

## QUICK TAKE

# Under The Microscope: The Patient Experience in UK Private Healthcare

2022 Edition

The Data Science team from Reputation analysed the patient experience trends from reviews of 171 private hospitals in the UK.



## The Digital Reckoning of Private Healthcare

- Review volume has almost **tripled** since February 2021
- **Cleanliness** and **bedside manner** continues to drive positive sentiment in patient reviews

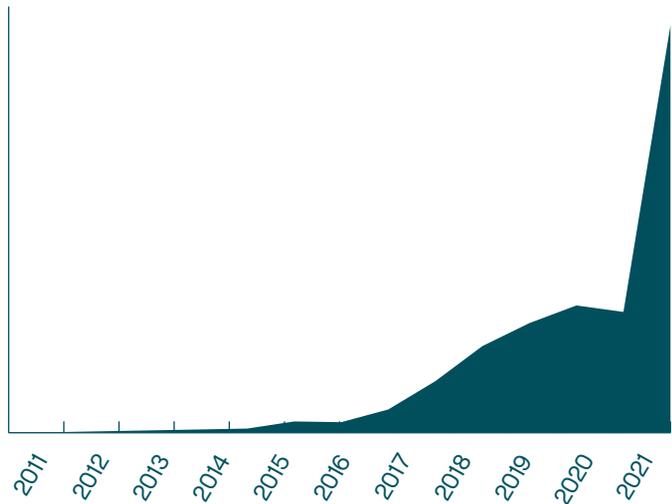
- Review **response rate** reached an all-time high 68% in 2021
- **Affordability** and **waiting times** continue to drive negative sentiment in patient reviews

Jump to the top 5 ranking to find out who is ranking on top of the Reputation Score ladder



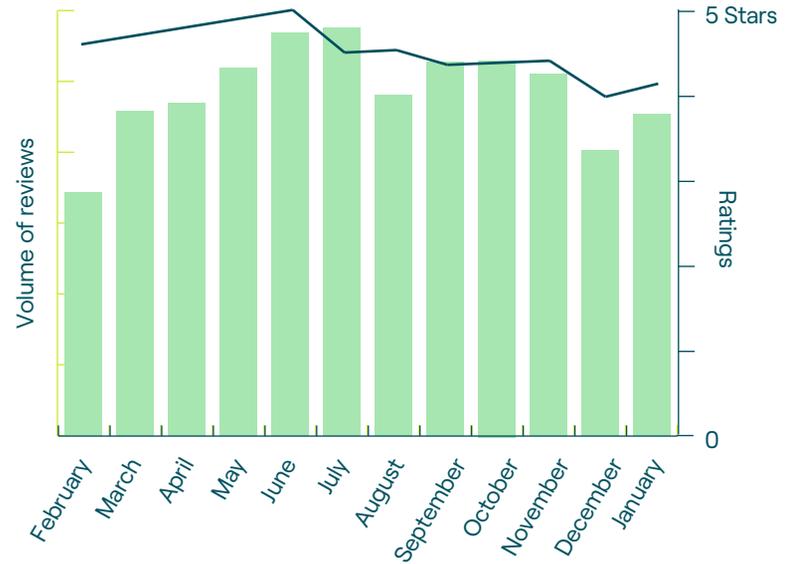
# Reviews Volume Are Constantly Growing

Total Reviews Over Time



Across the 171 analysed locations, we found a monumental increase in review volume. Since last year, volumes increase in review volume. Since last year, volumes have tripled for the private healthcare sector.

2021 Reviews and Ratings



Since June 2021, patients' ratings of private hospitals have been gradually declining. To ensure ratings remain high, private hospital operators should examine the sentiment behind reviews and ratings to identify areas for operational improvement.

The NHS backlog presents a unique growth opportunity for the private healthcare sector. Companies that are equipped to deal with surging patient reviews and other forms of online feedback are those best placed to attract new patients.

79% of consumers trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation. Thus, to drive new patient acquisition, it is critical that healthcare companies engage patients online where they leave and read reviews.

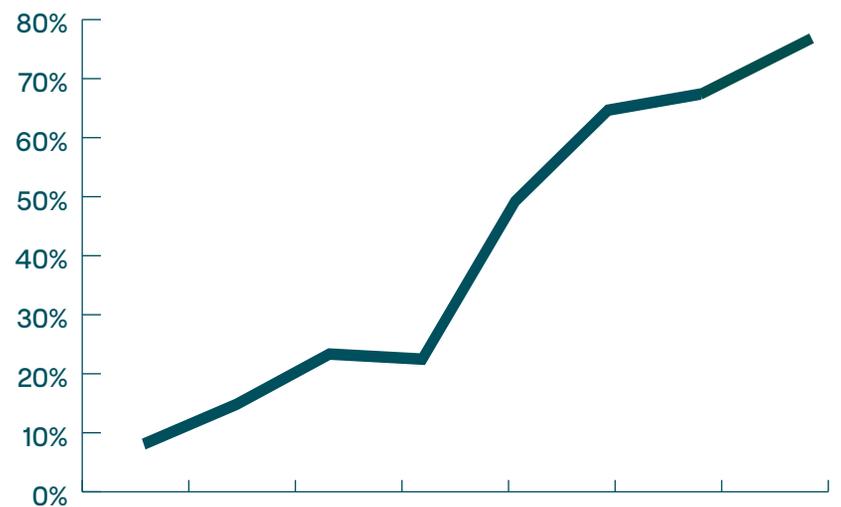
## Rising Review Response Rates

In the past, two-thirds of private hospital locations had a review response rate lower than 50%. However, the industry is reacting to growing review volumes by responding more consistently to patient reviews on the likes of Google.

