

# Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Support pack for GP practices - some useful  
guidance to help set up and maintain a PPG



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# What are PPGs?

A PPG is a group of people who meet on a regular basis to discuss their General Practice and is usually made up of patient volunteers and practice staff.

PPGs provide a forum for two-way communication between the practice and group members, giving patients the opportunity to influence decision making and support planning and delivery of practice initiatives. In order to be valuable, PPGs must have the confidence to challenge the practice in line with the critical friend ethos. A critical friend is someone who provides constructive feedback, without prejudice or negativity, to enable a service or function to develop positively.

PPGs generally have their own terms of reference, agreed between the GP practice and the founder members, and should act as representatives of their patient population.

PPGs are also to influence the commissioning of services within their wider community through ongoing communication and active engagement with NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB). Healthwatch Sefton is also supporting the ICB with the ongoing development of PPGs.

## What is not a PPG?

- A forum for complaints. Clear ground rules are needed to ensure that PPG members do not use the PPG as a vehicle to resolve their own personal issues.
- A time-consuming activity for practice staff. Some effort is required to get PPGs going but thereafter they should be self-organising and patient led and will often undertake activities that save the practice time.





# Four ways in which PPGs can operate

- Have regular meetings with members attending (this may need to be controlled depending on available space).
- Have people signed up taking an interest in the PPG from a distance. This means that they do not have to attend meeting but should be engaged with through newsletter, consultation documents or be involved in any other aspect of the PPG. The use of technology may help this – such as discussion boards/chat rooms on websites - these could be termed 'involved members'.
- Have a virtual PPG. This means that the practice will deliver their "PPG" remotely which some groups have been doing more of due to COVID-19 and may wish to continue in this way.
- Have a combination of a 'real' and 'virtual' group. The virtual group could support the work of the main group and offer a variety of perspectives from the wider patient population.

## A guide to what PPGs can do

### **Escalate practice issues**

The PPG can help share issues with practice staff. PPG are not about single issues repeatedly coming to the meeting but may be able to highlight recurrent themes.

### **Escalate wider commissioning issues**

Commissioning is about commissioners becoming much closer to patients. PPGs should fit into a wider structure that allows experiences, views or concerns to reach the right people at the centre of the communities.

### **Share learning with patients and practices**

Feedback on outcomes and liaise with other practices.

### **Work with other PPGs across Sefton**

Do you want your PPG to link in with others? This would be a good way for best practice to be shared and ideas to be formed across a larger area (PCN).



# A guide to what PPGs can do (continued)

## **Help with fundraising**

There are examples of PPGs helping the practice with events that help with fund raising or support events (i.e. Open Days)

## **Improve communication**

The PPG must be a conduit for improving communication between patients, the practice and the role of commissioners.

## **Help the practice deliver change**

Where changes are required in the practice, either as a result of the local survey or some other initiative, the PPG can help staff communicate the idea to patients.

## **Become a hub for social networking**

The group could be more than something that just meets to discuss the practice.

## **Key speakers**

Inviting 'key speakers' to the meetings to discuss specific issues, e.g. representatives from local voluntary organisations, council staff.

## **Help develop a local patient survey**

PPGs work with the practice to agree their local patient surveys. The local patient survey will need to:

- Identify and prioritise issues
- Be shared with as many patients as possible;
- Analyse the results
- Agree an action plan with patients on how they want to respond- including timetable
- Publish the results of the survey.

## **Promote education and self help**

If practices promote campaigns or self-help initiatives the PPG could help support it and improve take up. They could also help the practice understand what areas are of particular interest for patients or link in with other organisations who need volunteers (such as bereavement services). These can be recruited from the practice population.

## **Inspections**

PPGs may be asked to contribute to Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections on the practice

# Setting up your PPG

- ✓ **Decide on a lead for the PPG**
- ✓ **Set up the first meeting**
- ✓ **Promote the group**
- ✓ **Build the group and establish roles**
- ✓ **Share ideas with other PPGs in the area and learn from others**

From 2016 the GP contract stipulates that practice should have an active PPG. Please see appendix C for full details.

The first stage is to give people an opportunity to find out that there is a PPG, plans to set up the group and to arrange a first meeting. The first meeting will provide an opportunity to agree the overall purpose of the group and, once this is understood, the Terms of Reference of the group can be developed, which will set out objectives and guide activities. Roles and responsibilities for each group member can be agreed to steer the work of the PPG.

It is recommended that a member of staff is appointed as the PPG lead for the practice. They can be the first point of contact for the PPG.



