

Why are we using Care Opinion? An Introduction for staff

Sligo Leitrim Mental Health Services have partnered with Care Opinion to gain feedback from service users, their family and carers to learn from their experiences to improve services. Care Opinion Ireland is a not for profit social enterprise that enables people to share their feedback anonymously on the Care Opinion website. Rather than a questionnaire, people are asked to simply “tell your story”. People are able to anonymously explain their experience in their own words and are asked what was good and what could be improved. The story is then moderated and if appropriate, published on the website (publicly) and sent to staff that can read and respond to the feedback.

What do staff need to know?

- All stories shared on Care Opinion are carefully moderated by Care Opinion. Stories never include the names of staff in critical postings or any defamatory comments.
- People are only able to share a story about a specific experience of care once, but can post multiple stories about different experiences of care. The Care Opinion moderation team are trained in safe guarding and recognising vexatious comments and will make a decision not to publish if necessary.
- Once the story has been moderated and published, we send an email alert to relevant staff within the services. The appropriate member of staff then posts a response to the story to thank them, answer any questions, invite further conversation or to highlight any learning or planned changes in response to the feedback.
- The response is moderated and then published. Care Opinion then emails the story author to let them know their story has a response so that they can read it and respond further should they wish.
- Over half the stories shared on Care Opinion are entirely positive, with the rest being either mixed feedback or feedback that is critical but mostly constructive. Because the majority of stories highlight things that work well and include messages of thanks, using Care Opinion often supports a positive boost in staff morale.
- Discuss with your Care Opinion lead or Care Opinion about the different ways staff use feedback in your teams for learning, quality improvement and celebrating the positives.



- Service users can use this anonymous and public platform as a way to feed back rather than make a formal complaint.
- There are resources available to help staff and volunteers support service users to share their feedback on Care Opinion.

What do service users and carers need to know:

- People can share their story by going on the website, by calling Care Opinion, or by filling in a free-post feedback leaflet.
- Each story is anonymous, Care Opinion asks for a location to help find the right service but keeps information confidential. Care Opinion is independent of the HSE, but works with HSE services to give people an anonymous voice and staff a chance to respond.
- People can feedback about any of your services and can name staff in positive stories (first or second names only).
- The Care Opinion website has a picture stories feature which enables people to use picture tiles to share their feedback. This was designed specifically for people with dementia, and other cognitive impairments but anyone can use it.
- People are able to withdraw their story at any time should they wish.
- You do not need an email address, internet access or location to share your story and anyone is able to share their story about any service, or a number of different services across a care pathway.

