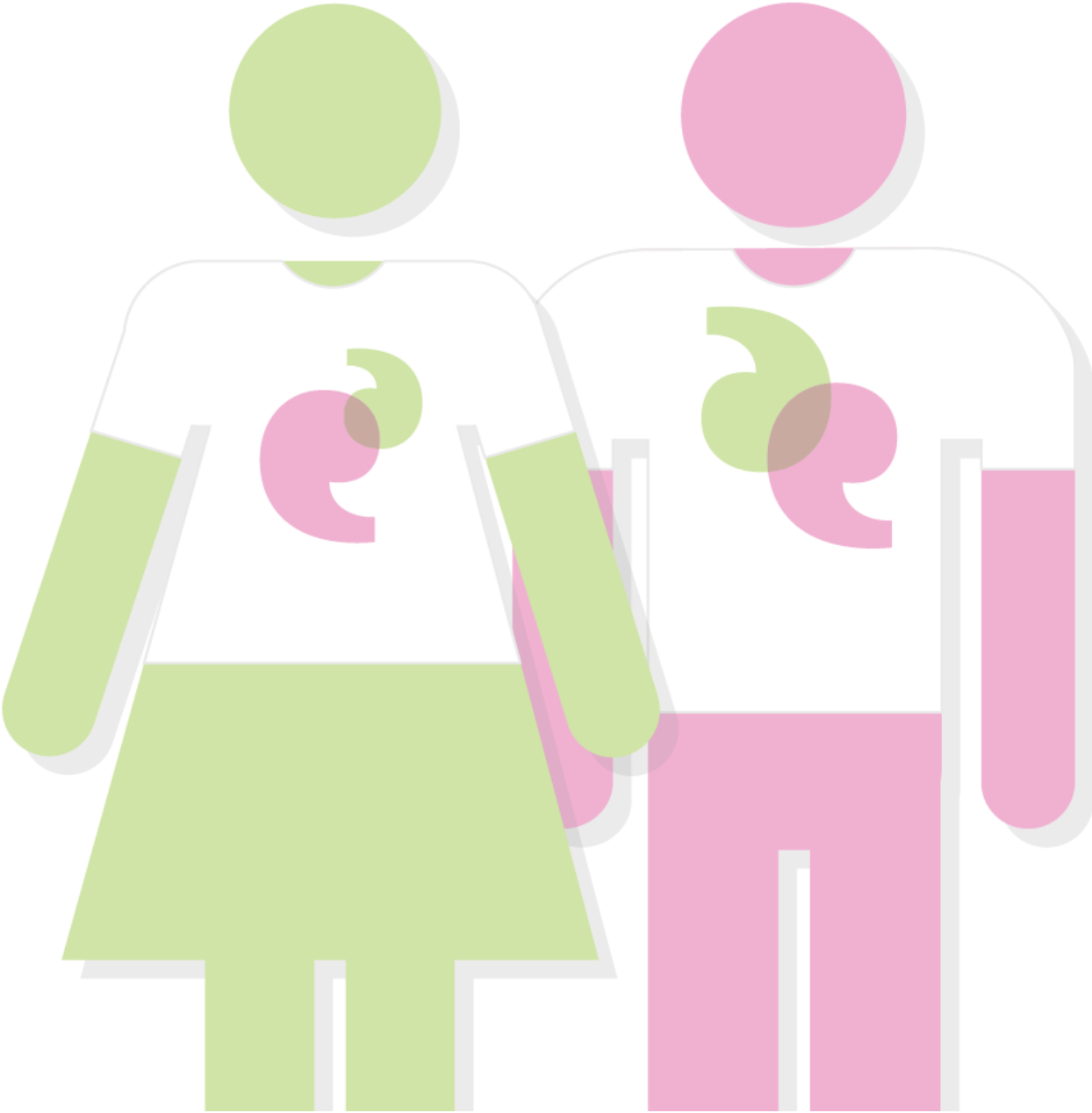
**Respect and dignity.** We value every person – whether patient, their families or carers, or staff – as an individual, respect their aspirations and commitments in life, and seek to understand their priorities, needs, abilities and limits

**Commitment to quality of care.** We earn the trust placed in us by insisting on quality and striving to get the basics of quality of care – safety, effectiveness, and patient experience – right every time.

**Compassion.** We ensure that compassion is central to the care we provide and respond with humanity and kindness to each person's pain, distress, anxiety or need. We search for the things we can do, however small, to give comfort and relieve suffering.

