# NHS corridor care reaches crisis point as summer surveys reveal worsening systemic neglect



A recent survey conducted by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) reveals a troubling reality in the NHS: nearly three in five doctors have provided care to patients in temporary and unsuitable environments such as corridors, offices, gyms, and even cupboards during the summer months. The findings underscore that corridor care is no longer a seasonal or occasional issue but a pervasive, year-round problem placing significant strain on both medical staff and patients.

The RCP's survey, which included responses from 553 physicians across the UK, found that 59% of doctors delivered care in these temporary spaces from June to August, with 45% doing so daily or almost daily. A staggering 94% of respondents reported that patient privacy and dignity were compromised in these settings, while 81% acknowledged the physical difficulties of maintaining clinical standards. Additionally, 72% of doctors felt forced into providing care under these conditions, and 66% viewed it as the new norm. Alarmingly, 8% said the experience had led them to contemplate leaving their roles entirely, highlighting the emotional and professional toll caused by the crisis.

This crisis is not confined to the winter months as traditionally perceived but has extended into the summer, revealing systemic issues in patient flow and hospital capacity management. One physician described the indignity of treating a patient with a serious condition like a brain abscess in front of a vending machine, calling it “a new low.” This vivid example illustrates the compromises forced on the NHS workforce and patients amid overcrowded hospitals.

The Royal College of Physicians has called for urgent systemic reforms to prevent corridor care by improving patient flow, discharge processes, and long-term investment in social care. The RCP’s clinical vice president, Dr Hilary Williams, emphasised the unacceptable strain on staff and patients, urging that care be provided in safe, private, and properly equipped environments. She declared that lasting change requires urgent systemic action.

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) echoed these sentiments, warning that corridor care is a 24/7 issue that shows no sign of relief. Patricia Marquis, Executive Director of RCN England, highlighted the persistent alarm sounded by nursing staff over the past year, warning that without urgent intervention, hospitals risk being overwhelmed in the coming winter months. This aligns with broader concerns across healthcare professionals about patient safety, privacy, and dignity.

The NHS Confederation acknowledged the severity of the problem but pointed toward ongoing efforts to bolster community support to manage care closer to patients’ homes and reduce hospital demand. Rory Deighton, director of acute and community care at the NHS Confederation, described the efforts as “incredibly hard” yet necessary to mitigate corridor care and its effects.

Government officials have recognised the shockingly routine nature of corridor care within the NHS, attributing it to over a decade of underinvestment and systemic neglect. A Department of Health and Social Care spokesperson outlined measures being taken to address the problem, including expanding urgent and emergency capacity, upgrading ambulance services, and protecting vulnerable populations through vaccination programmes. An additional £450 million investment has been announced to prepare the health service for the winter season and beyond.

The Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM) has been vocally critical of NHS guidance that at times normalises corridor care, warning that it endangers patients' safety. Dr Adrian Boyle of the RCEM condemned the acceptance of such conditions as "shameful," insisting that emergency departments must not accept overcrowding and unsafe care environments as the norm.

In light of the survey and these developments, the RCP has issued a position statement calling for a zero-tolerance approach to corridor care across the NHS. The organisation urges governments and healthcare providers to implement urgent reforms to eliminate care in temporary spaces, thereby restoring patient dignity and safety.

