

Health Secretary welcomes large fall in NHS dissatisfaction

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Survey shows the biggest drop in dissatisfaction in the NHS since 1998 as Health and Social Care Secretary pledges to do more to tackle underperforming trusts.

- King's Fund and Nuffield Trust survey reveals the biggest drop in dissatisfaction in the NHS since 1998
- Health & Social Care Secretary announces NHS Intensive Recovery programme to worst performing trusts in England from April
- High-performing teams with a track record of delivery will bring in tailored support to improve care.

Patients' dissatisfaction in the NHS has fallen by its biggest margin in nearly three decades, according to a new survey released thanks to record investment, falling waiting lists, and reforms.

The King's Fund and Nuffield Trust's British Social Attitudes survey reveals a 5.6 percentage point increase in satisfaction in the NHS, the first increase since the Covid-19 pandemic.

This reflects a significant effort by NHS leaders and staff up and down the country to accelerate improvement over the last year. This Government invested an extra £26 billion in the NHS this year, cut waiting lists by 374,000 since July 2024, recruited an extra 2,000 GPs and cut Category 2 ambulance response times this winter to their lowest level for five years.

However, despite the significant improvement overall, some "challenged" trusts have continued to struggle – often because of a range of persistent and historic issues that have never been properly addressed.

A new NHS Intensive Recovery programme has identified these trusts as those at the bottom of the new NHS league tables, facing the longest waits for care, persistent financial problems, and high leadership churn.

Speaking at the University of East London on Wednesday 25 March, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Wes Streeting will announce how he will drive the changes needed to get these trusts up to standard again for the benefit of all patients.

Wes Streeting, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, said:

When this government came to office, I said that, while the NHS was broken, it wasn't beaten. Patients are beginning to feel the change and the NHS is showing that things can get better.

The biggest drop in dissatisfaction since 1998 doesn't happen by accident. It is thanks to the government's investment and modernisation- all of which has been hard fought but is now delivering results.

Waiting lists are the lowest they've been in three years, more patients in A&E are seen within four-hours than for four years, and ambulance response times are the fastest for

five years.

The NHS is on the road to recovery, but there's a lot of road ahead. My foot is pressing down on the accelerator and I won't stop until the job is done.

The NHS Intensive Recovery programme will begin in April and has identified providers where structural challenges exist. The first wave of Trusts facing measures will include: North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust, Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust, Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust and East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust.

This programme marks a clear shift in approach — moving away from a one size fits all approach. This new approach will bring decisive action to fix long-standing issues that cannot be resolved by organisations alone.

The trusts identified are not failing through lack of effort, leadership or the hard work of their staff. They face deep-rooted challenges — including structural constraints and financial imbalance.

Each organisation will receive a tailored improvement approach, designed jointly with local leadership and focused on delivery.

This will include, changes of leadership where necessary at struggling Trusts, NHS veterans with a history of success brought into underperforming areas, the merging or separating Trusts so resources can be reallocated based on need, and improving access to capital for crumbling estates.

Wes Streeting, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, will say:

Right now, a cluster of high-performing Trusts are masking some chronic under-performance in other parts of the country. Failure has been tolerated for too long. Staff know it. Patients feel it. And I won't stand for it.

We won't have succeeded in changing the NHS, until we change it for the patients who are suffering the worst services in the country.

In some places, so many years of poor service without improvement is feeding that sense of fatalism. They believe that after so long, it just can't get better - in fact, they've never seen it get better.

That's why I've announced today a new Intensive Recovery programme. This will target the worst performing providers, sending in our best leaders or delivering the structural changes necessary to get them back on track. No more turning a blind eye to failure.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/health-secretary-welcomes-large-fall-in-nhs-dissatisfaction>