# Promoting the group

- Advertise in the waiting area and website, although, this will not work in solitude. (For an example poster, please refer to Appendix E)
- Invite specific individuals to join a group that you know may be interested in getting more involved in practice issues e.g. people who have made suggestions about the practice, or asked questions, or 'expert patients'
- It's important to ensure we encourage an inclusive group that represents the local population - think about ways to encourage people of different ages, races and ethnicities to join your PPG
- Talk to patients in the waiting room to invite them to join the group
- Ask existing members to talk to others to encourage them to join the group
- Advertise in local press and local voluntary sector newsletters
- If possible, offer a range of times for the group to meet and opt for the time that most people can attend
- Identify which patients would prefer to be part of a virtual group or be 'involved' through electronic information etc.

## Establish roles within the PPG

- Agree roles for the meetings and whether these will be fixed or rotational. (Please see Appendix B for example roles)
- Confirm contact details and agree the best means for communication with the group. Include consent for this information to be shared with PPG group members to enable them to organise communications
- Agree the role of GP Practice staff relating to the PPG- need to agree attendance of practice staff- who will attend and how regularly
- Discuss any training requirements for the group members
- A 'PPG Information pack' for new members is also available from your ICB





# Communication needs

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained when dealing with any queries from patients. Confidentiality forms should be signed by PPG members along with consent form for their own contact details to be shared with PPG members.

Communication elements to consider:

- ▶ A PPG suggestion box can support patients to put comments / suggestions / queries to PPGs
- ▶ Role of the PPG to take up general queries / issues on behalf of patients – it is important to maintain confidentiality where these are raised
- ▶ If individuals raise personal issues to the PPG then they should be referred to Practice manager or PALS, as the PPG is not an advocacy service for individual issues
- ▶ If possible, the practice could provide office space for the PPGs
- ▶ A PPG representative could attend part of the Practice staff meetings to maintain two-way communication
- ▶ Induction Pack - It is important to explain the role of the PPGs to all new members
- ▶ Use of social media and online platforms to promote the work of the PPG and further engage patients
- ▶ Providing information in an accessible format
- ▶ If people have special requirements ask them to contact the practice so that we can make reasonable adjustments to enable them to join and be part of the group
- ▶ If a patient's first language is not English and they would like to join the PPG ask them to speak to the GP practice to see if we can assist using the practice interpreting service

# Useful contacts, support and information

The organisations below can provide lots of useful information about setting up and running PPGs, including examples of work in other areas.

## National Association for Patient Participation

[www.napp.org.uk](http://www.napp.org.uk)

## GP Patient Survey website

Results of patient surveys about their GP practice

[www.gp-patient.co.uk](http://www.gp-patient.co.uk)

## Healthwatch Sefton Signposting Service

0800 206 1304

[info@healthwatchsefton.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchsefton.co.uk)  
[www.healthwatchsefton.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchsefton.co.uk)

## NHS Cheshire and Merseyside - Sefton place team

[communications@sefton.nhs.uk](mailto:communications@sefton.nhs.uk)  
[www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/your-place/sefton/](http://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/your-place/sefton/)



# Appendix A - Terms of reference

## **Title of the Group**

The group will be known as: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Aim of the Group**

- To promote co-operation between the practice and the patients to the benefit of both
- To provide a patients perspective to the practice
- To provide a forum to discuss issues relevant to the practice
- To enable patients to influence local health care services
- To promote good health by arranging/supporting health awareness events
- To network with other PPGs to share good practice and ideas

## **Membership of the group**

- The membership is open to all patients who are registered with (insert practice name)
- Membership will be on a voluntary basis
- Committee members will be elected from the membership for a term of 1 year/2 years
- Committee members will be made up of a Chair, Secretary and treasurer

## **Meetings**

- The PPG will meeting \*quarterly/monthly/bimonthly (\*delete as appropriate)
- The PPG will consider both face to face and virtual meetings based on the needs of the group
- There will be an agenda produced for each meeting which will be co-developed between the practice and the group
- Minutes of the meeting will be produced and agreed/verified by the PPG attendees during the meeting
- The practice will make meeting documentation available for all patients to access from their practice premises or via their website
- The practice will ensure that a representative from the practice attends PPG meetings

## **Ground Rules**

- All views are valid and will be listened to
- To respect each person's opinion even though they may differ from our own
- To allow people to speak out if there is something they don't understand
- Individual complaints/issues will not be discussed at this forum. These should be raised through the Practice's complaints process
- All information discussed by PPG members will remain confidential
- Members will demonstrate a commitment to delivering results as a group
- Being a member of the PPG does not entitle that individual to preferential treatment above other patients
- Mobile phones should be on silent or off during meetings.

