



Picker Experience Network Awards 2026 – Category Listing

The Picker Experience Network Awards are grounded in the understanding that experience, quality and safety are inseparable. Safe care underpins good experience, and good experience supports safer care which together influence outcomes. The Awards therefore recognise work that improves lived experience while also strengthening quality, reliability and safety. Throughout this document:

Patients refers to people who use services, including carers, families, caregivers and loved ones involved in care.

Staff refers to all colleagues, including clinical and non-clinical staff, volunteers, students, managers and leaders.

Experience improvement includes emotional, relational, informational, physical and safety-related aspects of care.

The framework welcomes excellence at different stages of maturity. Some categories recognise early learning and emerging practice; others recognise sustained or system-level impact.

Please contact us directly with any questions or queries at **awards@picker.org** or call us on **03333 44 7060**

General categories

No.	Category	Summary	What does excellence look like?	Examples and potential participants
ESTABLISHING THE FOUNDATIONS				
1	Partnership Working	Recognises projects that work in genuine partnership with patients, carers, communities or other organisations.	Evidence of shared power and clear influence where lived experience informs service design and experience improvement.	<p>Examples of projects include co-design programmes, patient councils, community and other projects in partnership with other organisations.</p> <p>Open to all, including where Professional services or commercial organisations are the lead.</p>
2	Leadership and Governance for Experience Excellence	Recognises leadership and Governance that embeds experience as a strategic priority.	Strong governance and accountability driving improvements in person-centred care. This includes experience, safety and quality/outcomes as well as sustainability	<p>Examples of projects include board leadership, governance frameworks, organisational culture initiatives and sustainability projects.</p> <p>The category is open to all but may be of special interest to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boards – Exec and Non Exec • Governance teams including Secretariat

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESG (or CSR) programmes
3	Staff Experience and Wellbeing	Celebrates initiatives improving staff engagement, experience and wellbeing to enhance care quality.	Evidence linking improvement in staff experience and engagement or wellbeing to better care experience.	<p>Examples of projects include wellbeing programmes, staff engagement initiatives, people development programmes and culture change work. Psychological safety plays a key role here, with support for speaking out.</p> <p>The category is open to all but may be of special interest to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People/human resources • Organisational Development (OD) teams • Internal comms • Staff engagement or experience teams
4	Equity in Experience	Celebrates initiatives addressing inequalities in	Evidence that services have become more	Examples of projects include targeted work with underserved communities and inclusive

		experience and access and encourage inclusion.	inclusive, accessible or culturally responsive.	<p>service design, work that reduces unfair differences in experience or address inclusion for underserved or marginalised groups.</p> <p>The category is open to all but may be of special interest to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local groups and communities representing minority groups • Charities or other third sector organisations • Voluntary groups
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UNDERSTANDING AND IMPROVING

No.	Category	Summary	What does excellence look like?	Examples and potential participants
5	From Insight to Impact	Recognises organisations that listen, learn and act on feedback using insight.	Strong listening systems and evidence that feedback is analysed and translated into improvement. This may include experience, quality or safety insight.	<p>Examples of projects include complaints or compliments learning systems, experience analytics, social listening activities and feedback loops.</p> <p>The category is open to all but may be of special interest to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient Experience Teams

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Services Organisations, specialising in Feedback Collection and Reporting Support Service Organisations
6	Developing the Capability for Person-centered Care	Recognises programmes building skills and capability for person-centred care for the future (including students and future workforce)	Evidence that learning or development initiatives have strengthened capability or culture to improve the experience.	<p>Examples of projects include training programmes, improvement education and student-led initiatives*.</p> <p>The category is open to all but may be of special interest to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University or teaching hospital programmes students (at any stage) on any health, medical, social care or related programme of study. Induction programmes L&D skill or capability development activities
7	Commissioning for Better Experience of Care	Recognises commissioning approaches that	Evidence that commissioning or design decisions improved experience	Examples of projects include outcomes-based commissioning, procurement

		shape and improve the experience of care.	(including for example reducing risk, improving reliability or safety).	models and integrated system planning. This category is open to any organisation which commissions healthcare services or is involved in commissioning.
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DELIVERING BETTER EXPERIENCES