**Improving lives.** We strive to improve health and wellbeing and people’s experiences of the NHS.

**Everyone counts.** We maximise our resources for the benefit of the whole community, and make sure nobody is excluded, discriminated against, or left behind.





# Patient Rights

## Your Rights as a Patient within the NHS

Everyone who uses the NHS services should be aware of the rights they have as a patient. For this reason, some of the most important legal rights have been listed below. To see a full list of your rights as patients see the official NHS Constitution document which can be found on:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england>

### Access to Health Services:

**You have the right** to receive NHS services free of charge, apart from certain limited exceptions sanctioned by Parliament.

**You have the right**, in certain circumstances, to go to other European Economic Area countries or Switzerland for treatment which would be available to you through your NHS commissioner.

**You have the right** to access NHS services. You will not be refused access on unreasonable grounds.

**You have the right** not to be unlawfully discriminated against in the provision of NHS services including on grounds of gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity or marital or civil partnership status.

**You have the right** to receive care and treatment that is appropriate to you, meets your needs and reflects your preferences.

### Quality of Care and Environment:

**You have the right** to be treated with a professional standard of care, by appropriately qualified and experienced staff, in approved or registered organisation that meets required levels of safety and quality.

**You have the right** to be cared for in a clean, safe, secure, and suitable environment.

**You have the right** to receive suitable and nutritious food and hydration to sustain good health and wellbeing.

## **Nationally Approved Treatments, Drugs and Programmes:**

**You have the right** to drugs and treatments that have been recommended by NICE<sup>1</sup> for use in the NHS, if your doctor says they are clinically appropriate for you.

**You have the right** to expect local decisions on funding of other drugs and treatments to be made rationally following a proper consideration of the evidence. If the local NHS decides not to fund a drug or treatment you and your doctor feel would be right for you, they will explain that decision to you.

**You have the right** to receive the vaccinations that the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation recommends that you should receive under an NHS-provided national immunisation programme.

## **Respect, Consent and Confidentiality:**

**You have the right** to be treated with dignity and respect, in accordance with your human rights.

**You have the right** to be given information about the test and treatment options available to you, what they involve and their risks and benefits.

**You have the right** of access to your own health records and to have any factual inaccuracies corrected.

**You have the right** to privacy and confidentiality and to expect the NHS to keep your confidential information safe and secure.

**You have the right** to be informed about how your information is used.

## **Informed Choice:**

**You have the right** to choose your GP practice, and to be accepted by that practice unless there are reasonable grounds to refuse, then you should be informed of those reasons.

**You have the right** to express a preference for using a specific doctor within your GP practice, and for the practice to try to comply.

**You have the right** to transparent, accessible, and comparable data on the quality of local healthcare providers, and on outcomes, as compared to others nationally.

## **Involvement in your Healthcare and NHS:**

**You have the right** to be involved in planning and making decisions about your health and care with your care provider or providers, including your end of life care.

**You have the right** to an open and transparent relationship with the organisation providing your care.

## **Complaints and Redress:**

**You have the right** to have any complaint you make about NHS services acknowledged within three working days and to have it thoroughly investigated.

**You have the right** to discuss the way in which the complaint is to be handled, and to know the period in which the investigation is likely to be completed.

**You have the right** to be kept informed of progress and to know the outcome of any investigation into your complaint

If you would like to find out more about NHS Constitution and your Patient Rights and Choices visit:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england)

OR

Contact your local Healthwatch, contact details can be found below:

## healthwatch

East Riding of Yorkshire

Phone: 01482 665 684

Email: [enquiries@healthwatcheastridingofyorkshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatcheastridingofyorkshire.co.uk)

Website: [www.healthwatcheastridingofyorkshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatcheastridingofyorkshire.co.uk)

## healthwatch

Kingston upon Hull

Phone: 01482 595505

Email: [enquiries@healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk)

Website: [www.healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk)

## healthwatch

North East Lincolnshire

Phone: 01472 361 459

Email: [enquiries@healthwatchnortheastlincolnshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchnortheastlincolnshire.co.uk)

Website: [www.healthwatchnortheastlincolnshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnortheastlincolnshire.co.uk)

## healthwatch

North Lincolnshire

Phone: 01724 844986

Email: [enquiries@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk)

Website: [www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk)