## **Confidentiality and data protection**

- No patient identifiable information will be shared or discussed at PPG forums
- Members will be required to complete a 'Considered Consent' form. The form will give members the opportunity to give permission for their contact details to be shared with other PPG members to enable the group to communicate effectively. This will be for the specific purpose of PPG work only
- All members will be required to fill in a Confidentiality and data protection form. The form is to inform member of their duty to adhere to Confidentiality rules

## **Objectives**

- Objectives for the group will be jointly agreed between the practice and the PPG members
- A record of the objectives will be documented separately from the terms of reference
- Objectives will be SMART. Specific, Measureable, Achievable, relevant and timely
- An evaluation of the PPG will take place annually to ensure effectiveness of the group, this will be done by the group itself



# Appendix B - Roles and responsibilities

**Key responsibilities for each role include:**

## **Group members**

- Giving time to attend meetings
- Attending as many meetings as possible
- Acting in the best interest of the PPG
- Understanding the purpose and workings of the PPG
- Listening to other PPG members and remaining non- judgemental
- Being aware of health and safety requirements of selves and others
- Being aware of the PPG's ground rules and abiding by these
- Keeping in mind the goals of the PPG

## **Chair**

- Chairing the meetings
- Steering discussions and keeping to the agenda
- Contacting and negotiating with relevant organisations to support the work of the PPG
- Listening to PPG members and remaining non- judgemental
- Providing leadership in deciding actions
- Planning specific meeting dates with the secretary and agreeing a suitable location for meetings
- Ensuring action plans are implemented
- Preparing agendas for meetings, with the support of the Secretary

## **Secretary**

- Circulating meeting papers- agendas, minutes etc.
- Taking minutes / delegating minutes to a specified minute taker if applicable.
- Advising people of the location and content of meetings
- Taking apologies and checking quorum of meetings (enough people to make decisions)
- Working with the Chair to support production of progress reports.
- Supporting the Chair to monitor action plans
- Keeping the member's list up to date
- Preparing and filing correspondence

# Appendix C - Extract from 2016 GP contract

## Part 5 Patient Participation

2. The following is inserted as a new clause 5.2:

### **"5.2. Patient Participation**

5.2.1. The Contractor must establish and maintain a group known as a "Patient Participation Group" comprising of some of its registered patients for the purposes of— Choose an item. 7(a) obtaining the views of patients who have attended the Contractor's practice about the services delivered by the Contractor; and (b) enabling the Contractor to obtain feedback from its registered patients about those services.

5.2.2. The Contractor is not required to establish a Patient Participation Group if such a group has already been established by the Contractor pursuant to any directions about enhanced services which were given by the Secretary of State under section 98A of the 2006 Act before 1st April 2015.

5.2.3. The Contractor must make reasonable efforts during each financial year to review the membership of its Patient Participation Group in order to ensure that the Group is representative of its registered patients.

5.2.4. The Contractor must—

(a) engage with its Patient Participation Group, at such frequent intervals throughout each financial year as the Contractor must agree with that group, with a view to obtaining feedback from the Contractor's registered patients, in an appropriate and accessible manner which is designed to encourage patient participation, about the services delivered by the Contractor; and  
(b) review any feedback received about the services delivered by the Contractor, whether pursuant to clause 5.2.4(a) or otherwise, with its Patient Participation Group with a view to agreeing with that group the improvements (if any) which are to be made to those services.

5.2.5. The Contractor must make reasonable efforts to implement such improvements to the services delivered by the Contractor as are agreed between the Contractor and its Patient Participation Group.

5.2.6. In this clause 5.2 "financial year" means the 12 month period beginning on 1st April each year and ending on 31st March the following year.

# Appendix D - Digital screen graphic

The below digital graphic can be used on screens in GP practice waiting rooms. This will be available to access via the Envisage system.



## Appendices E and F

Please see below for printable PDF versions of:

Appendix E - poster to be used in practices (Optimum size: A4)

Appendix F - leaflet for patients (Optimum size: A5 double sided - two pages)



# Get involved at your local GP practice

## Become a voluntary member of your local Patient Participation Group and you can...



- Meet with other patients and practice staff
- Influence decision making about NHS services
- Work in partnership with the practice to explore new ideas
- Provide constructive feedback on practice services



**Ask your GP practice team for more information  
on joining your Patient Participation Group**



# Do you want to get involved at your local GP practice?



## Become a voluntary member of your Patient Participation Group (PPG)

# What is a PPG?

A PPG is a group of people who meet on a regular basis to discuss their General Practice and is usually made up of patient volunteers and practice staff.

## What does a PPG do?

PPGs provide a forum for two-way communication between the practice and group members, giving patients the opportunity to influence decision making and support planning and delivery of practice initiatives.

## Why join a PPG?

Become a voluntary member of your local PPG and you can:

- Meet with other patients and practice staff
- Influence decision making about NHS services
- Work in partnership with the practice to explore new ideas
- Provide constructive feedback on practice services



**To join your local PPG, ask your GP reception team or visit your GP practice website.**