Our analysis of private hospitals' response rates shows a year-on-year improvement with response rates now reaching as high as 78%. Private healthcare companies that respond to reviews efficiently and effectively are those which are more likely to win new patients in the post-pandemic era.

**The leading two groups show a response rate over 70%.** Engaging with patients online through online reviews is one of the many ways healthcare providers can improve their reputation and ultimately increase patient acquisition and market share.

Reviews Response Rate

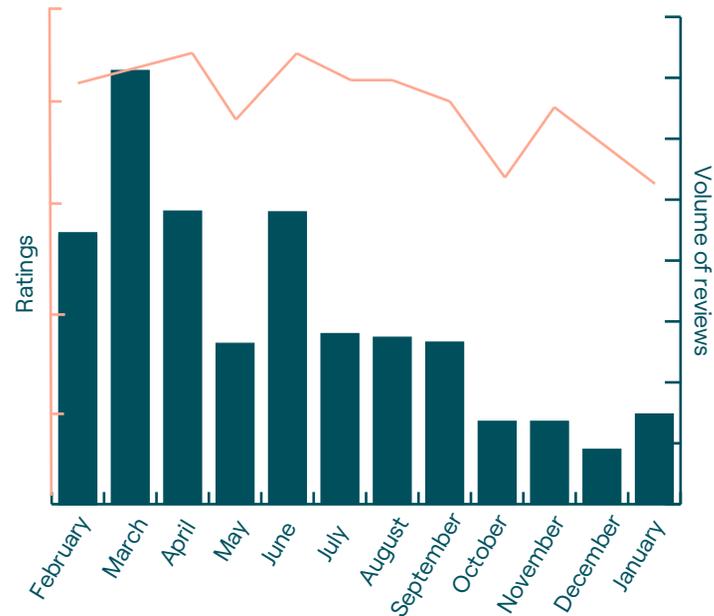


# Covid-19 Ratings and Reviews Are Less Frequent but Increasingly Negative

The frequency of this topic in reviews is declining. Moreover, the ratings associated with reviews where Covid-19 is mentioned are increasingly negative, reflecting the dissatisfaction of patients and families when it comes to Covid-19 protocols.

“Tried to attend my appointment today and was turned away at the door because I had my three month old baby with me. The receptionist said it was because of covid and expected me to be able to find childcare in the ten minutes before my appointment started.”

Review volumes and ratings related to Covid-19 since February 2021



## What Are Patients Sharing?

### Cleanliness and Bedside Manner are the biggest drivers of positive sentiment

The industry is seeing an upswing in positive sentiment around 'laboratory', 'testing', and 'elderly'.

All these are important factors for self-pay patients when choosing and evaluating private healthcare providers

### Waiting Time and Affordability are the biggest drivers of negative sentiment

Shorter waiting times are arguably one reason why patients choose private healthcare over the NHS, but this is a source of negative sentiment online.

'Billing' is often the underlying cause behind the negative sentiment around affordability.

### Responsiveness matters!

'Responsiveness' saw a significant downwards trend in sentiment. Clearly, patients place importance on the speed and efficacy at which healthcare providers respond to complaints and queries. 'Parking' facilities were another bugbear for patients as sentiment in this category also declined.

### 'Staff' received the most mentions in both positive and negative contexts

A patient's experience with their healthcare provider's staff determines whether their review is positive or negative.

Patients don't hesitate to go online to praise or criticise healthcare staff so having technology and processes to manage reviews and make operational improvements is crucial.

# Top Private Hospitals Ranking

We ranked the top 5 largest private healthcare groups using our proprietary Reputation Score. To arrive at a healthcare group's Reputation Score, we evaluated acute care hospitals within each healthcare group and aggregated their scores.

Rank	Group	Reputation Score	Sentiment	Visibility	Engagement
1	BMI	629	70%	63%	85%
2	Ramsay	504	56%	51%	74%
3	Nuffield	496	56%	54%	33%
4	HCA	442	56%	60%	42%
5	Spire	452	48%	55%	31%

Leaders (the top performers) outperformed laggards (the bottom performers) in sentiment, visibility, and engagement.

Sentiment is especially important because of all the elements of Reputation Score, sentiment has the biggest impact. Top-ranked BMI had the highest star average score of 66%.

The biggest difference between leaders and laggards: engagement. Leaders engage more with their customers and respond to reviews much better than laggards do.

## To ensure growth and to improve the patient experience overall, healthcare organisations must:

- Be responsive to online queries and comments from patients
- Understand and act upon sentiment trends in patient reviews to drive operational improvements

### We are here to help

Our platform turns listening into action. Taking control of your brand's reputation is no longer optional.



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