No.	Category	Summary	What does excellence look like?	Examples and potential participants
8	Excellence in Personalised Care	Celebrates personalised, compassionate and respectful care.	Improved lived experience, with evidence of treating the patient as an individual and with empathy, dignity and respect. It is often about the small things making a big difference with a focus on what matters most to the recipient of the care.	Examples of projects include personalised care planning, relational care models and compassionate care initiatives including end of life or long-term condition support amongst others. This category is open to all and includes family and carers as well as patients.
9	Joined-Up Care Experience	Celebrates joined-up improvements across multiple services or	Shared intent, learning and impact across organisations or sectors	Examples of projects include integrated pathways, system

		<p>stages of care including improving experience across pathways of care and wider system collaboration</p>	<p>with improved coordination, continuity and experience across systems and transitions.</p>	<p>collaboration and population health initiatives.</p> <p>The category is open to all but may be of special interest to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cross sector partnerships e.g. Social services, Local authorities, housing, fostering, prison services etc. • professional services or other commercial organisations including pharmaceutical or other healthcare cos • prevention and population health work with social impact • pathway improvement e.g. cancer, maternity mental health or other complex pathways
10	Environment of Care	<p>Recognises environments that enhance dignity, comfort and respect, and the roles of the</p>	<p>Clear improvements to how people experience care environments.</p>	<p>Examples of projects include estates redesign, dementia-friendly design or accessibility improvements and may include</p>

		physical and sensory environment.		<p>projects focusing on sustainability and inclusion.</p> <p>The category is open to all but may be of special interest to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artists and other dramatic arts • Architects/ Designers • Builders • Tech companies including AI and VR
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ENABLERS AND INNOVATION

No.	Category	Summary	What does excellence look like?	Examples and potential participants
11	Digital and Technology Innovation for Experience	Celebrates digital and other technology that improves experience while maintaining trust and safety. Includes data protection and AI ethics.	Technology improving access or coordination with strong governance and ethical data use.	<p>Examples of projects include digital access tools, AI-supported pathways and digital communications, tech developments, data governance improvements.</p> <p>The category is open to all but may be of special interest to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tech providers • digital media agencies • data management and security agencies

12	Support Operations Excellence in Improving Experience	Celebrates operational teams enabling safe and reliable care experience.	Evidence that internal operational improvements improved experience.	<p>Examples of projects include those focused on finance, reporting, procurement, estates, logistics, distribution, estates, data, infrastructure and IT services.</p> <p>The category is open to all support operations that may not usually be celebrated for their part to improve the experience either internally or directly for patients.</p>
SECTOR AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES				
No.	Category	Summary	What does excellence look like?	Examples and potential participants
13	Independent Excellence in Experience of Care	Celebrates experience improvement within the independent or private sector.	Evidence of person-centred care with appropriate governance, learning and accountability.	<p>Examples of projects include those from Independent hospitals, community providers, care homes and social enterprises.</p> <p>The category is open to all independent and private sector care service providers recognising the critical role they</p>

				<p>play in the overall system including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Hospitals and Clinics • Care Homes • Specialist Healthcare Services
14	International Excellence in Experience of Care	Celebrates outstanding experience improvement outside the UK.	Culturally grounded, evidence-based improvements with transferable learning.	<p>Examples of projects include those from International health providers and system partnerships.</p> <p>The category is open to any healthcare organisation, team or individual operating outside the UK, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospitals • Clinics • NGOs • International Health Programmes • Government bodies
PROGRESS AND MATURITY OF IMPROVEMENT				
No.	Category	Summary	What does excellence look like?	Examples and potential participants

<p>15</p>	<p>Emerging Good Practice</p>	<p>Recognises promising early-stage initiatives improving experience.</p>	<p>Clear understanding of the challenge and early evidence of learning.</p>	<p>Examples of projects include pilots, prototypes and early innovation projects. It may be results or outcomes are not yet available but there are early indicators of positive change.</p> <p>These projects are often not entered as they have not yet been running long enough or have enough evidence of impact but are likely to have some interesting and exciting early signs.</p>
<p>16</p>	<p>Long Term Improvement in Experience of Care</p>	<p>Recognises initiatives demonstrating long-term improvement.</p>	<p>Evidence that improvements have been maintained and embedded.</p>	<p>Examples of projects include long-term programmes showing durable improvement. These may have been entered before and have continued to evolve and drive ongoing sustained improvements.</p> <p>Long term may depend on the project but is likely to be over several years, rather than months.</p>