Overall, the situation paints a dire picture of the pressures facing NHS staff and the urgent need for systemic reforms to safeguard patients and uphold standards of care. The consistent reports from physicians, nurses, and emergency medicine professionals underline the critical state of hospital capacity and resource allocation that must be addressed to prevent further erosion of healthcare quality in the UK.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/three-five-doctors-cared-patients-36093589), [[7]](https://www.ireland-live.ie/news/uk/1922936/corridor-care-is-an-everyday-reality-not-confined-to-winter-doctors-warn.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/three-five-doctors-cared-patients-36093589), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/nhs-royal-college-of-physicians-government-royal-college-of-nursing-secretary-of-state-b1213294.html), [[2]](https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/news-and-media/news-and-opinion/doctors-confirm-corridor-care-crisis-as-80-forced-to-treat-patients-in-unsafe-spaces/), [[5]](https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/policy-and-campaigns/policy-documents/a-snapshot-of-uk-doctors-delivering-care-in-a-temporary-environment/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/three-five-doctors-cared-patients-36093589), [[7]](https://www.ireland-live.ie/news/uk/1922936/corridor-care-is-an-everyday-reality-not-confined-to-winter-doctors-warn.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/three-five-doctors-cared-patients-36093589), [[7]](https://www.ireland-live.ie/news/uk/1922936/corridor-care-is-an-everyday-reality-not-confined-to-winter-doctors-warn.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/three-five-doctors-cared-patients-36093589), [[6]](https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/news-and-media/news-and-opinion/royal-college-of-physicians-issues-new-position-statement-calling-for-a-zero-tolerance-approach-to-corridor-care/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/three-five-doctors-cared-patients-36093589), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/nhs-royal-college-of-physicians-government-royal-college-of-nursing-secretary-of-state-b1213294.html)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/three-five-doctors-cared-patients-36093589), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/nhs-royal-college-of-physicians-government-royal-college-of-nursing-secretary-of-state-b1213294.html)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/three-five-doctors-cared-patients-36093589), [[2]](https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/news-and-media/news-and-opinion/doctors-confirm-corridor-care-crisis-as-80-forced-to-treat-patients-in-unsafe-spaces/), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/nhs-royal-college-of-physicians-government-royal-college-of-nursing-secretary-of-state-b1213294.html)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/three-five-doctors-cared-patients-36093589), [[3]](https://rcem.ac.uk/news/this-cannot-become-the-accepted-norm-it-is-shameful-and-its-putting-lives-at-risk/)
* Paragraph 10 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/three-five-doctors-cared-patients-36093589), [[6]](https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/news-and-media/news-and-opinion/royal-college-of-physicians-issues-new-position-statement-calling-for-a-zero-tolerance-approach-to-corridor-care/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/three-five-doctors-cared-patients-36093589> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/news-and-media/news-and-opinion/doctors-confirm-corridor-care-crisis-as-80-forced-to-treat-patients-in-unsafe-spaces/> - A Royal College of Physicians survey reveals that 78% of doctors have provided care in temporary environments, such as corridors and waiting rooms, in the past month. This practice compromises patient privacy and dignity, with 90% of doctors reporting these issues. The RCP calls for systemic reforms to eliminate corridor care and improve patient safety.
3. <https://rcem.ac.uk/news/this-cannot-become-the-accepted-norm-it-is-shameful-and-its-putting-lives-at-risk/> - The Royal College of Emergency Medicine responds to the RCP's 'corridor care' survey, highlighting the dangers of treating patients in unsuitable spaces. Dr Adrian Boyle criticises NHS guidance that normalises this practice, emphasising the need for urgent action to prevent overcrowding and ensure patient safety.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/nhs-royal-college-of-physicians-government-royal-college-of-nursing-secretary-of-state-b1213294.html> - A poll indicates that nearly 80% of NHS doctors have been forced to provide care in temporary environments like corridors and waiting rooms. This practice is impacting patient safety, privacy, and dignity, with one doctor describing it as a 'travesty'. The Royal College of Physicians calls for urgent action to address this issue.
5. <https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/policy-and-campaigns/policy-documents/a-snapshot-of-uk-doctors-delivering-care-in-a-temporary-environment/> - The Royal College of Physicians' survey shows that 78% of doctors have provided care in temporary environments, such as corridors and waiting rooms, in the past month. This practice compromises patient privacy and dignity, with 90% of doctors reporting these issues. The RCP calls for systemic reforms to eliminate corridor care and improve patient safety.
6. <https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/news-and-media/news-and-opinion/royal-college-of-physicians-issues-new-position-statement-calling-for-a-zero-tolerance-approach-to-corridor-care/> - The Royal College of Physicians issues a position statement calling for a zero-tolerance approach to 'corridor care'. The RCP urges the NHS and governments across the UK to eliminate the practice of treating patients in temporary care environments, such as corridors and waiting rooms, to ensure patient safety and dignity.
7. <https://www.ireland-live.ie/news/uk/1922936/corridor-care-is-an-everyday-reality-not-confined-to-winter-doctors-warn.html> - A survey by the Royal College of Physicians reveals that nearly 60% of doctors have cared for patients in temporary spaces like hospital corridors, offices, and cupboards during the summer. The RCP states that corridor care has become an everyday reality and is not confined to winter, urging for systemic action to address the issue.