Individual & team categories (does not require a presentation)

No.	Category	Summary	What does excellence look like?	Examples and potential participants
17	Teams making a difference to experience	Recognises teams delivering excellent care experience.	Evidence of teamwork and positive impact on patient experience.	Examples of teams include Ward teams, patient experience teams, PALs or complaints teams, multidisciplinary teams and operational teams.
18	Outstanding Contribution to Experience of Care (in partnership with The DAISY Foundation)	Recognises exceptional leadership or contribution.	Sustained commitment advancing person-centred care.	Senior leaders or recognised champions.

Patient & volunteer categories (does not require a presentation)

No.	Category	Summary	What does excellence look like?	Examples and potential participants
19	Patient, volunteer or community recognition*	Recognises individuals improving experience through sharing their lived experience.	Meaningful influence or support improving care experience.	Examples include patient champions, experts by experience, patient advocates, member of a Patient Advocacy group, contributor to a charity,

				<p>peer supporters and carer advocates.</p> <p>This category is for nominations of outstanding INDIVIDUALS only, not Patient Groups, Collectives, Councils or otherwise.</p>
20	<p>Outstanding contribution to volunteering*</p>	<p>Recognises exceptional volunteering improving care experience.</p>	<p>Volunteers making a meaningful difference to patient or staff experience.</p>	<p>These could be volunteers working for a Trust or Charity or other groups. They are not paid for their work and are offering their time and expertise to improve the experience.</p> <p>This category is for nominations of outstanding INDIVIDUALS only, not Patient Groups, Collectives, Councils or otherwise.</p>
21	<p>Patient involvement in patient safety (In partnership with Patient Safety Learning)</p>	<p>Recognises patients who have worked with healthcare organisations to drive meaningful safety improvements.</p>	<p>Clear evidence that the individual's involvement directly contributed to a safety improvement - whether through raising a concern, participating in a formal</p>	<p>Example could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A patient whose complaint led them to work collaboratively with a department to improve safety processes.

			improvement programme, or influencing practice or culture at ward or system level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A patient safety partner who drove a successful safety initiative within their organisation. • A patient advocate who contributed to policy or governance changes that strengthened safety.
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*Students, Patients and Volunteers are not charged for entering.

Awards Pricing 2026

First Award Entry

£249 + VAT *(includes 1 x live event place)*

Additional Award Entry

£199 + VAT *(includes 1 x live event place)*

Additional Event Place (for entrants)

£249 + VAT

Additional Event Place (for non-entrants)

£299 + VAT

Our approach to pricing

Entry prices for the Awards have remained unchanged since before 2019. Throughout this period, we have been deliberate in ensuring the Awards remain accessible to a wide range of organisations, individuals and NHS Trusts, reflecting the importance of recognising excellence across the whole system.

In response to rising operational costs, including venue, staffing and production, we have made a modest adjustment to pricing for 2026. This enables us to continue delivering a high-quality, credible and impactful Awards experience that reflects the significance of the work being recognised.

At the heart of the Awards remains a clear purpose, to celebrate, share and scale what works in person centred care, and to bring together a community committed to improving experiences for patients, families and staff.

We remain committed to ensuring the Awards continue to recognise and amplify the very best in experience-led care, while remaining inclusive, credible and grounded in real impact.

Loyalty Pricing for 2025 Entrants

We recognise the ongoing commitment of organisations who return year on year to share their work and contribute to the wider learning community.

For organisations that submitted an entry in 2025, we are maintaining 2025 pricing as a loyalty offer.

First Award Entry

£199 + VAT (*includes 1 x live event place*)

Additional Award Entry

£169 + VAT (*includes 1 x live event place*)

Additional Event Place (for entrants)

£199 + VAT